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The impending retirements of community college presidents: A higher education leadership crisis

Katrina Vanderwoude

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THE IMPENDING RETIREMENTS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS:
A HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP CRISIS

KATRINA VANDERWOUDE

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Department of Leadership and Counseling

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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January 19, 2005

Ypsilanti, Michigan

APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of Ruth E. Smith and Geraldine VanderWoude.

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Appreciation is extended to the members of my committee, Drs. Helen Ditzhazy, William Shelton, Jaclynn Tracy, and Patrick Melia. Thank you for your support and encouragement throughout this process.

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Finally on a personal note, to my husband Bob and my daughter Elyse (who began this journey with me at the age of 11 months), thank you for your love and support throughout this process. How lucky I am to have both of you in my life.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified and interested candidates to replace retiring community college presidents and senior level officers and to learn if or how organizational changes and leadership during the growth and expansion of the community college system have impacted or contributed to this phenomenon.

The unit of analysis for the study was a public community college in Southeastern Michigan (the pseudonym of SMCC was assigned). SMCC provided the environmental setting for the researcher to observe, record, and interact with the system being examined. SMCC was used as a vehicle to better understand how or why the phenomenon, a shortage of qualified presidential candidates, may have occurred over time in relation to organizational characteristics, leadership, and environmental factors.

The data sources for the proposed study were documents, archival records, and interviews with community college leaders. A conceptual framework based on Deegan and Tillery's (1985) historical framework on the four generations of community colleges provided a lens for understanding the development of community colleges as institutions as well as the presidents who have led and currently lead them. The concepts embedded in Cain's (1999) systems approach to understanding community colleges and the organizational change theories of Fullan (1993, 1999, 2001) also contributed to the development of the conceptual framework.

This study explored the growth and changes of the role of the community college president in tandem with the perceptions of the role held by potential applicants for the job. Further, this study examined the organizational and structural changes that are

unique to the community college and how those changes may have resulted in the current shortage of prepared leaders to replace retiring presidents. It is anticipated that this study will add to the body of community college literature and potentially provide timely and useful insight to avoiding similar shortages in the future.

The qualitative case study method was employed in an effort to investigate “how” or “why” the changing organizational characteristics and presidential roles over time may have impacted the community college’s ability to continually produce an interested and qualified pool of applicants to replace retiring presidents.

This research explored and concluded that there are a number of disconnections between the role expectations of today’s community college president and the professional and personal expectations of potential candidates to fill the upcoming vacancies. These disconnections and their application for practice are outlined in the conclusion chapter of the dissertation document.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified candidates to replace the retiring community college presidents and senior officers and to learn if or how organizational changes and leadership during the growth and expansion of the community college system has impacted the current state of affairs. First, the evidence of a crisis had to be explored. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) stated in its Leadership 2020 report:

One major concern for community colleges is the impending shortage of college leaders resulting from an unprecedented number of retirements over the next decade.... In the next 10 years, community colleges will need to replace 800 of the 1,150 presidents. Yet the preparation of presidents and other community college leaders has declined, and the number of people prepared to step into leadership roles at higher levels, including the presidency, has dramatically diminished. (AACC, 2002)

Multiple studies supported this position that a notable number of community college CEOs will be retiring soon. Weissman & Vaughan (2002) stated after their comparative Career and Lifestyle Survey (CLS) of community college presidents:

The rate of presidential retirements appears to be on the rise. Among the 1996 CLS respondents, approximately 68 percent said they planned to retire within 10 years of the date they completed the survey; in 2001, this percentage increased to about 79 percent. Conversely, the percentage of presidents who planned to retire

more than 10 years from the date of the survey decreased from about 32 percent in 1996 to approximately 21 percent in 2001. (p. 10)

Similarly, Hockaday and Puyear (2000) concluded in their paper commissioned by the Kellogg Foundation, *Community College Leadership in the New Millennium*, that at least 600 of the nation's roughly 1200 community college presidents might retire within the next decade. Further, George Little, chair of the Association of Community College Trustees Board of Directors wrote, "There's a lot of concern about the coming leadership shortage at our community colleges. More than 60 percent of our current CEOs will retire in the next 10 years. The pool of candidates for these CEOs seems to be shrinking" (Little, 2002).

It stands to reason that retirements will increase as the average age of community college presidents is increasing. In 1998 the average age of presidents was 57 whereas in 1986 the average age was only 51 (Ross and Green, 2000). AACC researcher Christopher Shults (2001) suggested that it is not just the presidents who plan to retire, but senior officers as well. Shults argued that impending retirements affect not only current leadership but also the "leadership pipeline." Shults stated, "In AACC's 2001 online survey, 33 percent of responding presidents projected that at least one-fourth of their top administrative staff will retire by 2006" (2001). A 2000 Michigan State University (MSU) study that focused on career paths of community college leaders (Amey and VanDerLinden, 2002) identified six positions common to the career trajectory to the community college presidency: Chief Academic Officer, Senior Student Affairs Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Continuing Education Director, Occupational or Vocational Education Director, and Business and Industry Liaison. The study further

reported that in 2000 the average age of administrators in the aforementioned six positions identified as leading to the presidency was 52, and the average age of the chief academic officers was 54, not much younger than the average age of presidents. The exit of these senior level administrators is crucial not only because of the loss of their leadership but also because their positions often lead to the presidency.

Ross and Green (2000) concluded in their study of community college presidents that 56 percent of current presidents were in senior administrative positions immediately prior to their current position. Credentialing and preparation for the presidency may be another factor for consideration. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) concluded that 87 percent of current presidents and 74 percent of current chief academic officers hold doctorates. These findings indicate the doctoral degree as an important factor in attainment of the presidency. Yet, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) as cited in Shults (2001), the number of advanced degrees conferred in community college administration decreased 78 percent from 1982-83 to 1996-97, which supports the position that there will be a decrease in the pool of qualified presidential applicants.

The upcoming presidential and senior level retirements, coupled with the indication of a smaller pool of credentialed applicants, indicated a shortage of presidential leadership over the next decade. The ramifications of this type of crisis are far reaching, with potentially long lasting effects. Shults argued, "With the retirement of these leaders, inestimable experience and history, as well as an intimate understanding of the community college, mission, values, and culture will disappear, leaving an enormous gap in the collective memory and the leadership of community colleges" (2001). Shults

touched on the concept of institutional or organizational memory, further illustrated by Geigle's (1998) case study, which concluded that organizational memory and scripts play a powerful role that should not be ignored in organizations. Geigle conducted eight focus groups with long-term employees of a federal agency who had all been present during multiple reorganization attempts over a period of more than fifteen years. "Scripts" were created to describe each group member's impressions of prior and impending reorganization efforts. When asked to describe significant past events, all eight focus groups told the same stories of two past events. Geigle (1998) concluded that employees and their scripts were:

important sources of intelligence for those involved in planned interventions because they reveal what organization members noticed and judged as important in the past, providing a clue to what really matters in the present. They provide a kind of historical map that directs one's attention to the most important and most dangerous parts of the landscape. (1998)

By applying Geigle's conclusions regarding the importance of organizational memory to the impending leadership crisis at community colleges, the potential consequences of campuses losing both presidents and senior officials simultaneously became clearer to this researcher. Many community college campuses, particularly those where top administrators have been in their roles for an extended period of time, may face both a void in leadership and, to some extent, institutional identity as a result of multiple retirements on their campuses. Shults concluded, "Upcoming retirements among community college leaders and those in the leadership pipeline pose a critical challenge to community colleges" (2001). Fincher (1999) concluded that educational leaders of the

present should learn and study the past intellectual and cultural heritage of their campuses as a means for learning and understanding more about their future challenges. Fincher argued, “The challenge to those of us in institutions of higher learning is to appreciate a simple paradox: unless we understand the recent past of our institutions, we are unlikely to understand their purposes, meaning, and significance as they change to meet societal demands and expectations” (1999). This study examined the past history of community colleges as a backdrop to understanding the impending leadership crisis. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inspired this study are outlined in Chapter Two.

Research Setting

A community college in Southeastern Michigan was selected as the research site. The subject institution is a public tax supported comprehensive community college located in Southeastern Michigan and will be referred to as SMCC. SMCC is the only community college in Michigan governed by the same board as its local school system. Founded in 1938, SMCC is located in what the local community refers to as “Auto Country” due to the fact that a particular major automotive manufacturer is located within its district. SMCC enrolls over 25,000 students annually.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified candidates to replace retiring community college presidents and senior level officers and to learn if or how organizational changes and leadership during the growth and expansion of the community college system have impacted or contributed to this phenomenon.

The public community college system is a relatively new player in the field of higher education as compared to the university. As such, this researcher noted that more research is readily available on the university than the community college. “Historians of higher education have tended to use the research university as a means of understanding the United States higher education in its institutional form” (Hutcheson, 1999, p. 307). Hutcheson made a case that the community college system should be studied in its own right. Further, Cohen and Bower (1996) concluded that there was “no generally accepted national research agenda for community colleges, no consistently funded national agency charged with studying the institutions as unique entities, and few educational researchers directing their attention toward them.” (p. 367).

Similarly, I found that although research existed about the leadership styles of past presidents and the evolutionary changes of the community college system, none existed connecting these factors to a leadership crisis. Some efforts were found that alluded to an impending crisis. However, none explored how this crisis evolved and how to avoid similar shortages in community college leadership in the future.

The documented upcoming presidential and senior level retirements, coupled with the indication of a smaller pool of credentialed applicants, indicated a shortage of presidential leadership over the next decade. The ramifications of this type of crisis are far-reaching, with potentially long lasting effects.

This study was intended to explore the organizational and structural changes that are unique to the community college and how those changes may have resulted in the current shortage of prepared leaders to replace retiring presidents. It is anticipated that

this study will add to the body of community college literature and potentially provide timely and useful insight to avoiding similar shortages in the future.

Definition of Terms

The following list of operational terms was compiled to help the reader better understand the context of the study as well as language germane to the community college system.

- AACC – American Association of Community Colleges
- Community College – two year public college
- Comprehensive Community College – contemporary definition of a community college with emphasis on serving various sectors of the community, including industry
- Generations of Community Colleges – the evolution of the community college system, based on the work of Deegan and Tillery (1985)
- Motivation/ERG theory – Alderfer's (1972) theory of motivation (ERG), which emphasizes one's need for existence, relatedness, and growth.
- Junior College – a public, two year college with major emphasis on the student transferring to a four year institution.
- Leadership Crisis – the anticipated dearth of leadership that will occur when roughly 800 of the nation's 1100 community college presidents retire over the next 8 -10 years.
- Moral Purpose – Acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole (Fullan, 2001).

- North Central or NCA – North Central Association of Colleges and Schools is an accrediting body that evaluates community colleges.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations of this research related to the context from which this study was completed. It was delimited to a Southeastern Michigan Community College and more specifically to those in leadership roles within that institution. SMCC is a public, tax-supported comprehensive community college located in Southeastern Michigan with an annual enrollment of more than 25,000 students. As such, the results of this study are relevant to public, two-year institutions of similar size and may not be relevant to institutions with vastly dissimilar characteristics such as private colleges; colleges located in rural geographic areas; colleges with drastically lower or higher enrollments, and so on.

The participants were either a sitting president, someone in an administrative role defined as common to the career trajectory of the presidency, or those in other administrative or ancillary roles within the institution. This study was restricted to a sitting president, three Vice President/Deans, one Vice President Controller, the Director of Human Resources, the Director of Lifelong Learning, the Director of the Library and Archives, and other administrative support positions. The number of participants was limited to and selected by their role in relation to the community college presidency.

The limitations of this study included the self-reporting style of the interview process. Although participants did not appear overly guarded or uncomfortable in sharing their perspectives and opinions, it is worthy to note the

possibility that they may have shared their experiences selectively with the researcher.

Study Design

The qualitative inquiry was the approach used because the focus of the study, the shortage of qualified presidential candidates to replace impending retirements of community college presidents, was viewed as a contemporary phenomenon occurring in a natural setting (Yin, 1994). The unit of analysis was a case study (Creswell, 1998). The researcher used data collection methods of observation, document review, archival records, and interviews. The research design remained open and flexible.

The researcher began the inquiry by generating a list of information resources based on prior experience with the subject institution. Several visits to the campus, observation, and informal discussions helped the researcher formulate where pertinent data might be found. Some preliminary document review helped to generate a basic interview guide. College administrators and faculty were interviewed.

Reviewed documents were copied and catalogued. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber. The researcher also maintained a notebook, which provided a journal or diary of the research process. As data collection evolved, more data were collected from the case site until which point the researcher felt data saturation had been achieved. A detailed description of methodology is outlined in Chapter Three.

Summary

Chapter One provided an overview of the background, purpose, and significance of the study. In addition, the operational definition of terms and the relevant delimitations and limitations were presented. To conclude this chapter, the researcher provided an overview of the design of this study.

The following chapters provide the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, methodology, results/findings, and conclusions and recommendations. Chapter Two provides the theoretical and conceptual frameworks on which this research is based. Chapter Three provides a description of the methodological procedures used for this study. Chapter Four shares the findings and results of this research. The conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this research are provided in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Introduction

This chapter provides the historical context for the research and a description and explanation of how this study evolved as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks emerged.

The Historical Context

The researcher decided that examining the development of the community college system and the evolution of the role of the presidents at these institutions over time would provide a context for understanding why their leaving in large numbers presents a critical leadership gap for community colleges. As I began my research, Deegan and Tillery's (1985) historical framework on the four generations of community colleges provided a lens for understanding the development of community colleges as institutions as well as the presidents who have led and currently lead them. According to Deegan and Tillery, the development of the community college system as we see it today began as the result of the combined influences of 1) industrialization requiring more trained people, 2) the production of more high school completion rates as a result of "democratized" public school education, and 3) federal policies geared toward affordable and accessible postsecondary education. The four "generations" of community college development are outlined as follows:

- **Generation One: Extension of High School (1900 – 1930)**

As populations shifted from rural to urban, and as the economy shifted from agriculture to industrial, community colleges were introduced as a preparatory mechanism to prepare the unprepared for specialized study at the university

through general education. The system was modeled more after high schools than universities and developed into an extension of the high school system.

Universities, particularly those evolving into research institutions, were very supportive of this new alternative venue for those they considered less than ready for the academic rigor of the university. With respect to governance and leadership: The local school boards governed these entities that were managed as extensions by existing high school administrators and principals (Deegan and Tillery, pp. 5-8).

- **Generation Two: Junior College (1930 – 1950)**

The “junior college” shifted from a high school extension or secondary model to a collegiate identity, with local control. However, the effects of societal factors, such as the Depression, caused enrollments and functions to expand, beyond the purely collegiate model. Several functions were solidified: terminal education, general education, transfer and career education and guidance, lower-division preparation for university transfer, adult education, and removal of matriculation deficiencies. The American Association of Junior Colleges (now AACC), founded in 1920, began creating a professional image and lobbying for the advancement of these institutions, resulting in favorable legislation. With respect to governance and leadership: Junior college boards of trustees, usually elected by local communities labeled “districts,” evolved in a variety of ways. These boards gained authority for levying taxes, building colleges, setting policies, and employing and terminating personnel. The institutions remained primarily staffed by former high school personnel (Deegan and Tillery, pp. 8-12).

- **Generation Three: Community College (1950 –1970)**

The junior college evolved into the community college and increased its student enrollment from roughly one-half million to more than two million during this twenty-year period. This rapid expansion and growth resulted in new campuses being built and existing ones expanded. Articulation agreements were developed with four-year institutions. Federal support remained stable with strong student financial aid and capital funding programs. The concept of the “open door” policy was born through open admissions policies. The service philosophy moved to one of a community center, capable of providing something for everyone. The function of these institutions expanded beyond transfer programs to include terminal occupational education programs and services. With respect to governance and leadership: Locally elected boards governed most community colleges, moving their identity from that of high school extension to a segment of higher education. Faculty began demanding more participation in campus and program decisions; faculty senates emerged (Deegan and Tillery, pp. 12-16).

- **Generation Four: Comprehensive Community College (1970 - 1985)**

The growth and expansion during generation three increased the capacity of the community college to deliver an almost unlimited variety of offerings and services from a central location. The lifelong learning function mushroomed into a major core activity. Partnerships with the private sector emerged. With respect to governance and leadership: Perceptions of state and local responsibilities created conflict. Faculty groups began organizing into collective bargaining units with contracts (Deegan and Tillery, pp. 16-20).

Deegan and Tillery's four generations of the community college and the corresponding requirements of its leaders are outlined in Tables 1–3.

Table 1

Organization of community colleges across four generations, (Deegan and Tillery, 1985, p. 26).

<i>Period</i>	<i>Governance</i>	<i>Role of Executive</i>	<i>Role of Faculty</i>	<i>Finance</i>	<i>Facilities</i>
1900–1930 1 High School Extension	Local school boards and state departments of education. Codes of legislative and administrative law. Residual authority with school boards; management by school administrators. Decentralized.	School administrator. Little status in higher education. Minor efforts to build "college" identity. Deference to state board in legislative affairs.	Little distinction from high school role. Close supervision by administrators; rules and regulations. Little professional development or faculty organization.	Extension of K-14 funding formulae based on ADE/FTE students. Local taxes and state foundation funds. Use of oil revenues from public domain. Underfunded.	Use of high school facilities. Slow trend toward JC campus identity. Conversion of some high schools as first generation ended.
1930–1950 2 Junior College	Emergence of local JC trustee boards and special state monitoring agencies. Beginning of multicampus districts. Primacy of local control under school model.	Leaders for college identity and comprehensive programs. Developers: community support and capital funding. Shift away from school style of administration.	University became the model for faculty with demands for more role in welfare and academic matters. Some unionization. Little interest in peer evaluation and little professional development.	Funding: 40–50 percent local, 25–30 percent state foundation, 25–30 percent federal. No tuition or low fees. Still school funding patterns. Local bonds for construction.	Trend toward separate JC campuses. West: modern college facilities. Educational specification with faculty participation. Use of business and military sites in some communities.
1950–1970 3 Community College	Separate local CC boards or local agency control. CCs part of university in few states. State governing boards and state systems of higher education. More attention to system governance.	Builders. New systems and colleges. University preparation for role. Much attention to state legislation and resource development. Leadership and management styles more like university.	Faculty senates, often established under law. States move toward collective bargaining. Initiatives in curriculum and instruction. Organized state faculty groups with political influence.	Separate CC funding using ADA/FTE formulae. Diverse state models. New federal support and categorical state funds. Rise in fees and tuition. Stable funding.	State-of-art planning for facilities. Great growth in many states with increased federal support. World-class campuses used as community centers; new facilities for vocational and technical programs.
1970–mid 1980s 4 Comprehensive Community College	Governance conflict. Increased state authority; contract negotiations with faculty and staff. Move toward political model of governance. Efforts to delineate state-local responsibilities.	Managers of scarce resources. Political negotiators. Role conflicts: faculty and trustees. Locals vs cosmopolitan leaders. Use of strategic planning.	Collective bargaining. Organized and politically sophisticated. Seek primacy in academic and professional development affairs. Senates survive collective bargaining.	State models: (a) 1/3 tuition, 1/3 local taxes, 1/3 state; (b) state support and 1/3 tuition; (c) no tuition with state and local funding. Tax rebellion. Retrenchment.	Slowdown in growth of new colleges. Outreach facilities developed; use of community sites. New learning centers. Beginning of deferred maintenance.

Table 2

Purpose, programs, and students of community colleges across four generations (Deegan and Tillery, 1985, p. 27).

Period	Mission	Students	Curriculum	Support Services
1900-1930 1 High School Extension	Extension of the public high school: lower-division courses and some vocational courses; remediation for matriculation standards. New students: access for students unprepared or unable to leave home.	High school graduates not yet ready for university: ● low GPA ● course deficiency ● family resources ● personal needs Working students and those preparing for employment.	Regular school courses to make up deficiencies. "Parallel" university lower-division courses, civic, liberal arts, limited vocational work, remediation. Few noncredit or community service courses.	Limited counseling and advising. Vice-principal locus of student services. Focus: student activities, athletics, and discipline. Student decision making about education and career much less important than instruction. Little financial aid or job placement.
1930-1950 2 Junior College	Influence of national spokespersons. Peoples' colleges. Beginning of a more comprehensive program. Importance of student services. Some takeover of high school vocational courses and programs.	Near normative group of high school graduates. Second chance for young and mature adults. First generation students to higher education. Most students declare objective to transfer; less than 1/3 do.	Increasing vocational preparation with development of technical and paraprofessional programs. More organized approach to remediation. Curriculum makes second chance possible for underprepared students.	Student personnel concept: career and program guidance, personal counseling, and activity program viewed as co-curricula. Attention to student programming and placement in courses. Counseling veterans, close of generation. Attention to financial aid.
1950-1970 3 Community College	Open door. New emphasis on extended day and on technical education. Community college key to opportunity for those groups underrepresented in higher education. Expansion of community services and counseling.	"New students." Outreach to disadvantaged and mature adults. Career orientation. Marked increase in ethnic and part-time students. Increased transfer rates with good outcomes. High percentage first admission of university eligibles.	Four functions of CC now national pattern: transfer preparation, vocation/technical education, remediation, and guidance. Some increase in community services.	Professionalization of student services and counseling. New concerns for university articulation and equality of access. Co-curriculum more myth than reality. Better staff for extended day programs. End of period: less attention to student assessment and course placement. "Right to fail."
1970-mid 1980s 4 Comprehensive Community College	Mission ambiguity. Tilt toward noncredit programs and community service. Nontraditional delivery: electronic learning centers, TV, "store front" sites, cooperative education. Ideological conflicts about CC role.	Something for all: ● Mature adults ● Reentry women ● Underrepresented ● Career renewers ● Reverse transfers ● On-job trainees ● Joint high school enrollees Apparent decline: transfer and completion rates.	Growth of noncredit and community service programs, but transfer and occupational programs dominate. Dropping enrollments in liberal arts/humanities. Search for sharper definition of remediation. New concern for learner outcomes.	Expansion and fragmentation of student services. Federal funding for affirmative action and financial aid. Decline in holistic counseling. Under retrenchment, competition for funds. Move toward categorical state fund for counseling. Renewal with increased attention to assessment, placement, and learner outcomes.

Table 3

Community college relations with others across four generations (Deegan and Tillery, 1985, p. 28).

