WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO:

UNDERSTANDING TEAM LEARNING PROCESSES

WITHIN THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

OF MIDDLE ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES

by

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ABSTRACT

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The twin forces of complexity and change have created a volatile environment for higher education institutions. For many institutions, strategic institutional change has become an imperative, not a choice. These new demands have escalated the complexity of institutional leadership and changed the demands on the college and university presidency. Strategic responsibilities have expanded beyond the presidency in new ways, creating increased reliance by presidents on their senior leadership teams. In light of the key influence of senior leadership teams on strategic institutional change, a deeper investigation of these teams is critical for the sector's positive transformation. This qualitative study of presidents and senior leadership teams at five Middle Atlantic higher education institutions sought to understand how presidents and their senior leadership team members work and learn together. The study was especially focused on the ways presidents and senior leadership team members described their roles, interactions between team members, and the practices and beliefs that inhibit or enable team learning. Using shared leadership, team learning, and sensemaking literature coupled with the Dechant, Marsick, and Kasl (1993) model of team learning as a foundation, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews and administered an excerpt of the Dechant and Marsick (1993) Team Learning Survey. The study yielded insights that

could be valuable to those who lead or are members of higher education senior leadership teams and those that educate, consult, and advise senior leadership teams in college and university settings. While strategic planning and long-term thinking were identified as key roles for senior leadership teams, team interactions were largely defined by institutional management activities, including information sharing, determining ownership and key decision makers, problem solving, and issue resolution. In particular, student affairs and finance officers reported fragmented learning processes and fixed views of their functional expertise. Senior leadership teams were primarily engaged in learning processes to support complex problem solving. To execute strategic change in higher education, intentionally cultivated informal learning practices that encourage explicit reflection on action coupled with deeper forms of relationship building between team members are needed. These activities require clear endorsement and consistent support by the institutional president.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

> Higher education has always faced changes (some quite dramatic) that shaped the character and mission of the enterprise. Yet the multitude of directions for change and the lack of capacity (e.g. fiscal and human resources) to meet today's changes present challenges and threaten to overwhelm leaders, requiring more and perhaps event different ways of thinking and reflecting on problems and change than have been common in the past. (Kezar, 2018, p. 3)

In the midst of the growing importance of transformation, change, and innovation in higher education, researchers and practitioners have prescribed responses drawn from various theoretical foundations. This study relied on the sensemaking, shared leadership, and team learning literature to increase the understanding of how college and university presidents and senior leadership team (SLT) members learn to work together. Considering the dynamic and turbulent higher education environment, historical background provided important context for understanding the importance of investigating college and university presidents and SLTs. In the nearly 400 years since the founding of the first American higher education institution, the sector has experienced several significant transformations. Marked by industrial change, war, and social upheaval, scholars mark the shifts of American higher education in differing ways.

Trow (2007) identifies three phases: elite—the ivory tower model, mass—expanded access model, and universal—open access model. Thelin (2004) divides the history of American higher education into eight phases from the colonial period to our

current period of instability and crisis. Geiger (2016) takes a generational approach defining the ten generations of Americans educated in institutions of higher learning. Regardless of the approach to identifying historical transformative shifts in American higher education, the 21st century has ushered in the most recent of these transformations, oft described as a crisis in U.S. higher education (Association of Governing Boards, 2014; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Watson & Watson, 2013). The challenges driving this transformation connect to every aspect of the higher education enterprise, including the responsibilities of the president, finance, technology, faculty, enrollment, demographics, state and federal policy, and accountability (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010; Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Carey, 2016). While higher education has always faced calls for change and evolution to meet shifting societal needs, the current environment makes change an imperative, not a choice for most institutions (Kezar, 2018; Tierney & Lanford, 2016). Ultimately, the transformative impact of innovation and the shifts in the higher education market have prioritized strategic institutional change in the minds of higher education leaders (Christensen, Raynor, & McDonald, 2015; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kezar, 2018; Selingo, 2013).