Period	With Schools	With University	With Government	With Private Sector
1900-1930 1 High School Extension	K-14. Common boards, teachers and facilities with the schools. Use of school courses to make up matriculation standards. New tensions as JC seeks college identity. Local control derived from school heritage.	Major university presidents conceive JC. Bifurcated university. JC protects university from unqualified students. University influences on instruction and course of study; has control over student transfer. Support from university.	Modest recognition and funding. Early permissive legislation but no capital funding. Some use of oil revenues from public domain. First legislation enacted in California. Benign neglect of state system governance.	Little assessment of needs of business and labor. Modest placement activities but few efforts to articulate education with the workplace.
1930-1950 2 Junior College	Breaking away from the schools. Fewer high school teachers employed. Tensions with schools about open door and second chance. Some reluctance in schools to advise students to use JC for first admission.	Improved articulation for transfer students. Some independence gained in lower-division program. Good transfer outcomes. Beginning of state master planning for higher education and system coordination.	Junior college viewed as good social investment; alternative to overexpansion of the university sector. Federal support for education of veterans and some for manpower retraining.	Development of labor/management advisory committees. Better placement programs and community need assessment studies. Joint efforts to define level of technical programs for community colleges. About 25 percent of students with business majors.
1950-1970 3 Community College	Legislation for separate community college districts. Take over of many adult and vocational programs from schools. Neglect or breakdown of school-college liaison.	State master plans: CCs part of state systems of higher education. New articulation agreements and provisions for transfer of students who have earned eligibility. High point in community college-university relations.	Vast support. Community college seen as way to solve social and economic problems. Growth encouraged on a national scale. Federal student financial aid. Many state funding formulae are enrollment driven.	Active labor/management advisory committees for vocational programs. CC-level technical programs defined. Difficulties with apprenticeship programs in matters of standards and equal access. Improvements in career guidance and placement. Joint efforts to reform general education for career students.
1970-mid 1980s 4 Comprehensive Community College	Competition for adults. Improved articulation for vocational education under legislation. Some joint enrollments of select students. The colleges join in efforts to improve the preparation of high school students.	Increased misunderstanding of contemporary CCs by university officials. Both institutions neglect articulation. New competition for scarce state resources and for high school graduates. Questions about community college transfer programs.	Fear of overexpansion and concerns about the comprehensive community college mission. Trends toward increased state authority and loss of local tax funds. New attention to system governance and accountability and planning.	Expansion in vocation and technical education. Period begins with development of cooperative education programs, ends with expansion of contract learning with business and industry. Relations with private sector primary focus of national community college leadership in the 1980s.

The rapid growth of community colleges, through the aforementioned generations, has demanded expansion and development of those in leadership roles. The role of the community college president has evolved over these generations as the scope and mission of their institutions have grown. Cohen and Brawer (1991) wrote, “The role of the president changed as colleges grew larger. And as faculty and community advocate groups grew stronger, it became ever more circumscribed” (p. 113). The community college presidency has grown from little more than a part-time role for a high school administrator to a multifaceted chief executive officer position with many competing responsibilities. Vaughan and Weisman (1998) identified a number of skills for today’s community college president, including the ability to build coalitions, bring a college together in the governing process, mediate, understand and appreciate multiculturalism, tolerate ambiguity, and navigate technology. Again, these descriptors represent a vast difference in the role of the community college president of the past in comparison to the community college president of today and the future.

Given the growth and changing organizational structure of these institutions and the change and expansion of the presidential role, it is not remarkable that some level of confusion may exist regarding community colleges and the presidents who serve them. As my preliminary research progressed, I began to wonder if perhaps it is that very growth and development that has contributed to a leadership crisis for community colleges. Cain (1999) suggested that the divergent growth of community colleges during generations one through three rendered generation four “the generation of management rather than leadership” (p. 38). The proposition that presidents have been forced to manage and maintain rapidly growing institutions and customer bases rather than provide

the leadership to prepare their institutions for the next and future generations of evolution is of particular concern, given the anticipated change in the administrative ranks over the next decade. This research explored the organizational and structural changes unique to the community college and how those changes may have resulted in the current shortage of prepared leaders to replace retiring presidents

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The concept of the four generations of community college development (Deegan & Tillery, Tables 1-3, 1985) was used as a lens for viewing the evolution of the community college system and its leaders. The concepts embedded in Cain's (1999) systems approach to understanding community colleges and the organizational change theories of Fullan (1993, 1999, 2001) were used for the development of the conceptual framework.

Cain (1999) suggested that community colleges cannot be understood through linear examination but instead must be viewed as systems from a systems perspective. He argued that, "By studying a system instead of a specialized part of it, we can better understand the totality. By subjecting the community college to a systemic examination, we can begin to understand why the confusion exists about its role" (p. 16). Cain used Laszlo's (1972) four characteristics of natural systems to develop his systems theory approach. In short, Laszlo described systems as wholes with irreducible properties, capable of maintaining themselves in changing environments. He proposed that systems in fact create themselves in response to the challenge of the environment and naturally coordinate within nature's hierarchy. Cain (1999) asserted that much of the growth of the community college, resulting in the comprehensive model, "simply happened in response

to unpredictable conditions” (p. 38). Cain’s systemic approach provided a backdrop to further examine the growth and development of the community college as a system and its leaders as an integral part of that system over Deegan and Tillery’s (1985) four generations. Cain stated, “Community colleges exist in an ecological chain. To thrive, they depend on the surrounding environments – educational, social, economic...” (p. 18). The surrounding environmental factors present during each of the generations with respect to educational, social, and economic climate was examined.

Finally, to better understand the impact of the dynamics of change on this system over time, I looked at Fullan’s organizational change theories to examine and compare organizational and leadership changes during each of the four generations. Specifically, Fullan’s work helped because he focused on complex change for educational leaders, and the community college system has developed through four distinct periods of complex change. Fullan (1993) suggested that change should be looked at as “an overlapping series of dynamically complex phenomena” (p. 21). He proposed a set of eight lessons for understanding and acting in complex change situations (see Figure 1):

Complex Change Lessons
Lesson 1: Moral Purpose Is Complex and Problematic
Lesson 2: Theories of Change and Theories of Education Need Each Other
Lesson 3: Conflict and Diversity Are Our Friends
Lesson 4: Understand the Meaning of Operating on the Edge of Chaos
Lesson 5: Emotional Intelligence Is Anxiety Provoking and Anxiety Containing
Lesson 6: Collaborative Cultures Are Anxiety Provoking and Anxiety Containing
Lesson 7: Attack Incoherence: Connectedness and Knowledge Creation Are Critical
Lesson 8: There Is No Single Solution: Craft Your Own Theories and Actions By Being a Critical Consumer

Figure 1: Complex Change Lessons (Fullan, 1999).

Lesson 1, which defined moral purpose as complex and problematic, was really the most useful to this study. These lessons prompted me to review more of Fullan's work, which ultimately led me to his framework for effective leadership.

Fullan (2001) further argued that the difference between leadership and management is that leadership is needed for the problems that are not easily solved. Fullan organized his complex change lessons (Figure 1) to formulate a framework for effective leadership. This framework (see Figure 2) espoused that leaders must be directed by a desire to make a positive difference while understanding change, building relationships, and fostering the creation of knowledge within their organizations. Fullan asserted that all effective leaders possess infectious energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness and that there is a relationship between these three traits and the five components of leadership outlined in his framework (see Figure 2). Fullan (2001) further argued that his framework represents a "remarkable convergence of theories, knowledge bases, ideas, and strategies that help us confront complex problems that do not have easy answers. This convergence creates a new mind-set – a framework for thinking about and leading complex change more powerfully than ever before" (p. 3).

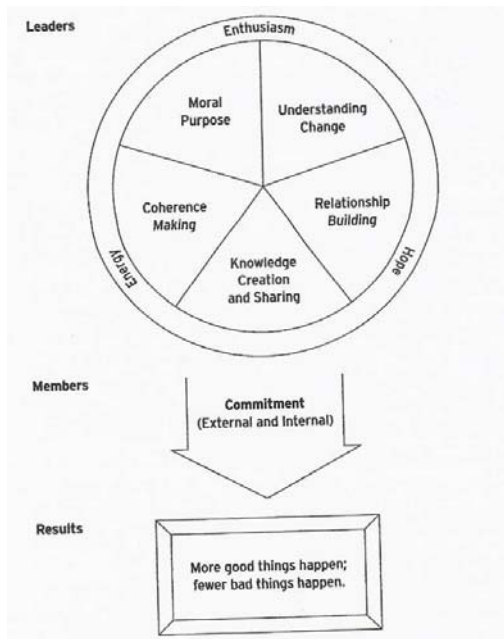


Figure 2: A Framework for Leadership (Fullan, 2001).

Fullan's change theories and concepts provided a useful tool for assessing how leadership has evolved over four generations of change within the community college system. I decided to compare the leadership styles and practices employed in the early years of the start-up and growth of the community college and the leadership styles and practices necessary for today and the future's comprehensive community college, given the evolution and change in core technology and mission over the developmental generations. Specifically, this study explored how these organizations evolved as systems in a changing environment (Cain, 1999) with respect to educational, social, and economic climate. The descriptors of educational, social, and economic climate also complement Deegan & Tillery's (1985) outline of the development of the community college's relationship with others (see Table 3). Further, this study explored how leadership has evolved looking at Fullan's (2001) five components of leadership (see Figure 2).

The relationships between organizational evolution and leadership evolution were examined. The theoretical frameworks of Deegan & Tillery, Cain, and Fullan provided background for a conceptual framework. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), “a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables – and the presumed relationships between them. Frameworks can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal” (p. 18). The key factors represented in the conceptual framework for the proposed study were the organizational characteristics, leadership characteristics and environmental characteristics and their evolution over four generations of community college development. For the purpose of the study, organizational characteristics were considered by looking at the structure, function, image, and culture of these organizations as a system. These specific dimensions were chosen as a means for identifying changing as well as constant organizational attributes over time and how those attributes may have affected the current leadership crisis. The key factors - organizational characteristics, leadership characteristics, and environmental characteristics - were part of the initial conceptual framework for the proposed study and are outlined in Figure 3. The relationships between these factors were examined over the course of four generations of community college development.

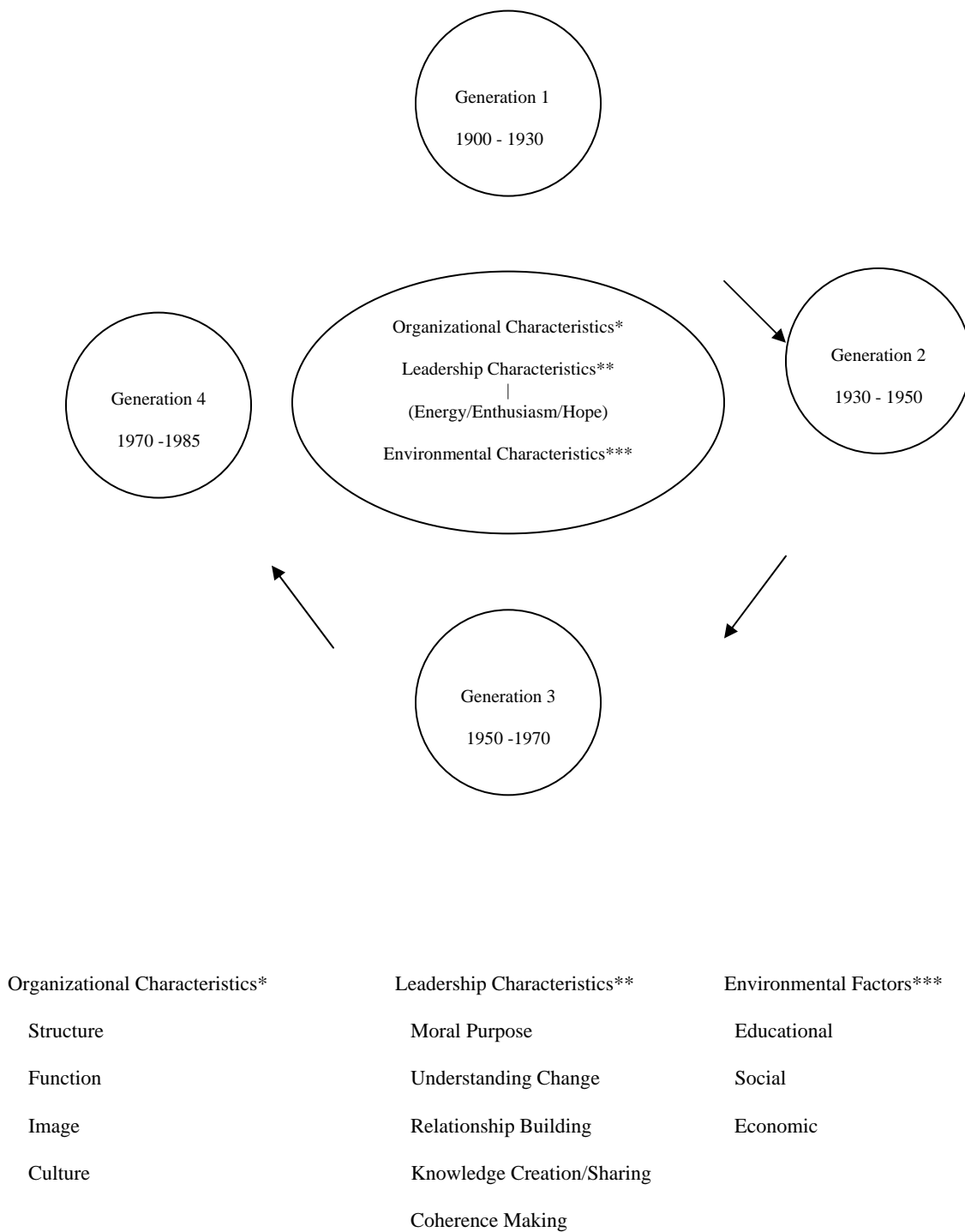


Figure 3: Initial conceptual framework for proposed study.

Miles & Huberman (1994) proposed that a conceptual framework illustrates the key factors and the presumed relationships between them. In preparation for my

research, I thought of several presumed relationships between the components of the key factors (see Figure 3) that I had identified. My review of literature and preliminary research led me to believe that several issues bore further consideration and exploration. Deegan & Tillery's (1985) generations (Table 1) described major changes in governance, finance, facilities, and the roles of the executive and faculty. I presumed that changes of this magnitude, particularly during and between generations three and four, might have produced some systems disconnection or even fragmentation, resulting in the institutional "confusion" proposed by Cain (1999). I wanted to understand the nature of these possible disconnections or fragmentations and how they might have impacted or contributed to the current leadership crisis. I also wanted to further explore the perceptions and image of the executive/presidential role. I wondered if perhaps a sense of confusion had created a lack of understanding of the presidential role, resulting in lack of interest or desire of community college leaders to aspire to the presidency, as evidenced by the assertions of unqualified applicants (AACC, 2002; Little, 2002) and declining enrollments in community college administration doctoral programs (NCES in Shults, 2001).

I presumed that another disconnection could be found between the presidential role expectations of institutions and the qualifications of potential candidates. Qualifications generally fall into three areas: training, experience, and motivation. For this study, I decided to focus on the relevance of motivation of potential applicants. I wanted to find out if perhaps the dearth of qualified applicants might be related to a lack of motivation of community college leaders to aspire to the role of president. The motivation theories of Alderfer (1972) and McClelland (1961) helped in my quest to

understand if lack of motivation has impacted the number of community college leaders aspiring to the role of president. Specifically, Alderfer's ERG theory espoused that motivation is composed of three components: Existence, which refers to our concern with basic material existence requirements; Relatedness, which refers to the desire we have for maintaining interpersonal relationships; and Growth, which refers to an intrinsic desire for personal development. Alderfer's theory also suggested that multiple needs may be operative at any given time. McClellan's work concluded that we are motivated by the needs for achievement, power, and affiliation. The more I thought about it, the more I began to see the similarities between these two interpretations of motivation and the Leadership Characteristics outline in Figure 3.

As the researcher, I realized the importance of remaining open to factors that had not been conceived or considered, but I feel that it would be intellectually dishonest not to disclose that I had thought about and perhaps formed loose hypotheses related to the aforementioned phenomenon as a result of both reviewing literature and my observations as a community college administrator. I felt confident that as my research progressed, any of these loose hypotheses would either evaporate or perhaps support an emerging theme.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided a historical context that supported this study. Further, the researcher introduced the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that grounded this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the research tradition and design will be discussed. The research questions, issues related to the research relationship, and monitoring are explained. Finally, the issues of validity and reliability are presented.

Research Questions

As explained in Chapter One, the purpose of this research was to explore and examine the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified candidates to replace retiring community college presidents and senior officers and to learn if or how organizational changes and leadership during the growth and expansion of the community college system has impacted the current state of affairs. In order to accomplish this purpose, the researcher posed the following research questions:

1. Why is there a dearth of qualified applicants/mentees to fill community college presidencies and cabinet level roles and to what degree have the evolution of these institutions as organizations and desired skill sets impacted or caused this dearth?
2. How have community colleges evolved as organizations? Within those organizations, how has leadership evolved? What is the relationship, if any, between the two?
3. Is there a disconnection between the requirements of the role of president and the professional and personal expectations of the potential applicant pool?

Research Tradition

The qualitative inquiry was the approach used because the focus of the study, the shortage of qualified presidential candidates to replace retiring community college presidents, was viewed as a contemporary phenomenon occurring in a natural setting (Yin, 1994). Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as:

an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Qualitative researchers strive to understand situations and relationships as a whole. Qualitative research is phenomenological, inductive, holistic, and interpretive. Qualitative researchers observe events, ask questions, theorize, and interpret before drawing conclusions (Reichardt and Cook, cited in Glesne, 1998). Glesne (1998) suggested that the qualitative researcher approaches the world with a view that reality is complex, ever changing, and socially constructed by the participants in any given setting. Qualitative interpretive research refers to the whole family of participant-observer research. Its focus lies in the “interest in human meaning of social life and in its elucidation and exposition by the researcher” (Erickson, 1986, p. 119).

The interpretive and holistic nature of qualitative research lent itself well to this study. The community college campus fit Glesne’s (1998) description of a complex, ever changing world where its participants socially construct reality. I decided to examine the changing nature of community colleges over time through observing, asking questions, theorizing, interpreting, and finally, drawing conclusions about why there

appears to be a shortage of qualified candidates to replace retiring presidents. A community college campus provided the natural setting and key informants.

Research Design

Research design can be described as the plan a researcher follows in his or her quest to explore and/or answer a research question. It is the flexible structure that holds all of the elements of a research project together, a set of procedures that guide the gathering of data. Yin (1989) concluded, “The design is the logical sequence that connects empirical data to a study’s initial research questions, and ultimately to its conclusions” (p. 28). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggested that qualitative researchers focus on socially constructed realities and seek to understand the participant’s perspective through observation and detailed interviewing, directing their attention to the specifics of particular cases.

The qualitative case study method was employed for this study. Creswell (1998) defined a case study as “an exploration of a ‘bounded’ system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). The case study method allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of phenomena under study (Yin, 1994). Yin suggested that generally, “Case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigators have little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). Yin (1993) rendered the case study to be appropriate when the researcher wishes to investigate causal relationships rather than simply describing situations. This study was designed to investigate “how” or “why” the changing organizational characteristics and

presidential roles over time may have impacted the community college's ability to continually produce an interested and qualified pool of applicants to replace retiring presidents.

The major case in this study was a Southeastern Michigan Community College. Originally, the researcher had planned to include four Southeastern Michigan public community colleges, but by recommendation of the dissertation chair, chose one particular institution due to its descriptor as the only one of the four in existence for three of the four generations. In addition, the other institutions were all of similar size, which allowed for reasonable generalizations to be asserted. Stake (1995) described the instrumental case study as focusing on a specific issue rather than on the case itself so that the case becomes a vehicle for understanding the issue. In this study, one institution (Southeastern Michigan Community College – SMCC), was used as a vehicle to better understand how or why the phenomenon, a shortage of qualified presidential candidates, may have occurred over time in relation to organizational characteristics, leadership, and environmental factors.

The research questions guided the process of this study. Initially, preliminary data were gathered through telephone conversations and a cursory review of data sources such as the college catalogue, the institutional website, and publications that focused on the subject institution. Historical college documents, including the Board of Trustees' meeting minutes, the founding proposal, records or organizational meetings, past and current job descriptions, and strategic planning initiatives and timelines were reviewed.

Unit of Analysis and Sampling

The unit of analysis for this study was a community college in Southeastern Michigan and will be referred to as SMCC.

- **Southeastern Michigan Community College (SMCC)**

SMCC is a public, tax-supported comprehensive community college located in Southeastern Michigan, specifically. Unique defining characteristics: SMCC is the only community college in Michigan governed by the same board as its local school system. SMCC is located in what the local community refers to as “Auto Country” because a particular major automotive manufacturer is located within its district. Founded in 1938, SMCC was established during Generation 2 (Deegan & Tillery, 1985). SMCC enrolls more than 25,000 students annually.

Stake (1998) stated that once the case has been selected, the researcher must make decisions regarding whom to talk with, what events to observe, and when and where to observe them. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), once fieldwork begins, samples tend to evolve in qualitative research. In other words, as the researcher starts to review documents, observe, and talk to people, the researcher discovers new samples and information sources.

Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select participants to be interviewed based on the concept that the interview will help the researcher discover an understanding of relationships among the information collected (Patton, 1990). Patton described the logic behind purposeful sampling:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can

learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. (p. 169)

Purposeful sampling was used in the selection of participants for this study. The researcher anticipated that, at a minimum, a sitting community college president would be used as primary informant and planned for secondary informants to be chosen using a comparable case selection strategy, in which participants are chosen based on relevant characteristics (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sitting president of SMCC was selected as a primary informant. The positions identified by Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) as leading to the presidency (Chief Academic Officer, Senior Student Affairs Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Continuing Education Director, Occupational or Vocational Education Director, and Business and Industry Liaison) were also selected for participation as information sources. Interviews occurred with college leaders with the following position titles:

- President
- Vice President & Dean of Academic Education
- Vice President & Dean of Career Education
- Vice President & Dean of Student Services
- Vice President of Business and Auxiliary Services & Controller
- Director of Lifelong Learning
- Director of Human Resources

In addition, informative conversations were held with the Director of Library Resources & Archives and various campus support positions as the information-gathering

process progressed. The complete list of interview participants is included in Chapter Four.

Ethical Issues

Glesne (1999) summarized the five ethical principles that many university review boards consider for research involving human subjects:

- Participants should be informed of any aspect of the research that might affect their well-being
- Participants should be able to withdraw, without penalty, at any time
- Unnecessary risk to participants should be eliminated
- Benefits must outweigh any potential risk to the participant
- Qualified researchers should conduct experiments.

In this study, Glesnes's five ethical principles were satisfied in the following way:

- Participants were informed of all aspects of the study and received a written consent form (Appendix A-1) prior to participation.
- Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at anytime without penalty.
- The researcher informed participants of any "risk" associated with their involvement. No risk was identified; therefore all interviews were conducted as planned.
- Interviews were conducted only after the consent form was explained and signed by both the participant and the researcher. Signed consent forms were retained on file.

- All data were collected and maintained in a locked file.
- The human subjects review protocol was followed to further ensure confidentiality and protect the rights of participants. (See Appendix A-2 for research proposal approval.)

Data Collection

Yin (1994) proposed that case studies deal with various types of data, including observations, documents, archival records, artifacts, and interviews. The data sources for this study were documents, archival records, and interviews. The most important use for document reviewing is “to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin, 1994, p. 81). Documents that were used in the study included college catalogs, journal and newspaper articles, organizational structure records and charts, statistical reports, minutes of meetings, and job descriptions and postings. These documents were obtained from institutional archival records, the college library, and the human resources department’s current and archived files. These documents helped in developing additional data collection and corroborating and augmenting other sources, such as the interviews.

An important source of data for the case study is the interview (Yin, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that researchers develop a semi-structured interview guide to maintain some level of consistency among multiple interviews. In this research, the semi-structured interview was used. The researcher prepared a number of open-ended questions in advance, and an interview guide, or list of questions or issues for exploration, was developed ahead of time. However, the researcher’s intent was to stimulate participants into open-ended discussion rather than to create a structured

question and answer session. See Appendices B-1 and B-2 for samples of interview guides that were used. A tape recorder was used for each interview with the written consent of the participant, which allowed the researcher to focus more on the interviewee. Although an interview guide was used to stimulate topical areas, the interviews were very open and flexible, which provided participants with the opportunity to expand their thoughts or introduce additional topics they felt germane to the discussion. Each interview tape was transcribed for the beginning stage of analysis. Interviewees were asked to review written transcripts and advise the researcher of any changes or additions. The interviews were designed to last approximately 45 minutes. The shortest interview was 30 minutes and the longest was roughly 80 minutes. All primary interviews were conducted on campus and in person. In addition, several secondary informal telephone conversations took place, which helped to facilitate the data-gathering process. Finally, each participant was given the opportunity to request that the researcher delete or augment any of their transcribed comments. All participants confirmed that their original transcribed interviews were correct and representative of their perceptions and opinions.

Glesne (1998) suggested that qualitative researchers should be aware of the issues of rapport and subjectivity. “In qualitative inquiry, the nature of relationships depends on at least two factors: the quality of your interactions to support your research – or rapport – and the quality of your self-awareness of the potential effects of self on your research – or subjectivity” (p. 95). The researcher had to pay particularly close attention to the factors of rapport and subjectivity for several reasons. The researcher had worked as a community college administrator for 15 years and had in fact worked at the subject institution for five years. The challenge with respect to rapport was that the researcher

had to be careful not to assume rapport had occurred simply because there was a prior relationship with the institution or the interviewee. The researcher was committed to establishing a strategy for using any past relationships as an asset while not relying so heavily on them as to inadvertently fail to develop appropriate rapport for extracting information. The researcher spoke with each participant by phone prior to the scheduled interview. The telephone pre-interview provided an opportunity to have casual conversation and reestablish rapport with past professional acquaintances. The purpose of this strategy was to ensure that actual planned interview time was used to productively secure data. Conversely, the researcher needed to take care not to sabotage rapport by appearing unfriendly. As yet another safeguard, additional time was built into each interview to accommodate introductory conversation. The interviews were scheduled for one hour with anticipation that 45 minutes would be necessary for the actual interview. Glesne (1998) warned that an “over-rapport” and even bias might result from an unconscious subjective selection process. In such a process, certain interviewees might be listened to more intently and better recorded than others. Similarly, the interviewer might actually infer and record answers that are not entirely accurate in an unconscious support of the interviewee with whom over-rapport is shared. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argued that once subjectivity is recognized, it can be monitored for more “trustworthy” research and can even contribute to the research. Furthering that argument, Glesne (1998) wrote:

Part of being attuned to your subjective lenses is being attuned to your emotions.

Your emotions help you to identify when your subjectivity is being engaged.

Instead of trying to suppress your feelings, you use them to inquire into your

perspectives and interpretations and to shape new questions through re-examining your assumptions. (p. 105)

The researcher tried to remain aware at all times that her own preconceived notions were a possibility. Further, the researcher remained cognizant of the possibility of self-harboring of answers to the questions posed to interviewees. The researcher tried to use her familiarity with community colleges and the research setting to fuel the research process through the continual reexamination of perceptions and assumptions while formulating new hypotheses.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and organizing the data that have been collected to create a new meaning or understanding and share discoveries with the audience. Initial data analysis can be conducted while collecting data, and a more formal analysis can be performed after most of the data have been collected (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Performing early data analysis helps the researcher understand the existing data while developing new strategies for opening the researcher's eyes to new data sources. An early analysis might facilitate the development of new instruments for additional data collection (Glesne, 1998).

Glaser's (1978) constant comparative model encourages early data analysis when multiple data sources are being used and presents a way to control the scope of data collecting, making multiple site studies more theoretically relevant. Glaser recommended that researchers begin collecting data; look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus; and collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus, with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the

categories. Glaser further recommended that researchers write about the categories being explored, attempting to describe and account for existing incidents while continually searching for new incidents; use data to test emerging models and discover or confirm basic social processes and relationships; and code data and write analysis focusing on the identified core categories (Glaser, 1978).

This study combined the strategies of early data analysis and Glaser's constant comparative model. The first stage of data analysis will include some initial coding to help organize the large volume of data anticipated from multiple data sources. Katzer, Cook, and Crouch (1998) defined coding as "the process of assigning a value for a variable to a case" (p. 267). Coding establishes labels that convey meaning to information. For example, in the proposed study, an interviewee might be coded as "gen 2" or "generation 2" to convey that the interviewee entered the community college environment during Deegan and Tillery's (1985) generation 2 of community college development. Coding allows a means for organizing and analyzing data in a timely fashion and helps the researcher establish and maintain clarity. Coding also helps to uncover sources of bias and tie the research questions to the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Since this study used the backdrop of a historical context, a chronological sorting was necessary. During the first phase of the study, the phenomenon - the shortage of qualified applicants to replace retiring community college presidents - was explored through a first level of document analysis, and codes were developed and assigned to the data obtained from the documents. Then, a simple time-ordered or chronological display was constructed as a means of categorizing the data. Miles and Huberman (1994)

advocated the use of time-ordered displays, which are descriptive displays of data categorized by time and sequence. A technique of time-ordered displays is the event listing matrix, which essentially is a chronologically display of events. Since the historical context of community colleges was included in this study, this technique helped to visualize the flow of information and events and provided a tool for highlighting connections between them. Miles and Huberman (1994) maintained that once an event matrix is completed, a more focused first narrative can be created. In this study, the results of the first level of analysis, preliminary document review and pre-interview telephone conversations, was used to develop new instruments and identify additional information sources, which moved the study forward to the next phase of data analysis throughout the process.

In the next phase of data analysis, interviews were conducted with key informants to collect additional data. After the interviews, data were coded to categorize and identify their relationships. Data from the document analysis and the interviews were compared as advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a strategy for processing and examining conclusions. This comparison helped to identify what additional information was needed, what follow up or summary interview questions needed to be asked, and to determine when enough data have been collected. The initial visit to SMCC to begin the document review process did indeed help to shape the interview questions. In some instances, participants were able to facilitate the next level of document review. In other instances, the participants' remarks helped to ground the next level of data collection.

The third and final phase of data analysis was used for drawing and verifying conclusions. Case dynamics matrices (Miles & Huberman 1994) were used as an

analytical tool. A case dynamics matrix shows a set of forces that caused changes and traces the consequential processes and outcomes. Such a matrix facilitates the researcher's ability to link the data with explanations and understand why certain occurrences happen. This comparative technique was used to analyze the matrix of data and draw conclusions. Following the third phase, the researcher began the writing process. Throughout the writing process, the researcher utilized the matrix, the research journal, noted transcriptions, and the conceptual framework to remain grounded. The "telling of the story" of the phenomenon is included in Chapter Four. As the writing process progressed, themes emerged which lead to certain conclusions. The researcher interpreted the findings with a link between the data and the conclusions. Continual reference to the literature also facilitated the research to develop conclusions.

Validity and Reliability

"Multiple perspectives exist regarding the importance of verification in qualitative research, the definition of it, and procedures for establishing it" (Glesne, 1998, p. 187). Miles and Huberman (1994) concurred that debates about the criteria for "good" qualitative research continue. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for evaluating qualitative research were used to achieve validity and reliability in this study. Lincoln and Guba developed terms that they described as more appropriate for the "naturalistic" nature or paradigm of qualitative research as opposed to the traditional paradigm which they believed to be more suited to quantitative research. For example, to establish "trustworthiness" of a study, the terms "credibility," "transferability," "dependability," and "confirmability" are used in place of "internal validity," "external validity,"

“reliability,” and “objectivity” (p. 300). They argued that their terminology was more congruent to qualitative work (Lincoln and Guba).

There are several techniques for achieving credibility of research findings – one of those techniques, triangulation, were used in this study. Triangulation is a process in which researchers use multiple and different sources, methods, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Cresswell, 1998). Denzin (1989) described four types of triangulation – data, investigator, theory, and methodological. In an effort to answer the burning question, “How do we know that the qualitative study is believable, accurate, and ‘right’?” (Cresswell, 1998, p. 193), data triangulation and methodological triangulation were used for this research study. Triangulation of data occurred through the comparing of data from various documents with data from interviews. For example, had an interviewee asserted that there was an in-house presidential leadership training program, but none of the documents from human resources confirmed that assertion, the researcher would have been alerted to explore the apparent gap in information. Patton (1980) proposed that data triangulation, the comparing and cross-tracking of information obtained from different resources, is valuable because different types of data collection disclose different things and aspects of what is being studied.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described methodological triangulation as using different data collection methods or research designs. In this study, methodological triangulation occurred through use of different data collection methods, specifically, reviewing documents and conducting interviews. The use of methodological triangulation will allow different pictures to emerge (Denzin, 1989).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) substituted the concept of transferability for the traditional concept of external validity. They suggested that transferability of research findings is dependent upon the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts. They argued that the researcher cannot specify external validity; researchers can only provide the thick description necessary to draw their own conclusions about transferability. In this study, the detailed description of the context of the case, such as the background and historical information of SMCC and its current institutional structures, was examined.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also preferred the substitution of dependability for reliability and confirmability for objectivity. Traditionally, reliability is the extent to which research findings can be replicated by another researcher, and objectivity is the extent to which research findings are free from researcher bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In Lincoln and Guba's naturalist paradigm, confirmability refers to the degree to which the research findings could be confirmed or corroborated by others. Dependability refers to the need for the research to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon under study as well as changes in the research design. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that both dependability and confirmability of the inquiry could be established through the use of auditing. For this study, two colleagues unrelated to the study were recruited to review and audit the research process, notes, records, and subsequent analysis, which helped to alleviate concern about the issues of confirmability and dependability. The colleagues were both doctoral candidates in Eastern Michigan University's Educational Leadership Program. Both had completed the required qualitative research course and had participated in a dissertation study group with Dr. David Anderson.

Significance and Implications of the Study

The American community college system is just over a century old, with most colleges having opened in the 1960s. A relatively new phenomenon in education, as compared to universities, these uniquely American-born institutions have experienced rapid growth and expansion. Concurrently, the roles of the presidents who lead and have led these institutions have expanded and developed over time.

Many of these presidents are now nearing retirement age, and there is evidence that over the next ten years more than 60 percent will retire (Weissman & Vaughan, 2001). There is further evidence that many senior level administrators, those typically in the “pipeline” to succeed presidents, will also retire during the same time period (Shults, 2001). These anticipated retirements will in effect create an unprecedented number of presidential vacancies. There are assertions that there currently exists a lack of credentialed and prepared potential applicants for the presidency, partially due to the decrease in enrollments in community college-specific doctoral programs (Shults, 2001).

My primary goals in conducting this study were to explore and examine the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified candidates to replace the impending retirements of community college presidents and senior level officers and to learn if or how organizational changes and leadership during the growth and expansion of the community college system have impacted or contributed to this phenomenon. Although research exists about the leadership styles of past presidents and the evolutionary changes of the community college system, prior to this study, the researcher did not find any research connecting these factors to the potential crisis. Some efforts allude to an impending crisis, but there was seemingly no research exploring how this crisis evolved

and how to avoid similar shortages in leadership in the future. Alluding to the crisis, Cheryl Gamble, editor of *The Community College Journal*, wrote, “The leadership crisis in community colleges did not appear overnight and will take patience, diligence and practicality to solve” (Gamble, 2002, p. 2). This study will add to the body of community college literature and potentially provide timely and useful insight to avoiding similar shortages in the future.

Analytical Generalizability

By employing the interpretive method, the researcher was able to analytically generalize the study’s findings. The researcher began with a conceptualization, which allowed for focus on the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified candidates to replace the impending retirements of community college presidents and senior level officers. Specific data was collected, which allowed for themes to emerge to make meaning of the phenomenon. The researcher’s intent was to make generalizations to other similar organizations not every existing organization (Miles & Huberman, 1994):

We are generalizing from one case to the next on the basis of a match to the underlying theory, not to a larger universe. The choice of cases usually is made on *conceptual* grounds not on representative grounds... Because case study researchers examine intact settings in such loving detail, they know all too well that each setting has a few properties it shares with *many* others, some properties it shares with *some* others, and some properties it shares with *no* others (p. 29).

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided a description of the methodology and procedures used for this study. The qualitative interpretive inquiry was used in a flexible

research design. The researcher also provided a description of the research setting or “case” and the participants. The approach used for instrumentation, document reviewing, and interviewing was also presented. Finally, an explanation of the organization and analysis of the data and the issues of trustworthiness and generalizability were introduced.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section will focus on the role and expectations of the community college president as evidenced through historical and current document review and results from interviews. The second section will focus on the stories of those interviewed – specifically, SMCC’s current president and those administrators currently sitting in positions identified as being a part of the career trajectory to the community college presidency. As the data gathering process progressed, two distinct areas emerged concerning the phenomenon of the lack of applicants for upcoming presidential vacancies: the current role requirements of today’s community college president appeared to have grown exponentially over the past several decades and, conversely, the interest of community college administrators at one institution to aspire to the role seemed to be dwindling. I began to consider whether the motivation of those in positions traditionally leading to the presidency was at a level that facilitated them to prepare for the role. These two distinct categories are presented for contrast in this chapter.

The Community College President

There is no doubt that the role of the community college president has evolved over time as the community college system has grown. Deegan and Tillery (1985) dissected this growth over time into “four generations” of community college organization, which provided the historical context for this study. Specifically, Deegan and Tillery looked at changes in the organization over time with respect to several distinct categories:

- Governance
- Role of Faculty
- Finance
- Facilities

The primary area related to this study is the role of the executive. However, other areas, such as the role of faculty, finance, institutional mission, facilities and governance directly affect the role of the president and will be included as a facet of the job. This section will present the role maturation of the presidency and the community college over time (generations) and then will use SMCC as an example.

- Generation One: Extension of High School (1900-1930)

As discussed in Chapter 2, the community college was born as populations began to shift from rural to urban and as the economy shifted from agricultural to industrial. The community college initially provided a place to prepare the unprepared for study at the university. The system resembled an extension of the high school, and in fact was usually housed within a high school setting. Faculty was inherited from the high school. The executive was typically a high school administrator with little to no higher education experience. The role required no external relationships with the private sector and the student population was primarily high school graduates underprepared for the university setting. These institutions were governed by local school boards and received funding as a part of the K-14 school system.

- Generation One and SMCC

SMCC was officially established in 1938, so although Generation One may have influenced the setup of SMCC, the institution did not exist during that period.

- Generation Two - Junior College (1930 – 1950)

The “junior college” shifted from a high school extension or secondary model to a collegiate identity, with local control. However, the effects of societal factors, such as the Depression, caused enrollments and functions to expand beyond the purely collegiate model. Several functions were solidified: terminal education, general education, transfer and career education and guidance, lower-division preparation for university transfer, adult education, and removal of matriculation deficiencies. The American Association of Junior Colleges (now AACC), founded in 1920, began creating a professional image and lobbying for the advancement of these institutions, resulting in favorable legislation. With respect to governance and leadership: Junior college boards of trustees, usually elected by local communities labeled “districts,” evolved in a variety of ways. These boards gained authority for levying taxes, building colleges, setting policies, and employing and terminating personnel. The institutions remained primarily staffed by former high school personnel. The executive role began the transition into a more community-based leadership position. The faculty and curriculum began to emulate a higher education model more closely resembling the university structure.

- Generation Two and SMCC

SMCC was founded in 1938 as SM Junior College in the middle of Generation Two. The Board of Education's resolution authorizing the creation of the college described:

a junior collegiate division in this school district which will include the thirteenth and fourteenth grades, and which will offer such college preparatory courses as will permit students to seek a higher institution of learning and also provide such terminal courses as will permit them to school themselves in industrial arts (Board of Education Resolution, May 4, 1938).

The first executive of SMCC (or at the time SMJC) carried the title of Dean. Prior to appointment Dean Ensign was listed as the Admissions Officer for Mathematics with the school district and held an MA degree. The Dean initially reported to the Principal of the local high school, who in turn reported to the Superintendent of the local school district. Current president Dr. Arthur Martin offered this about SMCC's first executive:

He was the person who helped form the college and when the college was formed, it was formed as a department of the public school district and so Frank had duties also with the school district at the time. He was a school district employee. He was given the assignment to help set up the community college department and then when the community college department was established, Frank was then appointed as the chief administrative officer for

that part of the district. And the college has remained a part of the local public school district over these past 67 or 68 years.

The college was initially established in a wing of a local high school building and the curriculum resembled the same, with some emphasis on career preparation. The newly established junior college enrolled 88 students in its first year. I thought it noteworthy that President Martin described SMCC at establishment as a “department” within the district. So I asked President Martin about his impression(s) of the role of the community college executive during Generation One in general and at SMCC (SMJC) specifically:

...the earlier presidents particularly those in the 30s, 40s, and 50s, had to establish the community college as a credible institution of higher education. There were no models to speak of, I mean, thinking of starting a college in 1938, where would you go to see one in operation that was mature enough to where you could say this is how we are going to pattern ourselves?

I wanted to know about some of the specific activities of SMCC's Dean in those early years with respect to institutional development. President Martin responded:

...what presidents did at that time...they had to establish credibility for the school called the community college and the models that were existing at that time were university models - the model that was selected was The University of Michigan in Ann

Arbor (U-M)...so they looked to the U-M and replicated the curriculum, at least the freshman and sophomore years, adopted the materials, text books, began to seek out faculty with similar credentials and for 25 years SMCC was a mirror image to the lower division of general education at U-M. And so the emphasis was building curriculum, establishing credibility, looking for benchmarks for design and comparison and then articulating the importance of the community colleges to the community because it had to find money for buildings, for staff. [Today] we still have to remind the public that we are still a credible institution. ...we have to keep articulating that, but we don't have the onerous thing of starting from scratch and build[ing] while we promote and develop – so there's where we're building on the shoulders of people who preceded us...

As SMCC progressed through Generation 2, there were indeed challenges with respect to outside influences. Specifically, as a result of World War II, by 1943 enrollment had dropped below the initial 88 students of 1938. The college decided to suspend classes until after the war and reopened in 1946. The peak years for veteran enrollment on a national basis were between 1946 and 1947 - approximately half of all university and college enrollees were veterans using the GI Bill (Olson, 1974). During those years SMJC was trying desperately to reestablish itself as an institution after being closed for three years. The veteran influence at SMJC in those years was seen in the new faculty hires. Additional

challenges as Generation 2 came to a close were facilities changes and the quest for accreditation. With respect to facilities, in 1946, the college moved the majority of its operation to an elementary school building and shared facilities with the elementary school children. Issues such as lack of adult lavatories, cafeteria, library space, and adequate office and classroom space presented areas for the Dean to focus his attention. The application for accreditation was completed in 1948, and evaluators from North Central Association visited the campus (the elementary school) in 1949. Although the evaluators found some fault with the physical plant situation, they were most concerned about the structure and organization of the institution with respect to faculty roles and recruitment, student-faculty ratio, library services, and so on. At the time of the accreditation visit, the college still shared faculty with the school system and was able to produce no real organization chart to speak of. Still, the victory of accreditation was achieved in 1949. The faculty, however, did respond to the issues that NCA had taken with respect to faculty organization:

Faculty Organization: We have felt that our system of faculty committees and the democratic procedures under which they operate have considerable merit. Perhaps we have much to learn in methods of faculty organization; however, at least according to the report 'faculty morale is high' and we hope to improve (NCA, March 11, 1949)

The development of collective bargaining and the role of the executive will be discussed further as a part of Generations 3 and 4.

I began to see the connection between Deegan and Tillery's description of Generation 2, President Martin's assertions with respect to the early president's quest for credibility, and Dean Ensign's plight as an early president in establishing such credibility with respect to such issues as facilities, staff, and enrollment. The role of a Generation 2 community college president started to take shape visually. I began to see how for SMCC, Generation 2 very much was the generation of establishing and maintaining existence while struggling with institutional identity.

- Generation Three – Community College (1950-1970)

Nationally, the junior college evolved into the community college and increased its student enrollment from roughly one-half million to over two million during this twenty-year period. This rapid expansion and growth resulted in new campuses being built and existing ones expanded.

Articulation agreements were developed with four-year institutions. Federal support remained stable with strong student financial aid and capital funding programs. The concept of the "open door" policy was born through open admissions policies aimed at welcoming all potential learners into the higher education system. The service philosophy moved to one of a community center, capable of providing something for everyone. The function of these institutions expanded beyond transfer programs to include terminal occupational education programs and services. The presidential role continued to expand into that of a external liaison and community leader. With respect to governance and leadership:

locally elected boards governed most community colleges, moving their identity from that of high school extension to a segment of higher education. Faculty began demanding more participation in campus and program decisions; faculty senates emerged. The role of the executive focused on campus and curriculum creation with new buildings and programs. In addition, the management of faculty wants and needs was introduced as collective bargaining agreements developed. The implementation of faculty association bargaining contracts, which explicitly spelled out working conditions, provided a new political dimension to the executive. Likewise, the pursuit of funding began to surface as an additional role.

- Generation Three and SMCC

In 1950 SMCC had 804 students enrolled. Dean Ensign continued to battle issues related to Facilities and Physical Plant as evidenced by the following excerpt from an untitled memorandum dated April 24, 1950, to the school board from the faculty:

We think it is only fair to point out that in spite of our program being split between two buildings, in spite of the fact that we had fractional faculty loads and inadequate facilities in many areas, and in spite of the fact that most of our planning has had to be done after all other units of the school system have been adequately taken care of, we have accomplished as much as we have.

In 1951, as a result of growing enrollments, faculty concerns, and inadequate laboratories, SMJC began renovation on the existing elementary school building and planning construction on a new technical science building. As the two new buildings opened, enrollment continued to climb from 3,154 in 1954 to 3,858 in 1955 to 5,600 in 1956 (Thomas, p. 50). The bequest of equipment from an automotive trade school fueled the creation of a technical center where automotive employees could be trained through apprenticeship. By the mid-1950s, SMJC received a major windfall – an automotive manufacturer, the largest employer in the area, donated a portion of the former estate of the corporate founder to be used to construct a complete community college campus. A significant outcome was the change in name of the institution from SMJC to SMCC. The mission of the college crystallized as the land and equipment donations came with the caveat that the college would adjust its mission, as President Martin explained:

...they also asked the school district to expand the mission of the junior college to include scientific and technical education. And at the same time they were closing the trade school and the apprentice school and said we will give you the assets of both the trade school and apprentice school and the curricula with the proviso that you continue it at this junior college. And so at that point when the college became SMCC, it also expanded its mission to include the technical and scientific education. It used much of

the curricular materials...and that is why we became the inheritors of the trade school but we were not part of the trade school operation.