Scholars, policymakers, and institutional leaders have promoted a range of prescriptions in response to these challenges, leading to an increased emphasis on strategic institutional change (Selingo, 2013; Wildavsky, Kelly, & Carey, 2011). Christensen and Eyring (2011) suggest that pressing higher education challenges have triggered the need to break with traditions that no longer serve higher education's current reality. Watson and Watson (2013) describe the transformation of higher education as one that requires a systemic change in work processes, social structures, stakeholder relationships, and learning orientation. Kezar (2018) describes eight pressures shaping the context for change: global economy, public investment and accountability, diverse students, corporatized environment, for-profit competition and marketization, new knowledge about how people learn, technology, and internationalization (p. 5). During

previous transformative periods in higher education, the literature on the leadership of higher education has primarily focused on institutional presidents (Aspen Institute Task Force on the Future of the College Presidency, 2017; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Pagan, 2011). However, the same forces driving an increased emphasis on strategic institutional change have escalated the complexity of institutional leadership and changed the demands on the college and university presidency (Association of Governing Boards, 2014). As a result, strategic responsibilities have expanded beyond the presidency in new ways, creating increased reliance by presidents on their senior leadership teams, often referenced as the presidential cabinet, to respond to pressing issues and drive institutional strategy (Brewer & Tierney, 2011). This increased reliance, coupled with changes in the complexity in higher education, compelled researchers to call for a deeper understanding of the senior leadership team (SLTs) as partners in the movement toward strategic institutional change (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Kezar, 2018; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). In particular, the social cognition theory of change offers a modality for inquiry and focuses on individual thought processes, individual learning, and sensemaking (Kezar, 2018). In light of the key influence of presidential SLTs on strategic institutional change, a deeper investigation of how they learn to work together is critical for the sector's positive transformation.

Statement of the Problem

The twin forces of complexity and change have converged to generate multiple shifts in the higher education marketplace (Christensen & Eyring, 2011) and the workplace (Morgan, 2014). New entrants to the higher education marketplace, coupled with shifts in market demand, have escalated the pace of change in higher education (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Increased complexity has directly challenged the primacy of the president, shifting the workplace and opening pathways for senior leadership team

expertise to oversee work previously managed by the president. Presidents have been compelled to share leadership in increasing ways to manage the flow of interconnected issues (Bess, Dee, & Johnstone, 2007; Martin & Samuels, 2009; Sandeen, 2011). The demands of the presidency have even spurred suggestions of co-presidencies to allow for a shared approach to running an institution (Gross, 2018). Even prior to these more recent shifts, as evidenced by this quote from Father Theodore Hesburgh (1980), the long-serving, esteemed president of University of Notre Dame, presidents have been advised to operate in a more collaborative way with a shared leadership approach.

> Don't think you can do very much all by yourself. There are too many of them and only one of you. Leadership may appear to be a man on a white horse ahead of the multitude, but you'll do a lot better if you get off the horse and entice the best of the multitude to join you up front. (p. 4)

Yet, in the near 25 years since Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) landmark study on the function of college and university presidential leadership teams, the higher education leadership literature has largely continued its focus on presidents. For practitioners seeking to educate, consult, and advise higher education leaders on practical leadership strategies, research must supply a deeper understanding of the increased importance of presidential SLTs as agents of strategic institutional change (Dean, 2008; Gaval, 2009). In addition, there is a growing body of literature articulating the efficacy of senior leaders in the institutional fiscal success and student success (Dean, 2008; Fincher, Katsinas, & Bush, 2010; Powers, 2014; Smerek, 2007).

Kezar's (2018) extensive work on strategic institutional change in higher education identifies a range of theoretical models in the organizational change literature and highlights the particular salience of social cognition models in higher education-oriented research. Social cognition models are well suited to the ambiguity and fluidity inherent in higher education institutions, which exist as an organizational form characterized by open or loosely coupled systems (Bastedo, Altbach, & Gumport, 2016; Weick, 1976). These models also emphasize learning, thereby providing a rich context for investigating SLTs

as agents of strategic institutional change. Without more developed knowledge of how presidents and SLT members work and learn together, higher education leadership development risks diminishing returns on its investment in leadership development and minimal impact on preparation of the sector's future leaders and student success (Fincher et al., 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand the team learning processes of presidents and higher education senior leadership team members analyzed through constructs contained within the team learning, sensemaking, and shared leadership literature. As college and university presidents and senior leadership team members respond to demands for strategic institutional change, this understanding informs a set of recommendations for approaches to senior leadership team development. Traditional leadership development programs are facing challenges as the fundamental nature of leadership roles transform. For these programs to provide value, they need to integrate and build capacity for team learning within approaches to leadership. This study provides an increased understanding of team learning between presidents and SLT members and recommendations for higher education senior leadership development.

Research Questions

Broadly, this study sought to shed light on a core research question: *How do these presidents and SLT members **work** and **learn** together?* Based on this core question, the supporting research questions for this study are:

1. How do these presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?

2. How do these presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?
3. What facilitates or impedes learning among these SLT members and between these presidents and SLT members?

Design

The study used a descriptive comparative case study centered on five higher education presidential senior leadership teams using four data collection methods: team learning process survey data, teamwork survey data, semi-structured interviews, and document review.

The **team learning process survey** included team learning process questions excerpted from Dechant and Marsick's (1993) Team Learning Survey (TLS), to characterize five learning processes: (1) framing, (2) reframing, (3) integrating perspectives, (4) experimenting, and (5) crossing boundaries. The **teamwork survey** provided information about the frequency and interaction purpose patterns in reported president and SLT member-to-member interactions.

Face-to-face, 60-minute, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with presidents and SLT members. The qualitative data collected through the interviews were prioritized during the interpretation of findings. The interviews were analyzed using a deductive coding process structured by the core constructs in the conceptual framework to ground the thematic categories within team learning, sensemaking, and shared leadership literature. Inductive coding was used to identify emergent themes generated from the data. The shared leadership literature recognizes that increased complexity and specialized knowledge require the distribution of leadership to enact change (Pearce & Conger, 2003). The sensemaking literature provided a framework for meaning construction (Kezar, 2012; Raes et al., 2013). The team learning literature provided a

framework for understanding the knowledge and processes needed for improved organizational performance (Decuyper, Dochy, & Van den Bossche, 2010). Chapter II provides a deeper analysis of these theoretical frames and key constructs. Prior knowledge of higher education and the operation of senior leaders in colleges and universities also informed the development of the study.

The study began with a purposive sampling approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) involving a systematic sampling of institutions within one state's higher education system. The researcher outreached to the state system Chancellor to request support for participation from the institutional presidents in their system. Two presidents accepted the invitation and agreed to participate. One site was selected as a pilot site. Based on this site sample size, the researcher engaged in a snowball sampling strategy to expand the number of participating sites from two to five (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Presidents from the five sites were asked to identify the senior leadership team members based on the following definition: *senior executive staff reporting directly to the president leading a division, helping define the institutional strategic direction, and/or providing direct support and advice to the president*. Each site included five core SLT member roles: (1) president, (2) chief academic officer/provost, (3) chief financial officer, (4) chief student affairs officer, and (5) chief advancement officer. Three sites included additional roles. The rationale for this criterion is defined in more detail in Chapter III.

Assumptions

The study's assumptions were informed by the literature describing higher education leadership, the influence of social factors (sensegiving and interdependence), and cognitive factors (sensemaking and shared cognition) on learning within teams. It was expected that the study would provide practical insight into how presidential SLTs

can or do learn to work together based on experiences and perceptions of presidents and their SLT members. Considering the complexity of the higher education environment and factors influencing team interactions, the study was intended to elucidate the facilitating and inhibiting factors supporting learning within the team. Since each team member also leads a functional unit, it was also expected that the study would reveal how their experience with the SLT influences the execution of their core role.