Board resolution 56-815a was passed on June 12, 1957, indicating, “that the Board of Education accept the gift of the ... Motor Company of land on the ... Estate, for development and expansion of the SMCC campus and that an appropriate letter of appreciation be forwarded,” (Board Resolution 56-815a)

As the discussions and planning about the new campus progressed, issues of faculty organization began to resurface. In 1955, Dean Ensign wrote in a memorandum to faculty:

It was at this time [1949] and with considerable effort, that our pattern of organization was devised, approved, and put into action. In those days we had less than twenty full-time instructors and many part-time staff members. All members of the instructional staff in the College who are more than half-time members are of the Faculty Organization and have full voting privileges. (Ensign, 1949)

In 1961, the college received the following directive from the NCA in preparation for the second accreditation visit in 1965:

The form of faculty organization should allow for the representation of all educational interests on each campus, should encourage initiative and participation by individual staff members

in the affairs of the institution, should provide machinery for the development of sound educational policies, and should help to coordinate the diverse interests of the staff. (NCA, 1961, pp. 11-12)

The comments of Dean Ensign, the directive of the NCA, and the faculty response to the initial NCA report are for two reasons: First, this chain of communication illustrates the growing role of the executive with respect to initial faculty organization and eventual collective bargaining agreements; and second, some sense of clarity has been provided.

As the college continued to evolve, Dean Ensign's reign ended in 1962. Also in 1962, John McKnight was appointed Dean of SMCC. In 1966 McKnight's title changed to President, and the position began reporting directly to the Superintendent of the district. As typical of most community colleges during Generation 3, SMCC continued the construction of new buildings and the addition of new programs and faculty. Four new buildings were constructed on the new campus: Administration, Liberal Arts, Science, and Student Center. In addition the original off-campus technical building was expanded.

The student body also continued to grow. Current President Martin began his association with SMCC during the 1960s. President Martin described what Presidents Ensign and McKnight were dealing with as far as student population and characteristics of SMCC at that time:

Basically, the students were full-time students, attending college, preparing for their very first career...generally 90% of them were between the ages of 18 and 22. And for this particular community, mostly, largely, not exclusively white and from middle class families. The vast majority of our students were recent high school graduates. There was very little, if any, understanding of financial aid. ...so essentially it was more a reflection of what you would find at the high school level only with students anywhere from two to four years older. Students who came to us as I said were young; very few had any family obligations in the sense of raising children or being a spouse. Our financial aid program started as a program awarding a few hundred dollars a year in the late 1960s to where this past year we have processed 23 million dollars in state and federal financial aid. (Martin)

The change in scope of the financial aid processing alone is indicative of the change of the institution and the president's role over time. The earliest actual job description located in archival records reflected the primary function of the president as:

To be responsible for the general planning and development of the college in respect to staffing, facilities, and scheduling necessary to effectively achieve the approved instructional program within the framework prescribed by the board of Education.

There was no educational degree requirement listed. The complete job description appears as Appendix C. A corresponding organizational chart shows how the college fit within the public school system at that time and appears as Appendix D. By the end of Generation 3, SMCC had upgraded the executive's title from Dean to President and had begun to occupy its new campus. The faculty had organized and entered into a collective bargaining agreement. All in all, SMCC's development during this period very much resembled the national trends described in Deegan and Tillery's Generation 3.

- Generation Four (1970 – 1985)

The growth and expansion during generation three increased the capacity of the community college to deliver an almost unlimited variety of offerings and services from a central location. The lifelong learning function mushroomed into a major core activity. Partnerships with the private sector emerged. With respect to governance and leadership: Perceptions of state and local responsibilities created conflict. Faculty groups began organizing into collective bargaining units with contracts.

- Generation Four and SMCC

Among the most notable changes regarding the presidency at SMCC during the early seventies was the appointment of Dr. Steven Brandon as president. President Brandon was the first to report directly to the Board of Education Trustees and was also the first to hold a doctoral degree. Further, Dr. Brandon was the first to be appointed to the executive role with the initial title of president at time of hire. President Brandon was faced with the continual issues with respect to increased student body and facilities growth as evidenced by additional buildings such as a performing arts center, a child care center, and the acquisition of a middle school building a few miles away to house Allied Health and Management Development programs. But Dr. Brandon faced other political challenges such as labor related conflicts including multiple work stoppages of the faculty. President Martin shared the following regarding SMCC's faculty and collective bargaining:

The faculty at SMCC is one of the first faculty in the nation to organize into collective bargaining and they were the first faculty in America to go out on strike and they have struck how many times, before I became president I think three times, none since I've been president.

The labor strikes referenced by President Martin all took place during the presidency of President Brandon, which illustrates again how the scope of the role was continually changing from generation to generation. When

asked why there had perhaps not been a labor strike during his own presidency thus far, Dr. Martin offered:

I came through the labor movement; I understand that view. I understand how union constituencies think, how they work, since I've been with the college I know the corporate culture of different areas of college and how that might play on union politics. I was a founding member of the administrators' union here so I helped organize the union so I understand all of that. The likelihood of someone following who has any experience in the labor union within education is going to be very small. The odds of that are... (shaking head).

The differences between Dean Ensign's role and the subsequent roles of Presidents McKnight and Brandon are well illustrated through the onset of labor relations management issues. While Dean Ensign utilized and scheduled faculty between the high school and the college without issue, President Brandon learned the outcome of unsuccessful bargaining through multiple work stoppages. I began to think of how it might have felt at the time to be President of the first community college in the nation to have a faculty work stoppage. I could see how the community college had begun to meld more with the external environment and culture during this period as opposed to the more campus specific issues of building and construction for earlier executives.

As I overlaid the growth and development of SMCC onto Deegan & Tillery's four generations of community college development, the changes in the role of the executive became so clear that I could not help but visualize the exponential maturation of the role in tandem with the expansion of the community college movement over time. Indeed the presidential role had drastically changed in respect to the facets identified by Deegan and Tillery and presented earlier in this chapter:

- Governance – The reporting relationship for the executive had evolved from reporting to a high school principal to reporting to the board of trustees. Likewise, at SMCC, the title of the executive changed over time from Dean to President.
- Role of Faculty – In generations 1 and 2 faculty were more than likely high school teachers assigned to teach yet another course. I learned that today faculty at SMCC were tenured with collective bargaining agreements and in some instances enjoyed salaries rivaling that of the president.
- Finance – At the onset of the community college, financing was not a problem. Community colleges received consistent and plentiful funding for programs, buildings, and so on. In contrast, in recent years community colleges and their presidents have been plagued with budget cuts resulting in staff and campus adjustments.
- Facilities – During the early generations, presidents concentrated on new buildings and facilities growth. In recent years presidents were trying to renovate aging and decaying buildings with limited funding. The growth

in technology has also forced campuses to upgrade to accommodate modern infrastructure.

I noticed, however, that at each stage the presidents seemed committed and excited about the challenges of the time. So I found myself pondering and asking the following questions over and over again: a) Why is there now a shortage in leadership to fill these projected presidential vacancies? and b) Why are seemingly likely candidates not excited about taking on these roles? Thinking again of the work of Alderfer and McClellan, I wondered whether a lack of motivation of potential applicants could be related to the anticipated small pool of qualified and interested candidates for these upcoming vacancies.

I decided that I needed to spend some time hearing more from SMCC's current president about his presidency over the past fifteen years as well as his thoughts on the role of his successor. I also wanted to hear the stories first hand from college administrators currently holding positions designated as typical to the career trajectory to the community college presidency, which could be accomplished by personally interviewing SMCC's cabinet level administrators.

The Pathway to the Presidency – Their Stories

This section includes the stories captured from personal interviews with SMCC's current president of over 14 years, administrators currently serving in roles common to the career trajectory of the community college president, and the Human Resources Director. The SMCC position titles interviewed and corresponding pseudonyms are:

- President – Dr. Arthur Martin
- Vice President & Dean of Academic Education – Dr. Earnest Coleman

- Vice President & Dean of Career Education – Dr. Jane Thomas
- Vice President & Dean of Student Services – Dr. Mark Meyers
- Vice President & Controller – Ms. Marcia Short
- Director of Lifelong Learning – Ms. Constance Klancy
- Director of Human Resources – Dr. Samantha Brown

The following stories were captured during one hour of planned interview time with each respondent. Although an interview guide (Appendices B-1 and B-2) was used, participants were encouraged to speak freely, and all questions asked were open-ended. The questions on the interview guide were designed to encourage participants to share their thoughts, opinions, experiences, and perceptions with respect to leadership issues; the growth of the community college; the past, current, and future role of the president; career path; interest in the presidency; motivations to seek the presidential role; preparation for the presidency; and presidential opportunities. This section is organized with each interview as a subsection. Responses have been excerpted directly from transcripts of taped interviews.

President – Dr. Arthur Martin

I had literally been preparing for this interview for well over a year. Throughout my preliminary research I had always envisioned spending time with a sitting president. Dr. Arthur Martin has been president at SMCC since 1990. Prior to that Dr. Martin was Vice President & Dean for Career Education at SMCC and Faculty even prior to that. I think it best that I allow President Martin to tell his own story. After exchanging greetings and talking a bit about the history of the community college and SMCC (as referenced in the first section of this chapter), I began the interview by giving a brief

synopsis of the purpose of my research. I wanted to know more about President Martin's background and community college experiences:

I am a student and graduate of [SMCC] community college so my association with the college goes back to the very early 1960s. But I've been with the college for 5-1/2 years as instructor of the technology division. I taught drafting and hydraulics and technical math and I also taught in the trade and apprenticeship division as well, which is a sister division to the college [and] which focuses on industrial apprentices so I taught in both those divisions. Then I left in 1972 to join the Michigan Department of Education and worked with Dr. John Porter and I worked in the Post Secondary Unit of the Department of Ed, which was at that time was due to the community college and so I began to have a broader experience with community colleges working for the Department of Education. And I was in that service for about 5, close to 6 years and then there was an opening here at SMCC as the dean of technical education so I applied and I was fortunate enough to be selected, so I was the dean of technical education through about 1981. Then I left the institution for about a year and a half to become the interim director of the UAW Ford National Development Training program, which was the first joint labor management employee development program in the nation. And so helped get that started and then returned to SMCC as the Vice President for Instruction. And then in 1990 after a nationwide search, I was appointed by the board, as president - so I have been serving as president of the college since 1990 so I'm in the fifteenth year of service as the president. So I go

back many years in different roles including that as a student so I've seen a lot of the institution over the years.

I realized that President Martin had very briefly described his career path to the presidency, yet I still wanted to know more about how he had ended up in his current position. So I asked why he had aspired to become a community college president. I wanted him to describe any particular situations, events, or other persons who might have contributed:

When I hired in as a faculty member here in the early 60s, my coordinator, which would be like a department chair, and the technical dean at that time, became mentors. I don't know, they saw something in me that appealed to them, maybe it was my energy, ignorance of youth, taking on things that were of high risk, who knows, but for some reason they had an interest in me, and my colleagues who were much older than me at that time also had an interest in me because I was one of the first of the new wave of faculty to come, it was like having a young person in the family. And so they put me into a large number of leadership positions developing curriculum, establishing and modeling labs. Also the union was being developed at that time. That's when the NEA and the AFT were looking to organize teachers during that era, and so a number of my colleagues wanted me to get active in the union, which I did in the early years. And then out of that I guess came the recognition that maybe I had some leadership skills. But my goal really was to be the best doggone technical education teacher SMCC ever had. I mean really that was my goal.

I wanted to know more about how President Martin's career had progressed. After hearing that he had in fact never set out to become president or even a higher level administrator, I was particularly curious about how he had in fact ended up in the chief executive role. President Martin continued his story:

We had a dip in enrollment in the early 1970s in my area of college, a recession, and the administration was laying off probationary teachers and it was obvious that if the decline continued, eventually it would hit third and four year teachers like myself and then I figured, well, rather than stay around here and run the risk of getting laid off, I'd look for something different and when word got out that I was looking for something different, that's when a former colleague of mine who joined the department of education in Lansing called me and said you know Superintendent Border is looking to start a team of post secondary educators in a new unit called Post Secondary Community College Unit and we are hiring people with liberal arts background and some in social services and health careers and we are also looking for someone in technical education and you are ideal because you taught the apprenticeship program, you taught the technical program, you are active in the union, labor movement, you've been through the U of M school leadership development program sponsored by the dean, why don't you apply. So I applied and was interviewed and selected by Superintendent Border. So I really left SMCC not because I wanted to run away from the college, but I felt that the college was going to have such a decline in enrollment in my area that they would have to surplus me, so I figured I might as well...and it happened to be

a step in the right direction for me. When I joined the Michigan Department of Education, that's what I was going to do the rest of my life.

Again, President Martin had interjected that he thought he would remain in a particular place and position for the rest of his life. I asked how he had reconnected with SMCC:

And then one day I got a call from a group of faculty at SMCC that said you know that your predecessor is retiring and we were talking about who we think ought to be applying. We are trying to call people that we know that we have respect for and encouraging them to apply. We'd like to have a large pool of qualified candidates - will you apply. So I applied without any expectation of returning to SMCC. I was selected to be dean of technical education, which included not only the technical vocation subjects but business, nursing, health careers, trade and apprenticeship education and management education at SMCC. And then went from there on to a variety of things in and outside of the college to eventually become president, but when it came time for the presidency, it was the president of the faculty union who approached me who said you better apply for this job and I said, "Well I don't want to be president of the college," and he said, "Well yes, you better be president because if you don't somebody is going to be president and you know this institution so well and you know the community so well and you are so connected with external stakeholders, they are going to exploit you. You are going to have to do the work anyway so you might as well be the president." And I thought and I said you know if I had to work for a jerk, better that jerk be me. So I became the jerk. It was a national search. We had thirty-some applicants, narrowed it down to five and then the board decided that

they'll go with the devil they know rather than the devil they didn't know so they've been living with me now for 15 years. I did not start off by saying I wanted to be king, I just wanted to be the best at what I was doing at that time.

What an interesting revelation. It appeared, according to President Martin's own words, that he had not in fact ever set out to claim the presidential role at SMCC or any other community college. I was intrigued by the pattern described of various individuals at different points in time encouraging President Martin into his succession of more responsible leadership roles. I noticed that repeatedly President Martin described himself as having been happy doing the best at whatever job he was doing at the time. There certainly seemed to have been a number of formal and informal mentors motivating President Martin at various times. I wondered if perhaps those imbedded mentors of sorts had in fact enhanced President Martin's motivation to aspire to each new achievement. I also wondered how or if the current environment at SMCC possessed these kinds of motivational enhancements. I asked about any formal mentoring at SMCC:

Structured, but informal. We don't have a program called successorship training program for leaders of tomorrow, you know, where there is a published document, but we have been committed to developing our successors for years. We have used a variety of approaches. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has the AACC for Women as an affiliate and they have run leadership development programs and we have over the years sent maybe a half a dozen persons to training through that and...that has worked for some.

I asked President Martin about some of these informal programs and the effectiveness with respect to the impending leadership crisis. In other words, I wanted to know if SMCC feels prepared internally to face this leadership challenge over the next few years. President Martin described a regional leadership-training program that some faculty and administrators had participated in and then shared:

One of the disappointments of all of this effort is that times have changed where very few people aspire to administrative positions particularly at the vice president and president levels because I have to say with some disappointment the quality of personal life is not as great being president of a college or vice president or a dean of a major college as [it] is if you were a faculty member. Earlier years, back in the 60s and I think preceding me those years, if faculty wanted to improve their standard of living or quality of life, the route to do that was administration and so there was this aspiration of “I’d like to be come a department chair, I’d like to become the dean, I’d like to become the vice president because that means a greater wage earning potential for me, that means that my family will have greater opportunities in life and that’s going to be the trap.”

I found these comments interesting, considering the current dearth of applicants for all of the vacancies to be created by upcoming retirements. I pressed further to find out what happened. President Martin’s take:

Well what has happened over the years both at community colleges and I think the same thing at the universities is that the union movement, collective

bargaining, has so well raised the standard of living for faculty and all of us together that one need not seek out administrative promotion to be able to earn good money and to have a wonderful quality of life in terms of time off, don't have the headaches of your board members and of politics, and labor unions and strife, you know, budget cuts, spending money on capital projects which the community doesn't like and then having to....and so as I look back.....Katrina you may be the only person of all of those that I have been involved with in terms of mentoring either directly or through programs that SMCC supported that is aspiring to a chief executive officer of a community college. You are the only one. What's wrong with you? No, No, didn't you learn from all of this? I'm serious. (Laughing)

President Martin had touched on several issues in my estimation. First, he had asserted that very few people are currently aspiring to the role of vice president or president. This statement actually supported my preliminary research, but I was still looking for the "why." President Martin had also talked about what amounted to the diminishing prestige of the presidential role. I wanted to know, given his impressions, if his opinions were confined to SMCC or the community college in general. His answer:

I don't think we are that much different. I mean I have talked to my colleagues at other large community colleges in Michigan. You have Washington County, Manchester and Oxford CC and very few people internally are really interested in a career in administration and it's evidenced when these positions become open. There may be one internal candidate if any. I mean when we searched for Dr. Coleman's position (Vice President/Dean of Academic Education), Dr. Coleman

was the only internal candidate. When we searched for Dr. Thomas' position (Vice President/Dean of Career Education), Dr. Thomas was the only internal candidate. Well maybe somebody would say well because they were so strong a candidate that no one applied but I don't think...I mean they were strong candidates, but I don't think that was the case. You know if people are interested in a career move they are going to do it - even if I don't get selected, I go through the process and I learn from it. There was none of that. You know, is there fear of retribution? No, the school is not known for getting even with somebody because they applied for a job; we've never had those kinds of negative experiences here, thank God.

I wondered why there had not been more internal applicants for these jobs. I asked President Martin if there were any other formal or informal processes at SMCC that provided leadership opportunities for faculty and middle managers:

So we've created internships internally for some of the faculty members to where we have said that is okay when you come back from the women's group [leadership training] and not have you go back to the classroom, we are going to give you this quasi administrative job and they would do it for a year or two and say, 'I'm going back to teaching because you know I don't have to be here all summer, I can go home at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock.' Because they can go back and they can make the same or even more money than administrators and do so with a fraction of the headaches.

Again, the issue of prestige or image of the presidency had surfaced. I wondered what happened to those individuals who had sampled administration before deciding to forego pursuit of progressively more responsible roles:

And so for those people, you know, they love the development, because it gave them a broader world-view and for that we all are better off. But in terms of saying that they are now going to be an administrator and move on to be that department chair or that division director or associate dean or dean, vice president or president, chances are very, very...you are the only one that I can think of and I'll bet you that in the fifteen years that I've been president we may have had 40-45 people be trained in some very formal structure. Now because leadership is diffused in any organization, is a monopoly of administrations, not monopoly of faculty because it comes from all parts of the institution and interacts. We have developed leaders, I mean our college senate chair, both past and present, went through the development process, went through Galileo, went through U of M consortium and I look around at various faculty leaders who are involved in assessment in diversity, the culture of American societies, all of those. I see a lot of the mentorees are leading that now. But in terms of being on the glide path for administration, you are the only one.

I could understand President Martin's segmentation of sorts regarding leadership.

Certainly SMCC and other community colleges were mentoring and developing leaders for many important and necessary roles on their campuses. I was, however, intrigued that President Martin had included this researcher as a part of his informal statistics with respect to leadership development, considering that I had left SMCC in 1996, eight years

prior. If indeed I was, in President Martin's mind, the mentee who had moved forward, this situation seemed even more grave. I wanted more clarification and asked President Martin what he felt was necessary to encourage more people to consider getting themselves into the pipeline for the presidency:

I think we have to change the way we appeal to future leaders. I think the old way of, you know, you might be able to make more money, you know, isn't working with the next generations. I think we are going to have to appeal to their commitment to serve and to say look it's not an easy job and you are not going to make a heck of a lot more money than you are making now, but you will have a direct impact on people's lives, on students' lives, on your colleagues and so if you are a person who likes a challenge is looking for a great sense of fulfillment that they ought to step into a leadership role particularly administration and try to appeal to that.

The issues of motivation to serve and the perceived lack of prestige of the community college presidency had once again resurfaced. One of my research questions for this study asked whether there is some type of disconnection between the community college's needs and those of the potential candidates for the job. I asked President Martin his views regarding a disconnection of sorts and if he saw any possibilities of melding the differences:

Well obviously there's a disconnect to some degree, otherwise we wouldn't have the low appeal for positions, but it is hard to determine, I mean it is hard to control the expectations of the institution on the chief executive and on major executive officers. So you can't negotiate and say, 'Oh if you come you won't

have to deal with issues of budget cuts, state aid cuts and collective bargaining and work stoppages and you can go home at 2 o'clock if you want and only work 9 months of a year if you feel like it.' So there is a limit to what a college can really make a commitment to because these institutions are jealous mistresses.

They want as much time as one can possibly give.

The community college as a Jealous Mistress – I found the visual of this metaphor more than a little interesting. I still wanted to know from President Martin his opinion of why others may not be viewing the presidency as a role they wanted to attain, as he had:

Because I don't think the job is attractive anymore. I don't think they have the prestige anymore, certainly not the income. I mean you look at the presidents of community colleges and universities and take a look at the agonizing life they lead and if one has family, children, they're part of the role. You know how many families are going to be okay with picking up the newspaper and seeing mom or dad scorched in the press for some decision or action or direction the college has taken? And to put up with the lack of respect sometimes that can come along with an unpopular decision.

President Martin was starting to touch on the personal sacrifices for a president. I was starting to visualize the effects of his aforementioned "jealous mistress."

And the other is, as a president especially and to a lesser degree, but nonetheless, still there with the vice presidents, is the visibility. You don't have a private life. When you are president of SMCC one day, which will be my hope, your husband is going to be a public figure as you are, your children are going to be public figures as you are, and that's an awful lot to ask of any family. So they are not

really attractive jobs, unless the person is left with a great sense of fulfillment, and in order to have that then they have to be successful. They have to develop processes or accomplish things where they can go home and say ‘even though I was called a knucklehead today by the faculty senate, best damn decision I ever made. I’m going to sleep like a rock tonight.’ And there are very few people willing to go through that in my view. I have not seen that.

I was getting the impression that for President Martin the “fish bowl” lifestyle of the presidency is bearable only if one feels good about what he or she is doing. I was reminded of Fullan’s (2001) work and his concept of leading with moral purpose. I was interested in knowing President Martin’s perceptions of the current successor leadership situation at other institutions, particularly community colleges:

And I look at other colleges sometimes I think well maybe that’s SMCC, maybe it’s viewed here as culture. But I look at the other colleges, community colleges particularly that have hired and I think it’s true with the universities with rare exception they have all been people from outside the institutions. So Washington County hired Colin Irons from outside. Well why? Obviously, there was no one from inside that they had greater confidence in. Oxford CC hired someone from out of state. Why? Because... (Shakes head, raises open hands and shrugs) Northern Michigan College, someone from outside the state. You talk about in the state but outside the college you have St. Pleasant County, you have Johns Maples. When you look at the last half dozen presidents that community colleges have hired, only two I think were internal. All of the others were external and if you go to the last 15 hired I think you’ll find that 12 of the last or 11 of the last 15

were from outside the institutions. So the question is okay well if these colleges have some kind of better successor leadership program, where are the successors? I wondered if President Martin had any insights or perceptions with respect to successor leadership issues outside of the state of Michigan:

So I've concluded through my travels not only here in Michigan but as a North Central evaluator, I don't know if there is much that a college can do to provide for successor leadership for chief executives and chief administrative officers. They can and should provide leadership training for people who are going to fill leadership roles elsewhere in the institution. Faculty leaders, you know, chairs of senate, department chairs, division directors, associate deans, I think their successor training can and will work; but once you get beyond that, I don't know of any model that someone has that can say 'look for the last 27 years the last four presidents came out of our institution that we developed.' People are hiring away talented people from other institutions and most of the presidents who are moving into larger institutions were presidents before they left. So to me that's another thing though it's kind of like those larger schools that pay well are top of the food chain they get experienced younger people. Somebody is doing it but I don't see any models that are any better than what we have done here at SMCC.

The research of Shults (2001), cited in Chapter 1, denoted that senior level administrators would also be retiring at an alarming rate over the next several years. Shults' survey results, in fact, indicated that at least one quarter of all community college cabinet level administrators would retire by 2006. So, to better understand SMCC's leadership situation, I asked President Martin about the likelihood of any of his cabinet level

administrators retiring or separating from the college within the same timeframe that he might leave or retire. President Martin indicated that his “entire cabinet” would be retiring within two years. I asked how he and the board of trustees might be starting to plan for this situation:

The board is aware of what we have done to mentor people but they are frustrated too, I mean they are very open in conversations. I mean, ‘What do we do when you leave?’ We don’t see anybody who has developed themselves, who has fire in the belly. And I’m saying, ‘Well, what you are going to have to do is go out and find the best people you can by paying them what you have to pay to get them here. And you have to just get used to the fact that you are going to pay my successor far more than what you are paying me.’ I say just get ready for it because you are not going to get him through the pipeline.

I wanted to know how President Martin felt about the potential of current SMCC administrators wanting to develop themselves into executive cabinet level roles. I also wanted to hear in his words some of the issues in line for his successor:

You will get leaders developed and they will fill some of the internal leadership roles in various sectors of the college, but frankly, I don’t see that too many are going to say, ‘I want to apply for that job and I’ve developed myself.’ It is possible there will be no internal candidates for the position so what they’ll have to do is go and steal some younger person, hopefully with some presidential experience to come and say, ‘I’m going to spend a number of years here.’

I wondered about any additional challenges that a new president might face with respect to SMCC’s structure or function. In other words, what are the necessary special skills or

experiences that a president needs to serve successfully at SMCC? President Martin shared more about SMCC:

Also, the thing is, this institution is a department of a school district. It is not a community college district; therefore it does not qualify for a charter millage, which means there is no operating millage that operates for perpetuity. You go to all the other colleges, they have a charter millage. They were created, the voters voted a certain no levy to run that college forever and so when colleges go before the voters these colleges and ask for a millage election, they are asking for an addition. At SMCC all of our millage is voted millage, none of it is charter millage.

I wanted to know specifically how the structure and millage elections impacted the role of a president or even cabinet level positions at SMCC:

So that means every few years we've got to go before the voters and have one hell of a campaign to get a renewal of our operating millage, otherwise we lose our local funding. There's no safety net and so the question is will the next chief executive, and the cabinet officers, have any experience running millage elections? If they find my successor from some other community college district, the likelihood of that person having had to spearhead an advocacy campaign or information campaign for an operational millage is pretty slim.

I was interested in knowing how the board of trustees might be approaching a tenuous situation that would appear somewhat imminent in nature:

So they have some real issues that they have to deal with, and the board and I talk about these things because they know I'm not going to be around forever, you

know? They know within the next couple years I'll probably be doing something different. We have open conversation about that and I think to some degree the board is scratching their heads trying to figure out what to do, you know, and I just keep telling them there isn't much you can do now other than begin when the time is right to have a process which is broad enough and conclusive enough to where you get a pool of as many qualified people as you can and make an intelligent decision to rehire and then have that person, hopefully with your guidance, bring on a team of people who are intelligent and train him.

President Martin's own words provided the closest thing to a full-blown testimonial to a leadership crisis that I had heard so far. In effect, what I was hearing was that SMCC would face a complete exodus at the presidential and cabinet level within two years. Yet there appeared to be no internal candidate development to mitigate the impending situation. Further, according to President Martin, finding an external candidate with such skills as running millage elections would be next to impossible. Yet there really did not seem to be a plan of action in place. There certainly seemed to be dialogue with the board of trustees as evidenced by President Martin's remarks:

I know them well and I've served with some of those trustees for all 15 years. There's a couple that I've served, two that I've served with for 15 years, some for 10 years, some for 3 years. You know, they are all good people. I mean, we have an open channel for communication with the trustees, so we talk very candidly with each other about our fears, our aspirations, our hopes. I think in their heart of hearts they would like me to say, 'Here's the four people at SMCC that you ought to really look at as president and if you find anybody on the outside, that's

great, but you've got a list of these folks.' I can give them a list of people who are outstanding at SMCC, but there won't be any of them on that list who want to be president. That's the reality of it.

What a powerful final statement. I'd now heard President Martin's story. I was still trying to sort out how an institution that had in effect mentored President Martin from his time as a student through his ascension to the presidency seemingly could not produce qualified and interested candidates for these upcoming cabinet level vacancies. Talk about a disconnection. Where were the President Martins of thirty years ago? I wanted to know what was going on with respect to motivation and the desire to serve in the role of president. I could not wait to hear the stories of SMCC's administrators, who were currently in positions known for leading to the presidency. What were they thinking and why?

The following subsections of this chapter represent the stories of SMCC's cabinet level administrators with respect to their own careers and opinions of the community college presidency. The Director of Lifelong Learning's story also is included since that position was among those identified as in the career trajectory to the presidency. The Director of Human Resources was also interviewed as yet another source to triangulate. These stories are told through excerpts from interview transcripts.

Vice President & Dean of Academic Education – Dr. Earnest Coleman

My time began with Dr. Coleman as a reestablishment of acquaintance. We shared hellos and I complimented his office, the only corner suite held by a vice president. Dr. Coleman shared an anecdote about inheriting the office because it was the farthest one from the president – and the president wanted to be as far away from student

complaints as possible. After lightening the moment with pleasantries, I began the interview with a description of the purpose of the study. I then asked Dr. Coleman if he'd given any thought to impending retirements and a potential shortage of leadership:

Well I've been in this job for 5 years and so my perspective might be somewhat limited. I mean, I came up through the instructional ranks, associate dean and then this job and so I wasn't specifically trained nor do my professional credentials nor in the area of administrative leadership or anything like that and I never planned to go in this direction with my career.

I remembered that President Martin had said something similar regarding not having aspired to his current position. Regarding current presidents, Dr. Coleman added:

So there's a big turnover now and so I think there is a problem with who is going to follow up. In my particular case, I'm probably fairly typical in some ways, in that by the time people get to chief academic officer level they are often very close to the end of their careers and that's the case with me. It's quite likely I'll go next year and if not next year, the year after.

Dr. Coleman had in fact confirmed President Martin's estimate that SMCC's cabinet level positions could be vacant within two years. I wanted to know more about how Dr. Coleman felt about his role as a trajectory to the presidency:

I'm at the point where I've been in this job now for 5 years and so I probably now have had enough experience so I could consider, if anybody...wanted me in the job, I could step into and learn the job of president of a community college. But the way the career trajectory goes, by the time you get to this job it's often a terminal or at the end of your career, you know, rather than get into a chief

academic officers job when you are in your 30's, let's say, and then you are in that job for 10 years or whatever and maybe in your 40's end up going into the president's job and then you'll have a nice long tenure of possibility.

It was interesting to hear Dr. Coleman's perception of his own career path of sorts in contrast with his thoughts on how the career trajectory to the presidency could happen. He seemed to be in deep thought as he continued:

I mean it's kind of what happens I think in business and industry, they move people into executive positions fairly early, I'm starting to talk off the topic because I haven't thought about this (pause) ...but we don't do that.

I wanted to get back to the issue of retirements at SMCC. I wanted to hear Dr. Coleman's impressions of what he thought was in store for SMCC. I shared some of my statistical findings and inquired as to whether or not SMCC might be facing the same leadership crisis with respect to retirement:

Yes, absolutely. I'll be 62 next year and I think there are three of us all kind of in the same generation. Yeah and so...you know we are all the same generation as presidents. You know there really isn't anybody to step up from... it really isn't until you get to this level that you start to understand what the president's role is. It's at this level that you learn the importance of the board of trustees, where you know, before this when you are associate dean ... your direction is towards the faculty and to give instructional advice, structural associating toward the faculty, the classroom, student issues, and that's certainly true here but now your focus starts to turn towards the board of trustees and exterior constituencies, legislative matters, accrediting bodies.

I asked Dr. Coleman about his perceptions of the role of president. What exactly did he consider the skills and strengths necessary for a community college president:

A big part of the president's job is or should be and maybe the biggest part is dealing with external constituency community relations, political matters, legislative relations; the relationship to the legislators who represent our district, and Martin is brilliant at this. That's a side of him that's very, very strong okay. You should be focused on those forces that are external to the institution that come to play upon it and you should be the one to maintain good relationships with those external constituencies and forces. And the internal matters should be as much as possible delegated to vice presidents. That's the way I would deal with it. Then [for] the internal stuff you want to have competent people who can take care of that for you and then report to you what they are doing and then you can give them kind of thought perimeters and let them work within those perimeters.

Dr. Coleman talked more about the role of the president, including the external requirements. He included an example that I felt really illustrated the commitment level as well as the necessity for a president to interact externally, even to the point of improvisation. Apparently a prominent community supporter wanted to play golf in a foursome at an annual golf outing fundraiser. Since President Martin was not a golfer, he'd assigned Dr. Coleman and two others to play but remained a part of the group by accompanying them in a golf cart and posing for pictures with the community supporter. Dr. Coleman's take on this action and the presidency in general:

You have to be very, very good at that. You have to be very articulate, you have to be able to speak publicly in front of a large crowd, audiences here and there on a constant basis, you have to have a lot of energy because it's never ending. It can be every night of the week. You have to live the job. He [President Martin] lives across the street and I live in Northville and first of all to be president you should live in the community, secondly I'm geographically challenged if I ever had that job. I would have to move into town because he has to be in town. You have so many nights when he works. You have to be high energy, you have to be on it all the time. Well and it also shows priorities. My priorities aren't that way.

As Dr. Coleman continued, I remembered President Martin's description of the college and the presidency as a "jealous mistress." Dr. Coleman touched on issues of family:

One thing, my wife has her preferences too and if I had said look we have to, if I were president we'd have to move, that would be fine but it's just different priorities. The president has to have the job as his first priority and in a way it's the first priority over a lot of personal things, your personal life. It trumps your personal life probably. Much more than my job, mine doesn't do that.

I wanted to know Dr. Coleman's perception of any gratifications that the community college president enjoys:

Yeah, you get recognized as a very important person in your community. You are a known person and assuming the institution isn't falling apart, you don't have some scandal like they have at Southern right now, you know who'd want to be president over there? You are respected and looked up to and all of that, those are all wonderful things. And of course your income level is high. It isn't as high as

it would be in private industry and in a lot of ways I think one of the problems with leadership and not just colleges, our community colleges, but school systems, superintendents, is it's a very big job and you make very good money, but it isn't as much as you make in private industry doing the same thing and you work just as hard, but I think there's that too.

I wasn't sure where Dr. Coleman was leading, but I sensed some issues with respect to prestige of the position as compared to industry and compensation. I thought it a good time to ask about the challenges or frustrations of the presidential role:

I think that could be frustrating if you have a board that tries to meddle in college affairs when they should leave those decisions to the administration. I think that it could be difficult when you have difficulty balancing and your budget isn't what it should be and you have to cut. We've lost like 3 million [dollars] last year and so you have to look at where you are going to cut, who you are going to cut, what programs get cut, what you can't do that you should do, that's frustrating. I don't think it's particularly a good time right now to be a president of a community college. I don't think he's not having a good time I just mean it's not as good a time as it was say in the mid 70's, when budgets were going up 5% a year, there was money, not to burn, but there was plenty, relatively speaking, but that is not the case right now.

Dr. Coleman's comment that it was not currently a good time to be president prompted me to inquire more about his perception of how the role had evolved. I also wanted know if he'd had at any time aspired to the presidency:

There's been a change in demand for accountability by government and accreditation, accrediting agencies. And so it's complicated things. We are expected to do more things. We are expected to do a lot with high school students that we weren't before, not just do overall but the high school outreach, we expected to do more for the community. There are more demands by more parts of our society.

Again, another description of the community college that supported Deegan & Tillery's theory of growth over several generations. I still wanted to know Dr. Coleman's own aspirations or lack thereof toward the presidency throughout his career. His answer:

No. ...when I got in this job I was naturally curious to know that whatever happened I always thought... Yeah. I mean I could say that when I got to this level I was thinking about the possibility if something had opened up. I was never interested enough to move though.

With respect to what conditions might have caused Dr. Coleman to pursue the presidency in earnest:

The opportunity for a vacancy in a presidency that was within commuting distance from where I live. That's pretty narrow isn't it? And it never happened. You know it could have, because I live near Schoolcraft and it could have because I live near Washtenaw, but by the time I got enough experience in this job, it never happened. But I would have, I think it would have been an interesting thing to do and I would have liked to have given it a try. See that's when if I were really ambitious to have been president and that was back in 1989 or something, that's when I would have said okay I'm going to look at another institution. I

didn't do it because I was happy where I was. So that's the decision I made at that point.

I appreciated Dr. Coleman's honesty about his own presidential aspirations. I wanted Dr. Coleman's perceptions with respect to current mentees or mentoring relationships on campus that might help to fill some of the upcoming vacancies at SMCC. Were there any persons on campus preparing themselves for these roles:

There might be one person but I don't think really. I don't see them really preparing themselves seriously as they should if they really mean it. They are not really saying it directly. A lot of people are kind of like me, even the ones younger than me; I see in this chief academic officer job where they've got plenty to do, they see the president and all the pressures that come under the president; they are not really lining up for those jobs that I can tell. You know you have to really be kind of ambitious in a purely ambitious way because you have to be willing to really sacrifice a lot of stuff to do that and people move with those presidencies and are thought to move around a lot and they move from place to place and that's tough to do.

Again, I was hearing that there would be little to no internal candidates for vacancies at SMCC. Similarly to President Martin, Dr. Coleman had suggested that he had not really aspired to his current role or that of the presidency. Regarding his current position, he shared:

I went into administration as associate dean level in '87 and mainly because, I don't know... it was sort of expected that I would do that, I think. People sort of saw me as someone who would do that and I wanted to do it and then that job was

a very hard job. That job is a job where you put out fires. An Associate Dean level job at community colleges is basically - it's like a foreman on the line in a factory, you know, who's watching to make sure nobody steals the ball bearings. You want a better administrative job than that; you know what I mean? You do. And this was a better job and so I focused on this job.

Dr. Coleman had left me with another interesting visual: the community college as a factory and the Associate Dean as a foreman for theft. Given that image, it was no wonder that there were problems getting people to move through the ranks. I found it interesting that Dr. Coleman, similarly to President Martin, had shared that he had not in fact followed a particular career path. Was this more common than I had realized? Might the rapid growth of the community college have contributed to a lack of career focus toward cabinet level positions? I needed to talk to more vice presidents to see what emerged.

Vice President & Dean of Career Education - Dr. Jane Thomas

Dr. Thomas and I took a few minutes to say hello and exchange bits of information about our families. I had worked for Dr. Thomas during my time as an administrator at SMCC until 1995. Dr. Thomas' office environment was exactly as I had remembered: a bit disheveled with piles of paperwork, each representing a facet of her role at SMCC. I segued into the interview by explaining the purpose of my study. I asked about her impressions of the statistics related to upcoming changes in community college leadership and SMCC, specifically.

Well we've had retirements here. We had 21 faculty leave last year. We had 26 faculty leave this year. We had four administrators leave 2 years ago. We had 3

administrators leave this year, and I think next year 3 of the vice presidents will leave. I don't think our president will for a couple years yet. So we've seen it here. We are hiring through advertising and what we are finding virtually across the board is there are not as many applicants as there used to be.

Dr. Thomas had more than intimated that there was indeed a problem with attracting applicants. I inquired as to what she thought might be contributing:

Well, fewer faculty want to move into administrative positions, I noticed. You know it used to be where faculty had this sort of image that they would move up. Some want to, but not that many. You know we've had so many budget cuts. People have seen the kind of hours senior staff have to put in. If I were a faculty person and I'd say I'd make \$85,000 plus EC (extra contractual) to work 8-1/2 months a year, 35 hours a week versus making 100,000-some dollars for working 12 months a year, 50 plus hours a week. And I don't think it's going to get any better, I mean, I don't think the state funding is going to get better.

Dr. Thomas seemed to be echoing what I'd heard in other interviews. I was back to wondering if the image of the presidency with respect to prestige had diminished. Dr. Thomas continued:

So I think with scarce resources the challenges are bigger and I think that people are sort of looking at the quality of life and younger people are not that interested in working like some of us are. They are much more interested in having free time. So I think it's going to be hard to fill some of these positions unless we restructure the job and I think that's going to be kind of difficult.

Yet again, I seemed to be hearing of a disconnection between the requirements of the job(s) and the expectations of qualified candidates. This seemed a likely time to inquire more about how Dr. Thomas had started her own career en route to her current position:

I started off wanting to be a youth minister. Then I wanted to be a campus minister. Then I wanted to be an English teacher so I was always kind of interested in education.

Dr. Thomas continued her story by telling of her time at seminary and her original intent to become a minister. Dr. Thomas shared that while working with community outreach programs in the city of Detroit, she became acquainted with the president of a community college. Her program was relocated to that community college, and her career as a community college administrator was launched. In her words:

And Dr. Wilson (the president) was my mentor and he sort of said ... I want you to create a community service and continuing education program for the college because we don't have one. I said, "What is the community service and continuing education program?" So I went out and I researched it and went around to people who were really helpful and I designed a program and the board approved it and so I was made the director of community service and continuing ed and then got promoted to assistant dean, which they didn't have one before. And then you know, then dean of community service and continuing ed and then when they added other job responsibilities at Washington County as they often did, I became the dean of educational services. And as you know when I left there I had the library for five campuses, and central area special needs of the five campuses, was centrally in charge of the foundation, community service and

continuing ed. And I had the western campus and then I had the downriver campus after that, so I had a campus as well as all those other programs to run. And probably would still be there if they had not offered the early retirement incentive.

I wondered if I was hearing that Dr. Thomas in fact had not necessarily embarked on a career path to community college leadership. I wanted to know more about her preparation for her current role. Dr Thomas shared that after her departure from Washington Community College, she had taken a position of lesser stature at SMCC. How did she progress to her current position?

And then Dr. Martin moved into the presidency. That was an opportunity to try and move up here and so I applied for it and got it. That's sort of how I got there. It's all kind of because I was doing something and either someone asked me, you know, or it was the next logical thing to do, but I have a bachelors degree in English, a masters in Theology, and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in adult and continuing ed. I mean none of them directly apply to what I'm doing today.

Dr. Thomas had confirmed that she had not set out to be a community college vice president or president. I thought it an appropriate time to ask Dr. Thomas more about her perceptions of the role of president and how that role had changed over time:

Well I think in the early days when community colleges were being created, presidents were more like entrepreneurs, you know, they were creating campuses and creating new programs and they had a lot more direct kind of activities much

like what I do now. I think as community colleges matured, they had to adjust what they were responsible for with the times.

Dr. Thomas continued and I felt I inadvertently supported the earlier findings of my research by adding:

I mean right now presidents are probably spending an ungodly amount of time on finances because there have been so many cuts. You know, they are either out raising funds or friends or they are deciding what's going to be cut to still preserve the mission of the college. They spend a lot of time on that. I think foundations are fairly new to the community college and presidents are spending more time assisting boards of foundations to try to fund raise. Some community colleges are very successful and many are not in that regard, because I don't think most of the presidents in place today have any fund-raising training or experience in this, you know, circumstances have placed them in that role.

I remembered that President Martin had emphasized the ability to fundraise with respect to millage elections as particularly important for his successor. I wanted to hear more of Dr. Thomas' perceptions of the presidency:

I think they have to have a sense of finance. I think it would be very helpful if they were good managers as people because there are not resources to keep people motivated and raise things other than monetary resources. It used to be people stay in the job because they were well paid and they were going to make more money next year. That's not necessarily true anymore. You know everybody here is taking pay cuts or have had decreases in their salary...

Again, the issue of prestige with respect to compensation had emerged. Dr. Thomas had specifically commented on “keeping people motivated.” Could this lack of motivation be manifesting itself into a lack of interest in pursuing higher-level administrative positions? In keeping with the presidential role, I asked Dr. Thomas her thoughts on gratifications and frustrations of the job:

It seems to me that the race of current community college presidents, a lot of them, have an ego in a sense. ...these are the people who are consensus leaders and not consensus leaders that you can be at a lower level. It's a much more authoritative role there. So I think one of the satisfactions that presidents get is they are top dogs. And I've seen it with women who defied me that their behaviors would change when they became president to be almost male-like in terms of some of those behaviors. Not all, in that there are more female presidents who are more consensus [builders], more intimate, who retain some of the things that made them good leaders at another level.

I decided not to ask Dr. Thomas to clarify her comments regarding women and their “male like” behaviors as president. Although that dialogue may have proved interesting, I did not feel it germane to this study. Dr. Thomas continued her opinions about the presidency and the effects of the role:

But there is something about being a president I think that's lonely and I think that people have got to have that mere satisfaction that they know they are the right person for the job and they are making tough decisions and they make a difference. To some extent I get some of that same satisfaction... I think that, you know, people at this level have to like stimulation of doing a lot of different

things at one time and that you'll never be done, that your desk will never be clear. I don't understand people with clean desks. Maybe they have more support systems or staff.

As I listened to Dr. Thomas, I was reminded of Fullan's (2001) concept of leading with moral purpose. It appeared that those in these roles were leading with a sense of purpose, yet they were describing a disconnection between the middle level administrator's need and motivation to progress and the commitment to the role once attained. Considering the anticipated retirements, I sensed that there would be serious concerns if a bridge were not hastily built to mitigate this disconnection. On a personal note, I found Dr. Thomas's comment about clean desks interesting, because all of the desks and offices of her counterparts were indeed immaculate. Hers was not.

Given Dr. Thomas's reaction to my inquiries regarding the presidential role, I wanted to know if she had ever aspired to the role:

I thought about it when I applied to come here. I had been a dean for many years and when I took early retirement, I applied for a number of jobs, some of which were presidencies and I came in second I think 5 or 6 times [because] Washington County Community College had a bad reputation and while people thought I looked good they just had hesitancy about the college. So I partly took a pay cut and a title cut to come here to have the reputation of SMCC to add to my name. And at the time I thought well you know I'm only going to stay here for a couple of years.

I wanted to know if Dr. Thomas had applied for presidencies after having accepted her current position as Vice President & Dean. Dr. Thomas did not exactly give a completely straight answer, but did share:

When Arthur Martin became president I saw an opportunity to be a vice president here and I stopped and I watched him and I thought well you know I can learn something from him and then when I want to be a community college president, you know I'll even be better prepared. But as the role of community college president has changed, I think that job is not as much fun as the job I have. I don't think the issues that you deal with are as for me professionally challenging nor would they necessarily use my skills. I mean, I'm sort of a shy person. I like working with people, I know, but I like being behind the scenes. I don't like to be the center of attention. I do not like to have to go to breakfast and dinner everyday and socialize and be charming 24 hours a day. I don't like that. It's not that I'm not charming and it's not that I don't do social things but a president's job is a lot more of that than it is the stuff that I like to do. And so I don't know what it was, but somewhere along those lines I sort of decided that that's not what I wanted to do, so I have not pursued it.

I was intrigued by the fact that Dr. Thomas had pursued moving into the presidential role on several occasions. I also knew unofficially that Dr. Thomas had occasionally applied for presidencies out of state within the past few years. Yet Dr. Thomas had ended her comments by indicating that she had decided that the role was not what she wanted to do. I wondered if some of Dr. Thomas's comments about the presidency and her impressions of how people had changed for the worse after becoming

president may have in fact been her way of dealing with not having become a president herself.

Fullan (2001) discussed as a part of his framework for effective leaders (see Chapter 2, Figure 2) the concepts of *energy-enthusiasm-hopefulness* as a characteristic found in effective leaders during times of remarkable change. As I thought more about Dr. Thomas's comments, I wondered if at some point her energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness for the presidency had waned. At one time those characteristics must have been there with respect to aspiring to the presidency as evidenced by multiple presidential searches. I wondered if the image of the presidency with respect to prestige had affected her motivation level to pursue. I did in fact ask Dr. Thomas to share why she was at one time attracted to the presidency:

Well at the time I was leaving Washington County Community College and I had accomplished a lot there. I had a lot of experience in my last position running a foundation, running the library, a special needs program, corporate training and a campus and it just seemed to me that actually a president would have less responsibility. The only thing that would be different is working with a board and I had gone through 9 presidents at Washington County Community College so I've seen how to do it right and how absolutely not to do it many times and I'm kind of a quick study so I think I figured out that I would know what to do. ... The longer that I go without applying for a presidency, I mean I can see that I could do that from this job and I don't have to do the things that I don't like to do. So it's just a different perspective.

As we neared the end of our time together, Dr. Thomas revisited the issue of the presidential role and qualified candidates:

I think there will be a shortage. I think that first of all not every president who is out there right now is that great and there are a really lot of bad presidents.

(pause) Some are very good. A lot of people don't understand, it's not like some other job that you come in at "x" hour and can leave at "x" hour. I think for a lot of people, maybe particularly for women, that's my perspective - if you have family you are to make those kinds of sacrifices. I mean, in my opinion it's a rare person who has the skills you need to run a major institution but also enjoys and does well the social responsibilities that come with the job at that level. So I think that it's going to be hard to find the president in the future... I don't know where we are going to get the next crop of leaders. I think it's going to be difficult.

My research had again been validated. I asked Dr. Thomas what the climate was currently like for mentoring at SMCC and whether in her opinion there were a few administrators looking to move up to the next level:

We have three faculty participating in this Galileo leadership project that went on for the last two years, one of whom is the CIS (Computer Information Systems) instructor who has been faculty chair of the senate for two terms and I've been mentoring her. She's co-chair of Working Connections with me and I'm hoping she'll apply for the associate dean of technology. I've been working another colleague who is actually going back to the classroom this fall. He was dean of technology at another school. So I mean I don't know that an internal person

would get it I mean we do have a tendency sometimes to promote someone within but that necessarily depends on the pool and the experience of other people.

To clarify and to end the interview, I asked Dr. Thomas if in her opinion there was currently anyone at SMCC aspiring to the presidency and preparing themselves appropriately. Dr. Thomas responded, “Nope. I would be the closest and I wouldn’t want this presidency and I don’t think I want a presidency anyway.”

So I had left yet another interview hearing the echo of President Martin’s analogy of the community college as a “jealous mistress.” The picture of this “jealous mistress” was beginning to take shape as having an image and perception that was not necessarily considered prestigious anymore.

Vice President & Dean of Student Services – Dr. Mark Meyers

My time with Dr. Meyers started very casually, as we were both challenged to find an electrical outlet for my recorder. After a few minutes of looking under chairs and behind a desk, we settled down and I gave an overview of the purpose of my research. I then asked Dr. Meyers for his reaction to the statistical data regarding upcoming retirements. Dr. Meyers’ response:

I think it’s true because the majority of the people who came into the community college movement came in the ‘60s. That’s when President Truman had created sufficient funds for community colleges to be built. In the 60s they were building a community college in a week. They went from about 230 community colleges to 1100 across the country...

I asked Dr. Meyers to elaborate on his specific experiences as a community college administrator over several decades. He began by describing his own entrance into the community college system:

We all showed up and we were just immediately moved into responsible positions because community colleges were expanding mainly because the baby boomers were coming through the system and the 4-year universities couldn't handle them so they ended up in community colleges. So there was this huge hiring in the 60s and we are all at the point now where we need to retire. We've all had 40 years of service or so and it's time to go.

How succinctly Dr. Meyers had confirmed my research findings with respect to an upcoming dearth in leadership. I asked Dr. Meyers his thoughts as specifically related to a shortage of qualified candidates to fill upcoming presidential vacancies. Dr. Meyers offered a very interesting perspective:

So presidents aren't very much different although they are somewhat different because many of them are younger when they get appointed to the position but there are many who are in that same boat who've been in the community college movement since the 60s and they should be retiring but I'm not very worried about it. There are always people who are interested in being president and there are still a lot of people who are working in the community college movement who are younger who would like those jobs.

Dr. Meyers assertion that there were many people with aspirations to the presidency prompted me to probe further as to what he thought some of the issues were:

So I think the issue is whether or not they [potential applicants] are ready to take on that responsibility, but the boards of trustees will send them off for training and there will be lots of applicants and I'm not worried. Those positions will all be filled. That's true for vice presidents too. There just aren't that many positions. You have 1100 community colleges; you got 1100 presidents. That's not very many positions. Usually, most community colleges have 3 or 4 vice presidents so that isn't very many positions across the country and there are plenty of faculty and lower level administrators who want those jobs.

I didn't really want to interrupt Dr. Meyers as he seemed to have given this a great deal of thought. He spoke deliberately and with an aura of deep belief and understanding of what he was saying. I wanted to know what circumstances had caused him to give the issue this much thought, but I decided to let him continue and made a mental note to probe more later in the interview. So, Dr. Meyers continued:

So they always talk about the great crisis but I don't think there's any crises at all. I think those positions - as people retire - people will apply and the problem the boards are going to have is that they've got presidents that have been experienced and now they have to just train new presidents although there are lots of workshops or lots of places where people can go to get intensive training as presidents. Most boards will probably give them 2 or 3 months of training and they already have lots of experience in community colleges in leading it and so I don't see this as a big deal.

Dr. Meyers' comments led me to think about the data that I had collected with respect to presidents and senior level officers leaving their positions. Further, I thought

again about the interviews I'd conducted so far at SMCC. Consistently, I had heard that the vice presidential level was expected to retire within the next two years. So I wondered where Dr. Meyers thought the abundance of applicants would come and asked that question. Dr. Meyers' response:

As for who goes into presidencies, most of them are from the academic vice president or the career vice president typically; however, because of the economic situation in the country a lot of boards may be looking to business managers to be presidents. But very few people make it from student services; very few vice presidents of student services get into presidencies, only if there is great student unrest. If there is great student unrest, then the boards get interested in having somebody who can deal with students. By and large they are more interested in people who are good strategic planners who reflect what the faculty want because keeping the faculty happy is probably one of the most important things you have to do as a board of trustees and as a president. Faculty don't like business managers, they don't like student services people, they like their own academic people that they understand.

Something was emerging here, but I wasn't yet sure what it was. I was intrigued by the fact that Dr. Meyers had separated the financial and student services positions as undesirable for the presidency for three reasons. First, I had not inquired as to any specifics regarding ranking of the vice presidencies. Second, all of my research thus far supported both of those positions as viable stepping stones to the presidency. Finally, the third reason was that Dr. Meyers was the Vice President of Student Services. I wondered if he had some personal experiences that had shaped his viewpoint. In any case,

something was not coming together and my instincts told me it was time to probe further. I decided to delve further into Dr. Meyers' own background by asking if he'd had a set career path to his current role. Dr. Meyers responded:

Personally I always aspired to getting higher levels of responsibility and that's just because of my family background that just says you are just supposed to keep climbing the ladder until finally they hit you on the head and say you can't go any higher. So when I was in Merrill, I worked at Montford College from '66 to '82 and I became a dean of students at one of the campuses and then the college board made the policy that nobody could become a vice president from inside. They only fill positions from the outside of the college so then I started looking elsewhere and I got a job here as a vice president and I've been here ever since.

Dr. Meyers had described his own motivation as defined by a family background that encouraged moving up until a ceiling of sorts was imposed. Given my interest in motivation of qualified applicants for this study, I found that statement to be significant. I had tended to think of motivation as relating to the environment of the role and the needs of accomplishment and belonging one might feel in a certain role. According to Dr. Meyers, it was his family's construct of aspiring to higher levels of responsibility that had driven him. I knew that Dr. Meyers had been in his current position for a number of years. Given his comments about the need to move up, I wanted to know exactly how long he had been in his current position. Dr. Meyers gave quite an answer:

I've been here 22 years. I've tried to become president. I've applied 19 different times. I have been the finalist in 5 places. I have been number two in two places. But, ultimately I always lost out to the academic vice president, so it's always

been that what I've related to you about my position moving into a presidency.

I've had personal experience with that. That's a difficult direction to go.

At that moment, I felt that I finally understood where Dr. Meyers was coming from. I tried to see things from his perspective for a moment. I came to the conclusion that it was perfectly logical for Dr. Meyers to feel there was no shortage. After all, if he had personally applied for 19 presidencies, it stands to reason that he would feel that there are others out there with his same level of motivation. Further, considering that he had not been selected for the presidency 19 times over, I suspected it might have been hard for him to conceive of a crisis or shortage. I realized that if I were Dr. Meyers I would probably feel that if there were that big of a looming shortage, then I shouldn't have been passed over 19 times. Dr. Meyers' earlier statements about the student services position being an unlikely inheritor of the presidency made sense as well. His personal experiences had indeed shaped his responses. Given his experience with interviewing for the presidency, I decided that Dr. Meyers' perspective on the presidential role would prove very helpful to my research. Dr. Meyers shared his thoughts on the presidential role:

When I think of the role of president I think of a person who has very good strategic planning skills, very good interpersonal skills and it's probably one of the reasons why I've never become a president. I don't see the president as being top down; I don't see the president as being in an authoritarian role. I see more [presidents] in an authoritative role and most boards in community colleges prefer authoritarian kinds of personalities, because they keep control and most boards of trustees in community colleges are local and usually conservative and they are

usually very worried about empowering people across the campus to realize their potential. They are worried they may get out of control so they prefer a controlling president, a controlling personality. That's my perspective.

Dr. Meyers had woven his perceptions on why he had not been selected for a presidency into his comments about the role. I heard from him so far that faculty did not like student services or financial people and that boards wanted presidents with controlling personalities to discourage empowerment of faculty and staff. I still wanted to know more about how he felt about the skills and characteristics of a president. Dr. Meyers continued and concentrated more on the skills and requirements of the presidency:

But the president's role is huge and it requires partnerships in the community as well as, well, demands partnerships in the community in order to deal with the funding. It demands partnerships with legislature, with local business; that position has everything to do with building image and helping the community to understand that the community college makes a lot of difference in people's lives, gives them the opportunity in training the knowledge and skills to be productive in the community. The president has to try to get the employers to understand that this is the place where they ought to be coming to get skills and educated people in the work force.

Dr. Meyers had described the presidency as highly visible in the environment external to the campus and yet at the same time very involved internally with respect to strategic planning and maintaining a sense of authority and order. As we concluded our time together, we did touch on Dr. Meyers' perceptions of any ongoing mentoring

programs for administrators or faculty. Dr. Meyers did not cite any such programs and only spoke generally of any faculty or administrators preparing themselves for vice presidential level roles at SMCC. As we wrapped up, Dr. Meyers concluded about the dearth of qualified candidates for upcoming vacancies:

I must be an idiot, but I don't see it as a problem. I know that everybody is talking about this great problem but they've been talking about this great problem for 20 years and I never see that there is a dearth of candidates for presidential positions or vice presidential positions. If any of us retired today there would be 5 or 6, maybe there'd be 50 applications for our positions.

My interview with Dr. Meyers was indeed significant for several reasons. Dr. Meyers was the only person that I interviewed that did not feel that there was a shortage of qualified candidates for vice presidential positions or the presidency. Yet he had confirmed earlier in the interview that even at SMCC the vice presidential level would be vacated within two years, leaving a vacant level of leadership and experience. In addition, Dr. Meyers was also the only participant to disclose having interviewed for 19 presidencies. He had further indicated that he felt he was not selected due to his management style and his experience as a student services administrator. Dr. Meyers' story indeed conflicted with what I'd heard from others, but his own personal experiences had been vastly different. I concluded that in part Dr. Meyers' opinion that there was no evidence of a shortage was most likely a result of his having applied unsuccessfully for multiple presidencies throughout the country.

Vice President & Controller – Ms. Marcia Short

Ms. Short was the only participant whom I had not previously met as she had joined the SMCC after my departure in the mid-nineties. I took a few minutes to introduce myself and we conversed a bit about the college in general. I began to share that I was completing my doctorate in Educational Leadership, but before I could continue, Ms. Short interjected, “That’s good news because you know there is such a shortage, a leadership gap in higher education is critical and becoming alarming” (transcript). I was shocked – talk about building immediate rapport! I hadn’t even started the interview and the participant was heralding my study and my findings.

I then shared the purpose of my research and asked how the statistics that I presented compared to her perceptions and experiences. Ms. Short replied:

Yes, I’ve given it thought and I’ve noticed it to be true. In the state of Michigan I’ve noticed significant numbers of presidents retiring and even more disturbingly I’ve noticed that in many cases they are long-term presidents. I’m aware of the leadership gap at the top and also in senior management the same is true as I’m sure you are aware of...

Ms. Short had essentially validated my research and findings. She seemed well versed on the topic and continued:

Academic deans and student services deans across the state also will have a big gap there. Chief financial officers have changed more incrementally over time. I’ve watched the turnover in those roles and that has been more incremental. It hasn’t been as dramatic as it has been with a more of a cliff effect for president than other positions. So yes, I’ve noticed the change in presidencies and I’m

alarmed that I don't see a next generation coming up that's prepared to take those places because the people who probably would are also retiring, so where is the next group coming from that will be president?

Ms. Short had very quickly given credence to all of my research and supporting literature. I felt a sense of excitement mixed with relief. I couldn't wait to find out her thoughts on whether SMCC was true to the pattern I'd discovered and described. Ms. Short commented:

Absolutely true. We are going to have a complete drain here in about a year. We are offering a voluntary employee incentive program for cabinet officers of which there are five and I believe four of them will take it. The president is not taking the vest. I think he's offering it to our cabinet as a gift. He knows that most of them are just about ready to go and he's going to be staying. His current contract was extended through 2007.

Ms. Short's estimate painted the gravest scenario that I had heard for SMCC so far. Everyone else had estimated the retirements to occur within two years. Ms. Short had not only shortened the timeframe but had indicated that in this case the president might be the only one left for a few years. If that were true, the president would be faced with hiring a new cabinet before his own departure in approximately 2007. I realized that if the president were to choose to retire, essentially the executive level of leadership could disappear within a year. This potential situation epitomized and illustrated the effect of these retirements and the subsequent shortage of leadership. These people would be retiring and taking all of their institutional knowledge (in some instances decades) along with them.

Given that Ms. Short was the newest and youngest cabinet member, I assumed that she would be the only remaining cabinet level administrator, if the retirements occurred as anticipated. Ms Short confirmed my assumption and then I inquired as to her own aspiration and career path. Ms Short shared:

Did I aspire? Yes I did. I started out in public accounting but then I learned that that was not for me. There was no passion. I quickly found that I had no passion for it. The role essentially is to make one or two people wealthy and to help corporations grow and who cares. I come from an educational family, lots of teachers and service of nursing that kind of thing so I grew up with education in the educational environment and I had an opportunity to move into it and I did and once I was in it, I knew I wanted to be in a leadership position and I did aspire to it and worked towards that.

Given that Ms. Short might be the only remaining member of SMCC's cabinet in a relatively short timeframe, I thought it significant to know her aspirations to the presidential role in time. Ms. Short was emphatic:

No. Talk about one of the worst jobs you could have. It's the worst of all possible worlds. As a VP I have all the ability in the world to have impact. I can impact in the community. I have, you know, community relations responsibilities. I have impact with what happens on campus. I have a division that I can directly mold into and guide. I watch students across the podium and I feel part of all that, but I don't have board relations. I'm not a political appointment. I don't have those headaches. You've got to want something else to do that and you got to want something else and I don't know what.

Well, now I knew that Ms. Short did not under any circumstances want to be president. She had already stated in the interview that three or four of the current vice presidents were expected to retire. So, I thought this provided the perfect opportunity to learn her perceptions on qualified internal candidates to fill these roles. Ms. Short gave another definitive response:

Well I can tell you this - we have, as I mentioned, three VP's that are probably retiring. We have no internal candidates for any of them. We will have to go to the outside for every one of them and even externally we know there is a very limited pool for every one of them. So I think that speaks to the crisis we are in.

Ms. Short had, in effect, taken my research to a new level. My research had focused on an impending leadership crisis. I realized that what Ms. Short was saying was that SMCC was already in a crisis mode – there was no “impending” to it. Again, I wanted to know why this was happening. If indeed SMCC was at the doorstep of the crisis, what were they doing to combat this situation? I asked Ms. Short if she had noticed any shortage of qualified candidates when positions were advertised:

Absolutely. We've advertised for positions, such as director of financial services, which you would think in this environment would produce a great pool of qualified candidates. It didn't. As you said there were many applications but in our minds really only one qualified candidate and two in second that we would have hired hire if we'd had to, but really wouldn't have wanted to.

Given the situation that Ms. Short described, I wanted to know her thoughts on the status of internal candidates and mentoring opportunities to prepare them. Ms. Short shared regarding mentoring:

We don't adequately. We do a few things, for example University of Michigan established a community college leadership consortium and we participated in that for the first two years and then there was a three-year program, and then the budget fell out for everybody and most of the consortium participants dropped out, because it was an expensive program. But institutionally we do not have a commitment to bringing forward leaders.

I was not able to see that SMCC had a real strategy or plan for filling their upcoming vacancies. However, Ms. Short had been so forthright with her answers that I wanted her opinion on whether she felt that there were potential internal candidates preparing themselves for more responsible leadership roles. Ms. Short was clear and concise in her response:

I do see a few people, a small handful of people that are interested in that kind of thing. Unfortunately because there has been nothing in place they aren't ready now that the roles of those positions are opening. If they had been mentored, they would have been given the experiences over time that would have prepared them. As it stands they have nothing to show. They are excited but they will not get the job. They simply do not have the experience. Do they have the ability, sure, but we haven't done our job.

There was something about the way Ms. Short spoke that made me believe that she had thought about this situation a lot. Perhaps she had thought about the impending leadership issues at SMCC more deeply because she knew that she would be the only cabinet member left in a relatively short period of time. In a sense, she would truly be

experiencing the “crisis” up close and personal. Ms. Short continued regarding the shortage of on campus candidates to step into these roles:

You know, it’s surprising but it’s a very small handful of people that are interested in doing that. But I don’t know, I think people that want leadership, that want responsibility, and that want to take on challenges, I don’t know if there’s that many people that really want to do that. I think people get to a point and they are comfortable and they can’t see why they should push for anymore.

The issue of motivation had surfaced again. Ms. Short had touched on the interest for candidates or lack thereof and the possible mindset of candidates with respect to wondering why they should bother. There was indeed a disconnection between the role expectations of the job and the willingness of potential candidates to take on those expectations. Ms. Short’s opinion regarding a disconnection of sorts:

I don’t know that it’s a matter of making the job attractive. I think it’s more of a matter of going out and seeking people who have the drive and some of the skills to move forward because I think they are out there but we don’t cast them. I think there are more of them out there and I think it’s a matter of us going out and finding out who they are.

Although I understood what Ms. Short was saying, I didn’t see how SMCC could immediately reform their strategy for encouraging new people into leadership in time to deal with the situation at hand. So, as we neared the end of the interview, I asked Ms. Short what her assessment was of SMCC’s immediate leadership situation:

We are a perfect case study of how lack of preparation, etc., has led us to the brink of a crisis. We are losing leadership in one fell swoop and we have no one

ready to step forward. I'm not sure we have people ready to step forward in either of the positions. We'll have to make do and we know that we will go out in the market and find replacements because other colleges have done as we have done and the pool just isn't there. So we've been told for a long time now that there is a crisis in leadership in higher education and it's here, here on our campus right now. By all means share what you've learned because we are living it. We know it's a problem, and, as you say, where is the solution?

Ms. Short had come right out and said that SMCC did not have a solution for this situation. Even though all of my research had in a sense predicted that this might be the case, this point of the interview with Ms. Short was a defining moment because without provocation she was supporting my research efforts on multiple levels. First, she reaffirmed her stance throughout the interview that there was a crisis in leadership for community colleges in general and at SMCC in particular. Second, she gave a very definitive time frame and numbers – the loss of three to four vice presidents within one year with no known replacements. Third, her final statement was actually a question for me, the researcher: “We know it's a problem, and, as you say, where is the solution?” (Short). I was being asked by the Vice President/Controller of a well-respected community college of very credible size and reputation to share my research findings in hopes of helping them with their leadership crisis. I had the same feeling that I had experienced when Dr. Martin had encouraged me to consider applying for upcoming vice presidential vacancies. And that feeling for me was, “My gosh, this is indeed bad if I'm being looked at as part of the solution.”

It wasn't that I doubted my own qualifications that concerned me, but rather the fact that I just happened to come in to discuss this issue of leadership on their campus and they so openly were ready to ask for help in any way. Something about that openness gave credence to both Dr. Martin and Ms. Short's statements. I thought about it for a while and realized that perhaps they were speaking so freely because the two of them would potentially be the only executives left within a year. The light bulb finally came on – they were in fact crying out for help because they knew they were the ones who ultimately would be “living it” as Ms. Short had said at the end of her interview. A final note about Ms. Short and this researcher's perceptions: Ms. Short was the only person I interviewed whom I did not know in any capacity. There was no prior relationship or preconceived notions on either of our parts. In fact, Ms. Short had been on vacation throughout the rest of my interviews and I was her first appointment upon returning. My point in documenting this is to illustrate that I believe Ms. Short's answers were very candid and totally uncolored by any prior relationship with me, the researcher. So it was doubly amazing and gratifying that Ms. Short's assertions so closely paralleled and supported my research findings.

Director of Lifelong Learning – Ms. Constance Klancy

I have known Constance Klancy for 15 years. We were colleagues at SMCC for six years and have remained personal friends since that time. Ms. Klancy had been an avid supporter of my completing my doctorate throughout the process. It was important to me to make sure that as the interviewer I treated her as I had the other participants. So I began the interview by sharing some of the statistics and introducing the purpose of my research. Oddly enough, we had never discussed my research topic before other than my

having shared that my study was related to community college leadership issues. Ms. Klancy's immediate response:

It's astounding to hear that three quarters of the community college presidents can be retiring in the next six years, really. Because I think you said between now and 2010 - that is astounding that the percentage of presidents will be retiring. I had absolutely no idea that that was the case certainly. And also the observation that the next level of individuals who are most likely to move into the presidency are also nearing retirement age as well is... (shaking head with shocked facial expression)

I asked Ms. Klancy her thoughts on whether SMCC fit the pattern that I was describing:

It absolutely fits that pattern. The president of SMCC right now I believe is either 62 or 63 years old and vice presidents who would be in line to move into the presidency are all within the 60 to 62 age bracket right now and they are also considering pending retirements within the next couple years so I'm not surprised, I guess I shouldn't be surprised then that it may be a national trend as well.

Ms. Klancy had confirmed my findings with respect to an impending crisis and the anticipated effects on SMCC's campus. I asked her perception with respect to other similar sized institutions:

I think you are going to find similar patterns. I'm most familiar with community colleges in southeastern Michigan and you'll find the same patterns in those community colleges as well. Baby boomer generation you know actually it's a group that I am a member of as well and I will be facing retirement soon, so I

guess I shouldn't be surprised. But it's not until you hear the numbers that you really begin to process and say, "Well, what effect is this going to have on our institutions in the very near future?"

Ms. Klancy had raised one of my research questions – again, in my opinion, validating the purpose of this study. In addition, Ms. Klancy had introduced another layer. As a director, Ms Klancy represented mid-level management, or one of those people who might logically aspire to the vice presidential level. Her admission that she too would be retiring soon again raised the bar, as now the level below the vice presidential level was potentially exiting as well. I recalled that Ms. Klancy had been at SMCC for a number of years and wanted to know more about how she felt about the presidential role. First I inquired as to the length of her tenure and then asked if she'd at any time aspired to become a community college president. Her thoughts:

As of July I have been in the community college system for 27 years. At SMCC for 27 years. That answer would have to be unequivocally "I have not." I have not had a personal need to be in that level of position to serve the community. I think the demands are too high today on the individual who has to lead the institution. It's rare that you run into Dr. Martin and he tells you that he has an entire weekend of personal time that he can spend with his family and during the week he's often at meetings or dinners or events in the community four, five, or six days of the week, so it's that aspect of having to give up part of one's own commitment to family that is the strongest deterrent for me.

Ms. Klancy echoed some of what I'd heard before regarding the perceived demands of the role and the unwillingness to make personal life decisions to

accommodate the “jealous mistress” that President Martin had described. It appeared that in a nutshell, the motivation had never been there for Ms. Klancy. Had she noticed anyone else on campus preparing themselves for higher-level roles and why or why not?

Ms. Klancy remarked:

No, I cannot say that I’ve observed that. No, and the reason I don’t think I’m seeing it is that there hasn’t been a clear pattern of promotion within the institution. There just has not and I’ve been here 27 years.

So what did Ms. Klancy think was going to happen at SMCC over the next several years with respect to leadership?

It’s going to be interesting. For that matter I suspect they are going to be hiring vice presidents from the outside as well. I don’t know that there are many faculty members from within the institution who hold doctorates who will be prepared to move into a vice presidential position. So, I suspect that we are going to be looking to people who have had leadership positions at other institutions.

Although that sounded reasonable, given that most other community colleges were dealing with the same situation, this proposed solution did not necessarily seem extremely plausible or easily achievable. I wondered what the climate was like on SMCC’s campus. My thoughts were that overall there must be some discomfort in knowing that a shake-up in leadership was imminent. Ms. Klancy shared her observations:

If administrators across campus heard those numbers [my research statistics], and if you know - I mean, you have to turn the light on and people are so engaged in their day-to-day activities. I’m not sure that they are looking that far down the

pipe. We are all worried about the next budget cuts that are coming in October, but are we looking at the legacy that we will leave behind? I just don't think we've had time to look that far down the road.

It really seemed to me that this crisis in leadership had almost crept up on everyone at SMCC. Cabinet level administrators had been aging and headed for retirement for the past decade, but it appeared everyone had been too busy to notice. Further, mid-level managers such as Ms. Klancy were not expressing any interest in inheriting these positions and their challenges. Ms. Klancy had reaffirmed that there was indeed a shortage of qualified candidates and that potential applicants were not connecting with the necessary preparation and commitment for these jobs.

Director of Human Resources – Dr. Samantha Brown

I had heard from the president and from those individuals in positions typically in the career trajectory to the presidency. I wanted to hear from the person responsible for the hiring process at SMCC. As the Human Resources Director, Dr. Samantha Brown was in the position to view this situation through a different lens than those in the academic specific roles. Dr. Brown's perception:

I think the demographics of the population are such that you really have to think about legacy leadership, you have to think about who is going to fill these kinds of positions in the future. I have not really given a great deal of thought to it other than to pay attention to... let me back up. Since my role in filling those positions would be how to conduct these kinds of searches, I've paid attention to how other colleges do that. Is it working? I've paid attention to how other colleges have done it and what kinds of advertisement they put out but I haven't really done a

great deal on it to be honest with you. One of those things that's on the desk over there that I should be doing, but it's on the backburner.

This was not the answer I had expected from the Human Resources Director. But the more I thought about it, Dr. Brown's response really did make sense. Her answer had quickly connected the bulk of what I had heard. I realized at that juncture that by Dr. Brown admitting that she had given so little thought to conducting searches to fill vacancies, she had in fact validated the other stories of uncertainty about how to handle the situation. In other words, if the Human Resources Director was not dealing with the grave and imminent situation described by President Martin and echoed by the cabinet (with the exception of Dr. Meyers), it stood to reason that administrators on campus were not particularly aware of or in touch with the situation.

I wanted to hear Dr. Brown's thoughts on how SMCC compared to national trends as far as impending retirements of its executives:

Yeah, I think so. Our president has been president for a number of years. He would certainly be eligible to retire. I don't really know if he is planning on retiring in the very near future but he could and that's true of almost of all of our cabinet with one exception just given their ages so yeah I think the college could very well be facing the possibility of replacing a number of executive level people.

I must say that I indeed found it interesting that Dr. Brown didn't seem to have a better handle on the situation, given what I had heard in the other interviews. It occurred to me that Dr. Brown might have been trying not to disclose too much information from

the standpoint of the Human Resources Director. Confidentiality is always an issue in personnel departments.

As our interview moved toward a close, Dr. Brown shared a lot of information about the selection process for applicants, such as the use of screening committees to make recommendations to the hiring administrator and the names of publications where SMCC typically advertise job postings.

Probably the most significant moment of my time with Dr. Brown surfaced at the end of the interview. Dr. Brown encouraged me to apply for an Associate Dean's position that had been vacant for a couple of years. When I indicated that I would not be interested, Dr. Brown gave me several copies of a corresponding job posting and asked me to share with anyone that I knew. Finally, Dr. Brown mentioned as I was leaving that there would be upcoming vice presidential vacancies and that I should keep in touch and consider applying. As a parting note, Dr. Brown confirmed that I had her phone number and email address and again encouraged me to keep in touch and consider future job openings.

The conclusion that I drew was that somewhere deep down Dr. Brown knew, just as the other participants had, that SMCC was indeed facing a shortage in qualified applicants for upcoming vacancies. Her awareness was evidenced when she essentially tried to recruit me (and any qualified people I knew) for current and future openings at SMCC. I suspected that if qualified applicants were indeed lining up to apply, Dr. Brown would not have found the need to appeal to me so strongly.

Summary

This chapter was divided into two sections. The first section, *The Community College President*, focused on the role and expectations of the presidency over four developmental stages. Deegan and Tillery's (1985) four generations of community college development was used to illustrate how the role of the president evolved over time in general and specifically at SMCC.

The second section, *The Pathway to the Presidency – Their Stories*, presented the stories that resulted from personal interviews with the president of SMCC and cabinet level administrators. The focus of this section was on hearing the experiences of these individuals with respect to their perceptions of the presidential role and their own career paths and aspirations.

Themes emerged from these stories, the examination of documents, and observation that will be discussed further and analyzed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the background, purpose, and significance of this study. In Chapter 2, the historical context that supported this study and the grounding theoretical and conceptual frameworks were introduced and explored. Chapter 3 provided a rationale for the methodology that was employed for this study and introduced the research questions. Chapter 4 provided the findings and discussion in two sections. The role and expectations of the community college presidency were contrasted with motivational levels of community college administrators to aspire to the job. Themes emerged through the stories of a sitting president and cabinet level administrators. Chapter 5 begins with a brief summary of the research and the theoretical implications of the study. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research and practice, as well as implications for community college leaders.

Purpose and Significance of the Research

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine the phenomenon of the small pool of qualified and interested candidates to replace retiring community college presidents and senior level officers and to learn if or how organizational changes and leadership during the growth and expansion of the community college system have impacted or contributed to this phenomenon. Multiple studies (outlined in Chapter 1) supported the position that a notable number of community college CEOs would be retiring soon. In addition, the research of Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) further suggested that the positions common to the career trajectory to the presidency were also retiring. Amy and VanderLinden (2002) further concluded that although 87 percent of

presidents and 74 percent of chief academic officers hold doctorates, pursuit of community college-related doctoral degrees had declined, which indicated a lack of preparation for the presidency.

The significance of this research is based on the ability of findings to provide timely and useful information to community college leaders and boards currently facing a dearth in candidates for the presidency. The experiences of one president and cabinet level administration at one institution were shared. It is hoped that this study will add to the body of scholarly research related to community college leadership.

Summary of Research

After a literature review, Deegan and Tillery's (1985) framework of generations of community college development was selected to provide a backdrop of the historical development of the community college system and the role of the president. Further, Fullan's (2001) framework for leadership provided a lens for viewing how leadership had evolved over four generations of organizational change within the community college system. As my research progressed, the motivational theory of Alderfer (1972) was explored to help make sense of why or why not community college leaders were aspiring to the presidency.

The research tradition used for this study was the qualitative inquiry. The researcher used the data collection methods of observation, document review, and interviewing. To organize and analyze the data from interviews and campus visits, the researcher engaged in a repetitive process of collecting, organizing, analyzing the data and then reentered the field when necessary to gather more data. Glaser's (1978)

constant comparative model of steadily comparing and analyzing throughout the data collection process was used.

A community college in Southeastern Michigan (SMCC) was selected as the research site. Data were drawn from the review of documents such as college catalogs, journal and newspaper articles, organizational structure records and charts, statistical reports, minutes from meetings, informal discussions, and job descriptions and postings. In addition, personal interviews were conducted with the President of SMCC and the entire cabinet of executive positions.

Themes emerged from these various data sources that helped me to better understand this phenomenon of a shortage of qualified candidates to fill upcoming vacancies at community colleges. These themes are outlined in the next section of this chapter.

Major Emergent Themes

As my research progressed, I found that several commonalities or themes began to emerge across various data collection methods:

- *The Jealous Mistress*
- Questionable Prestige
- Lack of Career Path
- No Motivation: No Preparation

These themes emerged during interviews with the president and vice presidents of SMCC and helped me to better understand situations and relationships germane to the lack of qualified candidates to fill presidential vacancies at community colleges. This section presents each of those themes.

The Jealous Mistress

The *Jealous Mistress* first surfaced during my interview with President Martin as a descriptor of how all-consuming the role of the president really was. Although Dr. Martin had been successful in the presidential role, he was very clear in conveying that the role deeply affects one's family life as a direct result of the scrutiny of the public and the press. As President Martin shared, "I mean, you look at the presidents of community colleges and universities and take a look at the agonizing life they lead and if one has family, children, they're part of the role" (Martin interview). In addition, President Martin expressed the visibility and lack of privacy of the presidency. He described the job as unattractive to prospective candidates because of this fishbowl type of existence, as well as the compounded internal and external workload and commitments. President Martin was clear that only the sense of accomplishment that he felt made the rest of the job worth it.

Although President Martin coined the phrase of the *Jealous Mistress*, every other participant described very similar viewpoints on the presidency. Ms. Klancy and Ms. Short had both been clear that they had never considered the presidency as an option because of the required lifestyle. Ms. Short had been very direct in her description of the presidential role, "Talk about one of the worst jobs you could have" (Short interview). Drs. Coleman and Thomas had each described the role as requiring a very special person to take on the sheer volume of work with respect to time commitments and lack of privacy. Dr. Coleman had stated, "... you have to have a lot of energy because it's never ending. It can be every night of the week. You have to live the job" (Coleman interview). Dr. Meyers, the Vice President of Student Services, was the only participant

to disclose that he had continued to seek out a presidency regardless of the rigors of the job. The comments of these administrators were not just speculation on their parts. They each used their observations of President Martin's lack of privacy and personal time to illustrate their points.

The scope of the role of the president and corresponding commitments certainly had expanded over time as evidenced by the work of Deegan & Tillery (1985). With each successive generation the presidency had grown, as had the public figure status of the role. A generation 2 president, for example, was much more internally focused on curriculum and facilities creation. Current President Martin, however, was described as spending an enormous amount of time in the community raising revenue and friends. I concluded that this was indeed a factor creating a disconnection of sorts between the feelings and expectations of potential candidates and the expectations and reality of the job. For the most part, potential candidates, such as SMCC's own cabinet level administrators, had essentially removed themselves from the equation due to their fear of the all-consuming nature of the role. Their fears were based on observations of the sitting president and their own perceptions. The difference between why these administrators did not want the job and why President Martin did seemed to boil down to the fact that President Martin felt that the sense of accomplishment that he experienced was worth the other aggravation. Somehow that part of the message had not transferred. In thinking of Fullan's (2001) framework for leadership, the concept of leading with moral purpose helped me to understand President Martin's willingness to continue to fight the *Jealous Mistress*. At the end of the day, President Martin apparently had a desire to focus on making a positive difference while understanding change and building toward the future.

I perceived that in effect, President Martin had a moral purpose for continuing to lead that far outweighed the apparent limitations and commitments of the role.

Questionable Prestige

Another factor influencing the desire for SMCC leaders to aspire to the presidency seemed to be the dwindling perception of the prestige of the position. Although the role of president at any institution or corporation would seem to imply a certain level of prestige, I heard something different from participants in this study.

Prestige was spoken of in two areas: salary and the budgetary confinements of the position. President Martin touched on the issue of salary as compared to roles within corporations with the same responsibility. He intimated that anyone looking at the financial considerations for industry versus the community college would gear themselves toward a career in industry. When asked why, he stated, “Because I don’t think the job is attractive anymore. I don’t think they have the prestige anymore, certainly not the income” (Martin interview). He further added that as a result of collective bargaining agreements, faculty members were no longer dependent on moving into administrative roles to enjoy a competitive wage. There was no longer that much of a salary differential between faculty and executive level roles. In fact, President Martin had shared with a laugh that some faculty members were indeed earning more than he was. Dr. Thomas echoed this viewpoint by comparing the current salary of faculty to that of a vice president. In her estimation, a faculty member’s salary and extra contractual earnings were very close to her own – the difference being that faculty worked fewer months per year and were not required to spend long hours on campus. She added, “It used to be people stay in the job because they were well paid and they were going to

make more money next year. That's not necessarily true anymore" (Thomas interview). Dr. Thomas seemed quite frustrated yet appeared accepting of why others were not excited about aspiring to her or the president's jobs. Both Drs. Coleman and Meyers reinforced this opinion by commenting that one did not have to aspire to the presidency to earn a decent or, in some instances, comparable wage at the community college.

Another issue surfaced that I felt was directly related to the perceived prestige of the role – budgetary cuts and changes. Every participant spoke of state level budget cuts as the single most frustrating area of the president's job. Each participant gave additional detail as to how the budget cuts had affected the institution and morale in general. Dr. Meyers, in particular, spoke of a time in the not-so-distant past where community colleges seemed to receive a steady stream of funds from the state as allocations. He contrasted that time with the current state in which budget cuts are common and feared. In addition, he and others spoke of federal grant opportunities that were no longer available. As I listened to each participant talk about the budget cuts that had occurred over the past several years, I heard a common sense of helplessness and resentment. Some of these budget cuts had resulted in staff reductions and hiring freezes. Drs. Thomas and Short had mentioned that when the Vice President of Public Relations had left a few years ago, a decision was made to distribute those responsibilities to the other cabinet level members. The decision, in their estimation, was a direct result of budget cuts.

There seemed to be an undercurrent of the budget cuts as a symbol of the lack of government support for the community college, which translated into a lessening of the prestige of these institutions and the presidents who lead them. Alderfer's (1972) ERG

theory of motivation emphasized the need for existence, relatedness, and growth as motivational constructs. My interpretation of what I heard from participants was that these budget cuts in a sense threatened their existence – positions had been eliminated, programs had been cut.

In addition, the compensation of the president was in some cases less than that of faculty members. These factors were perhaps viewed (even if unconsciously) as a direct affront to the prestige of the role of the president. In other words, a prestigious role is assumed to receive higher compensation than its subordinates. Considering that all of the participants mentioned the compensation issue, without my asking, it was apparently on their minds. Again, I concluded that the need for existence, relatedness, and growth were perhaps unconsciously not being fulfilled. As a result, potential candidates were not offering themselves to roles that they felt were lessening in prestige via compensation and budgetary cuts, while gaining in workload.

Lack of Career Path

Community college literature, such as the works of Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) and Vaughan and Weisman (1998), support the importance of a planned career path to the presidency. So, I was initially surprised to learn that neither the president nor any of the cabinet level administrators at SMCC had consciously aspired to their current positions or the presidency as part of an organized, long-term career path. Not one participant had decided at an early age to pursue the community college presidency.

President Martin had been perfectly happy as a faculty member until others suggested that he aspire to the role of department chair. His succession to each role of added responsibility seemed to follow the same pattern. Had a colleague not encouraged him,

President Martin disclosed that he would not have applied for his current presidency at SMCC. Further, Dr. Martin shared, regarding SMCC's current leadership pipeline, "One of the disappointments of all of this effort is that times have changed where very few people aspire to administrative positions particularly at the vice president and president levels." The lack of career path still seemed to be evident on SMCC's at present. Most of the other participants followed a similar nondescript path. Dr. Thomas had set out to be a minister and, over time, ended up in the community college system during a time of rapid growth and promotional opportunities. Dr. Thomas confirmed with respect to her own career, "It's all kind of because I was doing something and either someone asked me, you know, or it was the next logical thing to do" (Thomas interview). Dr. Coleman had been satisfied as an English teacher after not finding a job as a journalist after college. Over time he was convinced by colleagues to pursue a department head position and eventually had applied for his current role as vice president. He stated, "I went into administration as associate dean level in '87 and mainly because ... it was sort of expected that I would do that I think." Further, relating to his current position as Vice President, "And this was a better job and so I focused on this job" (Coleman interview). These statements were not indicative of a clear career path. Ms. Klancy had held various positions at SMCC but disclosed no specific career path. In fact, she had assumed different responsibilities, as positions happened to become available.

The only participants who had planned their career paths to some extent were Ms. Short and Dr. Meyers. Ms. Short had aspired to hold a responsible role in finance, but not necessarily at the community college. Although the community college system had eventually become a great place for her to work and excel, she had not set out on a

specific path to be vice president/controller at a community college. Dr. Meyers was actually the only person that had set out to aspire to the highest position possible at the community college. Even so, Dr. Meyers admitted that this was because his family believed that one should always aspire to the next level until a ceiling of sorts was imposed. With respect to his family's philosophy, he shared that he had pursued leadership roles "...just because of my family background that just says you are just supposed to keep climbing the ladder until finally they hit you on the head and say you can't go any higher" (Meyer interview).

I want to clarify one of the reasons this lack of career path seemed noteworthy to me. Early in my doctoral studies at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), I was fortunate to have enrolled in a higher education leadership course that was taught by EMU's former president, Dr. William Shelton. Dr. Shelton shared a bit about himself and his background in the first course session. He disclosed that very early in his career (I believe by his second or third professional position) that he had made the decision that he wanted to be a university president. He had then set out to prepare himself for attainment of that goal. I kept waiting to hear a similar statement during my interviews with the vice presidents and the president of SMCC. I never heard anyone articulate that type of clear career path, not even the president. For me, this lack of declaration by even one participant was conspicuous because of its absence.

The more I thought about it, the more I wondered if the fact that none of SMCC's current executive level leadership had actively establish specific career paths for their own roles was affecting their ability to model for others. Fullan's (2001) framework for leadership included the components of knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence

making. I realized that with respect to how to aspire to the roles of vice president or president, SMCC's executive level administrators could not share, model, or mentor others with respect to a clearly defined career path to the presidency because none of them had pursued such a path themselves. They could certainly share their own experiences, but those experiences would not necessarily include a direct path for attainment. With respect to the issue of career path, the coherence-making piece of Fullan's (2001) framework for leadership was not really applicable.

The community college system is still a fairly new addition to the field of higher education. Perhaps there really have not been enough generations of leaders for a career path of sorts to be established. Community colleges grew so rapidly in the 1960s that many of today's top leaders found themselves in the community college system almost by accident. Most of the participants shared that they had entered the community college system for the first time because there was job availability at that time due to rapid growth. President Martin and Drs. Meyers, Thomas, and Coleman had all entered the community college due to a surplus of jobs during the height of expansion. None of them had specifically set out to become community college executives. So, unlike Dr. Shelton, these leaders did not have a system with the longevity of the university with a possible history of leaders to emulate. Hence, they had each in their own way "ended up" in their current roles. Technically, at SMCC there were no role models to emulate based on a long-term desire and deliberate career path to the presidency, as evidenced by the stories of the participants in Chapter 4.

No Motivation: No Preparation

There is a lack of credentialing and preparation for the role of the community college presidency. Amey and VanderLinden (2002) concluded that 87 percent of current presidents and 74 percent of chief academic officers hold doctorates. The earned doctorate is, for the most part, a necessary credential for the presidency. Yet, the National Center for Education Statistics, as cited in Shults (2001), reported that the number of advanced degrees conferred in community college administration had decreased 78 percent from 1982-83 to 1996-97.

The participants in this study confirmed the reality of these statistics on their campus. President Martin was clear that he did not see people preparing themselves for the presidency by attaining the necessary credentials and experiences. He had gone as far as saying that this researcher was unusual in what he assumed were her aspirations to the presidency. Ms. Short had spoken quite definitively by sharing that any potential candidates on SMCC's campus were "not ready" with respect to credentialing and/or relevant experience for upcoming vice presidential vacancies. She had further concluded that on-campus applicants would not be hired for vacancies because they lacked necessary preparation. Drs. Thomas, Coleman, and Meyers had all cited preparation and credentialing as a barrier to promotion for current staff on SMCC's campus.

They were in effect saying that the motivation and interest level for preparation did not seem evident among their current staff. Considering that the vice presidential and presidential roles were seemingly viewed as having high level workloads with questionable prestige, there was no wonder why people were not racing to earn doctorates to prepare themselves. Dr. Thomas had questioned why someone would bother with her

job when they could for roughly the same compensation and less strife remain in a faculty position. Ms. Klancy had also emphasized that she did not see college faculty and mid-level administrators aspiring to and preparing for these roles. Ms. Short had really summarized the situation well:

We are a perfect case study of how lack of preparation, etc., has led us to the brink of a crisis. We are losing leadership in one fell swoop and we have no one ready to step forward. So we've been told for a long time now that there is a crisis in leadership in higher education and it's here, here on our campus right now.

This lack of preparation might have been a direct result of the lack of motivation to aspire to these higher-level roles. I had learned that the image of these roles had suffered over time. Certainly, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the prestige of community college president had taken a hit. But I found that the image problem, which linked into the lack motivation, was most alive right on SMCC's own campus. After all, it was SMCC's executive administrators who had shared their own feelings and perceptions of their roles and their institution. If mid-level managers and faculty were seeing that the current executive level administration felt overworked, underpaid, and undervalued, then it would seem logical that they would not be motivated to prepare themselves to move into these roles. With this kind of walking advertisement, who would?

Alderfer's (1972) ERG theory of motivation found one's need for existence, relatedness, and growth to be key for motivation. The more I thought about this, the more I realized that these basic motivational needs were not being met comprehensively in the minds of SMCC's executive level staff as they projected their thoughts about their roles to others. Hence, the perception of these roles was not positive enough to create an

urgency to prepare for them. Further, McClelland's (1961, 1988) acquired-needs theory proposed that an individual's needs were acquired over time and classified as related to achievement, affiliation, or power. Key to the classification of achievement was the need for regular feedback in order to monitor the progress of achievement. At SMCC my perception is that there was a lack of positive feedback to continue the stimulation of motivation for achievement, which may have influenced preparation for successive leadership roles. This is evidenced by the less-than-positive perceptions that the executive level administrators shared about the role of the presidency.

Once again the growth of the system had created another challenge. In the earlier generations, leaders simply transferred or were assigned from the local school system, so credentialing was not a factor. If one was qualified to teach at the high school, he or she was automatically qualified to teach at the community college. The issue of motivation to attain certain credentials didn't really exist.

Implications for Theory

A conceptual framework based on Deegan and Tillery's (1985) historical framework on the four generations of community colleges provided a lens for understanding the development of community colleges as institutions as well as the presidents who have led and currently lead them. Cain's (1999) systems approach to understanding community colleges and the organizational change theories of Fullan (1993, 1999, 2001) also contributed to the development of the conceptual framework. I found that each of these theoretical constructs helped to shape my research and also prompted me to think about future applications.

Deegan and Tillery's (1985) work provided a historical backdrop for this study. SMCC's growth and organizational evolution closely resembled the characteristics of each generation. This historical framework added a sense of structure to the dissertation process. However, Deegan and Tillery completed their research and wrote their book in 1985. I found myself yearning for the rest of the story. An extension of their work, essentially the fifth generation, would provide a useful tool to community college researchers and administrators. I envision the fifth generation expanding to about 2010 to chronicle the timeframe of the anticipated presidential retirements and leadership void.

Cain's (1999) systems approach provided a useful tool to rely upon throughout the research process. I was constantly reminded to look at the whole picture without overly segmenting in a linear fashion. Understanding the community college as a system allowed me to look at all facets of the emerging role of the president as well as institutional growth. I did not find it necessary to incorporate Cain's work any further.

Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2001) organizational change theories were particularly useful because he looked specifically at rapid change within educational organizations. Fullan's framework for effective leadership and the concept of leading with moral purpose became a driving force in understanding motivational levels or lack thereof of potential candidates for upcoming vacancies. I am convinced that a collaborative partnership of sorts between Fullan and a community college researcher would provide more insight for community college leaders with respect to leading effectively.

Finally, Alderfer's (1972) ERG theory of motivation and McClelland's (1961, 1988) achievement motivation theory surfaced last and became key in assessing the disconnection between expectations of potential applicants and the expectations and

requirements of the role of the community college presidency. The simplistic components of the theory, existence, relatedness, and growth were very easily understood and applied.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study confirmed that one community college and the role of the president had indeed evolved and matured over time. At the onset of this research study, I found that although research existed on the evolutionary changes of the community college system and leadership styles of past presidents, none existed connecting these factors to a leadership crisis. Some research efforts had alluded to an impending crisis. But none explored how this crisis had evolved or how community college leaders could avoid similar leadership shortages in the future. During my preliminary literature review, I found data that support a presidential and cabinet level administrator shortage on a national level at community colleges.

As my research progressed, I found that there were disconnections between the expectations and desires of potential applicants for vacancies and the actual requirements and expectations of the jobs of the president and cabinet level positions. I chose to focus on the reasons behind those disconnections. However, I always understood that this community college leadership crisis deserved and merited additional inquiry.

The leadership crisis in community college leadership, created by the projected alarming rate of presidential and cabinet level retirements, bears further examination. Although this study was conducted at one community college, data and survey results (described in Chapter 1) supported that community colleges across the nation are

experiencing this phenomenon. The proposed suggestions for further inquiry are based on the questions the researcher was left with at the completion of this study:

- Examine the formal and informal mentoring programs currently available to community college leaders on a national and regional scale. How are these programs being linked across the nation? How might the structure of these existing programs be utilized to help colleges prepare collectively to build a leadership pipeline? Although this study was conducted at one community college, literature and survey results (described in Chapter 1) supported that this crisis in community college leadership is evident across the nation.
- A study directed toward the Boards of Trustees at community colleges is proposed. These boards hire the presidents of their institutions. How do board members feel about the qualifications of candidates in recent searches? How are they preparing themselves for presidential searches over the next several years? What is their successor leadership plan?
- A national study that includes recently hired presidents who determined that they wanted to be community college presidents very early in their careers and set out to attain that goal. I suspect the views of some recent and younger presidents might be captured. What prompted them to pursue the presidency? Exactly what steps did they take toward achievement? Have they implemented a successor leadership plan and if so what does it look like?
- A comparative case study of community colleges with respect to leadership. Initially I had planned to complete a comparative case study using four community colleges. My dissertation chair and committee suggested that I

pare the study down to one institution to make the study more manageable. I would like to see this study replicated within other institutions for a comparative view.

The above questions are key areas that arose from the results of this study and appeared worthy of further consideration. Additional exploration of the above mentioned areas would add to the development of knowledge and understanding for leaders of community colleges and other complex organizations.

Recommendations for Practice

The recommendations for practice are drawn directly from the major themes that emerged during this research study. These recommendations are suggestions for community college leaders based on my interpretation of what I heard throughout my study. These recommendations will be presented using the thematic headings, where applicable, that were utilized in the Major Emergent Themes section earlier in this chapter.

- The Jealous Mistress – The role of the president emerged as an all-consuming job, leaving little personal time for a normal family life. President Martin and all of the other participants described the job as living in somewhat of a fishbowl, due to the scrutiny of the public and the press as evidenced throughout their stories in Chapter 4. I heard a lot about the negative side of the presidency and why others had not aspired to the role because of those factors. Specifically, all four vice presidents and the Director of Lifelong Learning described the role of the presidency as all-consuming, overwhelming, and highly visible, which supported and triangulated President Martin's assertions. But I also heard President Martin

declare that it was the sense of accomplishment that made all of the negativity of the job worth it. President Martin was fueled by that sense of having made a difference, which Fullan (2001) described as leading with moral purpose. I think that community college leaders, such as President Martin, should be sharing this viewpoint on their campuses with their faculty and staffs. Sharing Fullan's concept of leading with moral purpose might in fact create a sense of interest and understanding. One of the other components of Fullan's framework for leadership was knowledge creation and sharing. The word seems to be out on SMCC's campus that the president's job is indeed akin to a *Jealous Mistress*, but the other side of the story (the sense of accomplishment that makes the job worth it) is not being shared and emphasized as equally important. So my recommendation is that presidents share that knowledge and help those on their campuses to better understand the full scope of the presidential role. This approach might serve as an informal mentoring opportunity of sorts. I came to believe that the best weapon for slaying the *Jealous Mistress* might very well be getting her out in the open and removing her layers one by one through open dialogue and communication.

- Lack of Career Path – As discussed in the Major Emergent Themes section of this chapter, SMCC's president and cabinet level administrators had not necessarily planned to aspire to their executive level roles. These leaders might consider the implementation of forums on both on their campus and collectively with other institutions to stimulate open dialogue regarding their backgrounds and how their careers emerged. These open forums would provide an opportunity for these

leaders to begin sharing with future leaders how they might start developing appropriate career paths. Ideally, intervention would begin as part of the orientation process for new faculty and administrators. Connecting early with people in these roles might very well get the newer and younger staff to start thinking and planning their careers more actively rather than simply “ending up” in positions based on circumstances. Fullan (2001) included the component of knowledge creation and sharing in his framework for effective leadership. This sharing of sorts would certainly create knowledge and a sense of belonging for SMCC’s staff, while providing a mechanism for developing new leaders for the pipeline.

- **No Motivation: No Preparation** - The findings of this study supported the research of Shults (2001), which concluded that there had been a decline in the number of doctorates conferred with an emphasis on community college leadership. SMCC’s executive level administrators were clear in their estimations that their current staff was unprepared to pursue upcoming vacancies with respect to experience and credentialing.

Yet I did not hear any sense of urgency or even a vague commitment to professional credentialing from Director of Human Resources, Samantha Brown. In fact, in 2002, as a doctoral fellow for EMU’s Educational Leadership program, I contacted various community colleges to offer on-campus visits from EMU’s Educational Leadership faculty. The intent was to create an opportunity for college faculty and administrators to consider doctoral degrees. When I contacted

SMCC, Dr. Brown's response had been that there was no need for EMU's faculty to visit, because anyone who wanted an advanced degree already had one.

So when I fast-forwarded to 2004 and heard across the board that there were no in-house qualified candidates prepared to fill upcoming vacancies, I knew that communication was somehow not fluid on this issue. SMCC and community colleges in similar situations would certainly benefit from partnering with Higher Education Leadership Programs, such as EMU's, to create an environment of support for attaining terminal degrees. Obviously, experiential opportunities would also need to be explored, but without the credentials potential applicants cannot ever hope to qualify for higher-level roles. Along with this recommendation, I suggest that SMCC and other community colleges began actively sharing on their campuses that there is indeed a leadership crisis and that qualified candidates will be needed to fill these vacancies. Knowing that there will be jobs available might actually increase the motivational level to pursue advanced degrees and additional responsibility. Again, Fullan's (2001) concept of knowledge creation and sharing is applicable. Alderfer's (1972) ERG theory of motivation also applies. If the faculty and staff began to feel their needs of existence (a sense of tangible permanence would be created through preparation for longevity), relatedness (through sharing of the imminent crisis and the need for qualified candidates, senior administrators would in effect create a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for faculty and staff), and growth (pursuit of additional education and responsibility clearly relate to a sense of personal and

professional growth), then perhaps they will consider their future growth and placement within the organization.

Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter began with a review of the purpose and significance of the study and a summary of the research. It also described the major themes that emerged during the research. Finally, recommendations for further research and practice were discussed.

As my research concluded, I found myself reminiscing a lot about how I had spent well over two years thinking about, working on, and living with this topic. This phenomenon of an oncoming shortage in community college leadership first surfaced for me in an Educational Leadership course, with then-Regents Professor and former EMU President Dr. William Shelton. Dr. Shelton usually opened each course session with an environmental scanning of sorts of the current issues facing higher education. Often, he began by asking who had read the Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE). So, in preparation for this weekly question, I began scanning the CHE each week before class. One week I came across an article written by Christopher Shults, a researcher for the AACC. The Shults article, referenced several times in this document, spoke of an impending leadership crisis for community colleges, based on upcoming presidential vacancies. So I went off to class and shared my weekly higher education news. Dr. Shelton and my cohorts in the classroom seemed particularly interested in the scope of this article. I remember Dr. Shelton commenting that there would be lots of promotional opportunities for those preparing themselves for these vacancies.

I was intrigued enough to contact Mr. Shults at the AACC headquarters in Washington, DC, to discuss his article. I found that he had spent a considerable amount

of time as a staff researcher creating surveys and compiling data from community college leaders. Mr. Shults clearly stated that in his opinion there was no additional research that fully explored this issue. He further suggested that I connect with community college professors and researchers at Michigan State University, Marilyn Amey and Kim VanderLinden. Dr. Amey shared some of her research findings with me (also referenced in this study) and strongly suggested that I pursue this line of research. Dr. Amey concluded with me that in her opinion any study related to this topic would add to the body of research for community colleges facing this very real situation.

I decided that I wanted to know more about this leadership crisis facing the community college over the next several years. I learned over time that this phenomenon was clearly not easily repairable. Fullan (2001) argued that difference between leadership and management is that leadership is needed for the problems that are not easily solved. Little to no research existed about this topic, which I found surprising, given the timeliness of the void in leadership. But what I found was that community college leaders in general, and at SMCC in particular, were spending an incredible amount of time managing the daily rigors and challenges on their campuses and within their community environments. They simply had not had the time to think about and began preparing for these upcoming vacancies. As my research progressed through literature and document review, observation, interview, construction of field notes, and eventually review of hundreds of pages of interview transcripts, I realized that this topic was much more complex than I had originally suspected.

First, I learned that not only were presidents retiring, but in many cases the entire executive or cabinet level administrators were also retiring. SMCC projected that their

entire senior administrative team would be gone within two years. Equally surprising to me was the fact that this impending situation was not being discussed as an urgent matter on campus. I did not expect to hear the presidency viewed as a *Jealous Mistress* of sorts with questionable prestige. Nor did I expect to hear that for the most part SMCC's executive level administration had not really set out to achieve their current roles. Oddly enough, there seemed to be a void in communication related to this very real issue being faced by SMCC and other community colleges across the nation (based on literature review), as evidenced by the encouragement of information sharing throughout my recommendations for practice.

By examining the evolution of the community college and the presidency over time through Deegan and Tillery's (1985) four generations, I was able to see how the rapid growth of these institutions had manifested multiple disconnections – the most glaring being the disconnection between the perception and expectations of the presidential and cabinet level roles and the desires and needs fulfillment of potential candidates for those jobs. Fullan's (2001) framework for effective leadership (Figure 2, Chapter 2) combined the components of Moral Purpose, Understanding Change, Relationship Building, Coherence Making, and Knowledge Creation and Sharing as key to ensuring that positive outcomes were achieved. Having spent a considerable amount of time on SMCC's campus, I concluded that their first step toward combating this crisis should be the creation of knowledge and a shared vision on their campus. There is indeed a leadership crisis as echoed by SMCC's president and senior level administrators. It is time to share the ramifications of this crisis through open forums with on campus faculty and staff, perhaps providing an opportunity for understanding the need for faculty

and staff to begin preparing themselves to fill the leadership gap that is on the way. So I encourage SMCC and other community colleges to began vigorously sharing that there is indeed a crisis and that answers can be found by developing their own staffs and faculty members to become the next generation of community college leaders.

Post Research Note

I recently learned that three of SMCC's vice presidents, who participated in this study, have announced their retirements, effective at the end of the current school year. The exodus has officially begun. It will be interesting to see what happens over the next year or two at SMCC. An extension of this research as a direct case study would truly be valuable to community college leaders. Although I do not plan to embark on another formal research study, I certainly intend to monitor SMCC's progress informally.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One (A-1 and A-2): Consent Form and Human Subjects Board Approval

I agree to participate in one or more interviews about a leadership crisis in the American community college system to be conducted by Katrina VanderWoude as part of the dissertation for the doctoral degree in educational leadership at Eastern Michigan University.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the interview at any time if I choose to do so. I further understand that my confidentiality will be protected at all times and that fictitious names (if any) will be assigned to me in any written report of the interview. I may request copies of my audio-taped interview (which will be erased following transcription) and/or transcriptions, and I may request that portions of the tape or transcriptions be deleted if I find that necessary.

I further understand that, with my permission, portions of my interview(s) may be included in a final report submitted to the dissertation committee and the Graduate School at Eastern Michigan University, and that prior to submission all identifying characteristics will be erased.

If I have any further questions I may contact Katrina VanderWoude at:

6605 Torybrooke Circle
West Bloomfield, MI 48323
(248) 738-5174
katrinavanderwoude@comcast.net

Questions concerning the approval process of this research should be directed to:

Dr. Patrick Melia – Administrative Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review
Dr. Steve Pernecky – Faculty Coordinator, Human Subjects Review
Eastern Michigan University Graduate Studies and Research
The Graduate School
Starkweather Hall
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734/487-0042

Interviewer:

Date:

Respondent:

Date:

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

05/18/04

Ms. Katrina VanderWoude
Department of Educational Leadership

RE: *"The Impending Retirements of Community College Presidents: A Higher Education Leadership Crisis."*

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Eastern Michigan University has granted approval to your proposal: "The Impending Retirements of Community College Presidents: A Higher Education Leadership Crisis".

After careful review of your application, the IRB determined that the rights and welfare of the individual subjects involved in this research are carefully guarded. Additionally, the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate, and the individuals are not at a risk.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the IRB of any change in the protocol that might alter your research in any manner that differs from that upon which this approval is based. Approval of this project applies for one year from the date of this letter. If your data collection continues beyond the one-year period, you must apply for a renewal.

On behalf of the Human Subjects Committee, I wish you success in conducting your research.

Sincerely,



Dr. Patrick Melia
Administrative Co-Chair
Human Subjects Committee

CC: Dr. Steve Pernecky, Faculty Co-Chair

Appendix B-1: Interview Guide (president)

The Impending Retirements of Community College Presidents:
A Higher Education Leadership Crisis
Interview: Arthur Martin, President
Southeastern Michigan Community College
July 15, 2004
Researcher: Katrina VanderWoude

Preface:

The purpose of this study is to examine more closely the perceived upcoming presidential leadership changes as current presidents retire at over the next ten years, which could result in cc's having to replace roughly 800 of its current 1100 plus presidents. In order to understand how this shortage may have happened, I want to understand the current role of the community college president and how that role has evolved over time.

I also want to look at those positions identified as most common to the career trajectory to the cc presidency – CAO, Senior Student Affairs Officer, Chief Financial Officer, CE Director, Occupational/VocEd Director, Business & Industry Liaison – some data suggest that those positions are also retiring – which is why I'm interviewing those staff members.

Why SMCC – established in 1938 – experienced more generational development than other institutions.

- 1) How has the community college changed in your years in the system?
- 2) What do you think of when you think of your role as president at SMCC? How has your role changed during your presidency?

- 3) What differences do you see, if any, in your presidential role and activities as compared to those your observations of previous SMCC presidents during your time at the institution? Beyond SMCC?
- 4) What are the skills sets for a community college president? What skills do you use often? Have they changed and what do you think will be needed for the future?
- 5) What are the gratifications of the role? How about frustrations?
- 6) Has there been a change in the environment external to your campus or center over time? How has that affected you?
- 7) Why did you aspire to become a cc president? Were there any particular situations, events, or persons that contributed to your decision to pursue the presidency?
- 8) What are your thoughts on this “perceived” shortage of qualified candidates to fill the upcoming presidential vacancies?
- 9) How does SMCC mentor administrators and prepare them for successive roles, including the presidency? Are you currently mentoring anyone? Do you see anyone excited about the challenge and preparation for the role? Why or why not?

- 10) Tell me about the collective environment for learning more about the presidency as a career path – formal and informal.
- 11) Some college leaders allude to a disconnection between current community college institutional needs and the needs of persons aspiring to the presidency. What are your thoughts?
- 12) What happens at SMCC upon your retirement?
- 13) Is there anything else you care to share about your fascinating job as president of SMCC or the community college system in general?

Appendix B-2: Interview guide (vice presidents)

The Impending Retirements of Community College Presidents:
A Higher Education Leadership Crisis

Interview: Earnest Coleman, Vice President/Dean of Academic Education
Southeastern Michigan Community College
July 27, 2004
Researcher: Katrina VanderWoude

Preface:

The purpose of this study is to examine more closely the perceived upcoming crisis in presidential leadership as current presidents retire at an alarming rate over the next ten years, which could result in cc's having to replace roughly 800 of its current 1100 plus presidents. In order to understand how this shortage may have happened, I want to understand the current role of the community college president and how that role has evolved over time. I also want to look at those positions identified as most common to the career trajectory to the cc presidency – CAO, Senior Student Affairs Officer, Chief Financial Officer, CE Director, Occupational/VocEd Director, Business & Industry Liaison. You are in one of those positions, which also seem to be retiring at an alarming rate.

- 1) Have you given any thought to these impending retirements and have you noticed this situation to be true?
- 2) When you think of SMCC and you think of these statistics, does any of that ring true regarding your current administration?
- 3) When you think of the role of the president, what comes to mind?
- 4) Has that role changed in your time in the community college system?

How?

- 5) What do you think are the skills sets needed to be a cc president?
Have they changed and what do you think will be needed for the future?
- 6) When you think of cc presidents, do you think of any particular gratifications? How about frustrations?
- 7) How has the community college changed in your years in the system?
- 8) Has there been a change in the environment external to your campus or center over time?
- 9) At any time in your career have you aspired to become a cc president?
Why or Why not? If not, what would have caused you to pursue the role of president at the cc level?
- 10) What are your thoughts on this “perceived” shortage of qualified candidates to fill the upcoming presidential vacancies?
- 11) How does SMCC mentor administrators and prepare them for successive roles, including the presidency? When you look around at SMCC, do you see anyone being mentored into the presidency? Do you see anyone excited about the challenge and preparation for the role? Why or why not?

- 12) Tell me about the environment for mentoring or learning how to be a president? Do you feel there have been opportunities for you to consider this role? Please elaborate.

*Appendix C. Job Description*PRESIDENT**A. Primary Function:**

To be responsible for the general planning and development of the college in respect to staffing, facilities, and scheduling necessary to effectively achieve the approved instructional program within the framework prescribed by the Board of Education.

B. Directly responsible to:

Superintendent of Schools

C. Immediate Subordinates:

Dean of Academic Education,
Dean of Technical Education,
Dean of Student Personnel Services,
Assistant to the President,
Controller, and
Director of Institutional Research

D. Assigned Responsibilities

1. To be responsible for supervision and administration of the total college operation.
2. To represent the college or assure alternate representation on all occasions where he deems it wise and necessary.
3. To be the channel of communications for all staff members to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education in all instances not otherwise specifically provided for in policy.
4. To be responsible for establishing, maintaining, and advancing relations with state and federal agencies deemed to be in the best interest of the college and the school system.
5. To be in charge of all college personnel, administrative and non-administrative, instructional and non-instructional, day and evening, full and part-time.
6. To plan, develop and direct the public relations activities of the college through all media of communications, in accordance with established policies.
7. To establish and maintain desirable relations with high schools, and with other colleges and universities.

PRESIDENT (cont'd)

-2-

8. To be responsible for the effective coordination of the variety of programs at the college.
9. To be the clearing house for all personnel additions, reclassifications, and assignments or reassignments, both instructional and non-instructional.
10. To offer guidance and direction to the Deans of the respective areas of the college in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.
11. To plan for effective utilization of campus facilities and provide for evaluation and improvement when needed.
12. To recommend repairs, remodeling, and improvement of the college plant, and help establish priorities.
13. To act as the representative of the college in the community.
14. To plan, develop and provide administrative policies, and controls over the instructional and extracurricular activities to insure public understanding, acceptance and support of the college programs.

8/6/69