Since the foundational research on higher education senior leadership teams demonstrates the tendency of members of the team to see themselves as a "team" in name only, presidential leadership teams can often be better described as "convened" teams (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Given this conception of how members may view the team experience, a broad assumption existed for this study that certain SLT members engage in more diverse and complex work with each other and create "member clusters" based on SLT member role (finance, student affairs, academic affairs, etc.). These member clusters were anticipated to influence variations in the characterization of the team's learning state. For example, SLT members who exist within a member cluster may meet more frequently, in more diverse ways, may recognize a deeper level of interdependence, and may perceive the team learning state as more synergistic and less fragmented than those who exist outside of a member cluster. Physical distance between SLT members and proximity to the president on a university campus were also expected to influence interpersonal communication patterns and potentially impede an individual's perception of the team's learning state. Given the diversity of institutional types in the study's sample, the researcher assumed that institutional type might influence the study's findings.

The Researcher

Two areas of my professional interests and background converge in this study: the function and operation of teams and higher education. My initial interest in teams began as a consultant at PriceWaterhouseCoopers working with a cross-disciplinary team that collaboratively developed a people risk diagnostic for consulting project teams. People risk was defined based on factors drawn from four human resource sub-disciplines—coaching, employee relations, diversity, and leadership. We administered a quantitative assessment to project teams engaged in long-term (at least a year) engagements that had worked together for at least three months to understand risks to team performance. Following the quantitative assessment, we met with project leaders to discuss their team results and develop a plan to remedy risk and maintain strengths. This rich experience planted a seed of personal interest in the function and operation of teams and deepened my understanding of their impact on work life satisfaction levels and the success of project goals. In addition to the work products, I have fond memories of our collaborative work as a team that continue to influence professional decisions I make today.

Surrounding this experience is my professional work focused on diversity and inclusion in three higher education institutions and my current role in leadership development at the American Council on Education. My roles provided direct access and reporting lines to senior level administrators or faculty. This experience provided me with a dual vantage point into strategy and implementation. Juxtaposed with my previously mentioned and subsequent corporate experience, I recognize opportunities for higher education to reform its approach to leading and managing increasingly complex enterprises. My role at the American Council on Education provides direct and indirect access to a wide range of college and university presidents and senior leaders. This access facilitated my ability to identify and secure study participants.

Rationale and Significance

> Presidents must revitalize their cabinets and surround themselves with passionate peers who are forward-thinking, financially savvy, creative, and collaborative. "The risk is that if you don't collaborate it will destroy you," says the president of a major state university. "Expectations have been raised" for all cabinet members, another leader says, meaning every top administrator must be multi-talented and a team player—much more so than in the past. (Association of Governing Boards, 2014)

Market disruption, among other changes in the higher education ecosystem, generated a fundamental transformation within the sector. Institutions previously confident in their standing have slipped from positions of strength and prestige to positions of stress and turmoil (Martin & Samuels, 2009). This, in turn, has spurred a need for deeper knowledge to enact proactive responses. While this level of transformation may be unfamiliar to institutional leaders, these seismic changes have bolstered the impact of leadership decisions on the landscape of the future. Previous research has tended to articulate insights into the particular functional areas represented within the SLT, i.e., the chief academic officer, the chief student affairs officer, the chief diversity officers, etc. Relatively little attention has been paid to the SLT as a unit (Fincher et al., 2010). For the first time in its 30-year history, the 2016 American Council on Education's report on the American College President cites the management of the senior leadership team as a presidential priority (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Yet, most of what researchers know about senior leadership teams comes from research on the presidential experience of building a senior leadership team. The lack of understanding about the ways in which higher education's senior leadership teams learn to work together creates gaps in understanding for presidents seeking to build leadership strategies for their staff and institutions.

Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) study defining presidential leadership teams relied largely upon organizational and leadership theory. Their recommendation for the use of their work alludes to the learning capacity of teams. This study aimed to address

team learning—a specific element of the SLT experience that has direct impact on the institutional capacity to respond to strategic institutional change (Kezar, 2018). Leadership development providers might benefit from this study's recommendations for the development of programs and services for higher education leaders (see Chapter V).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

For the purpose of this study, the researcher followed an iterative process to conduct the literature review and continued to review books, peer-reviewed articles, reports, and dissertations from the ProQuest, EBSCO, JSTOR, and Emerald databases. In order to locate articles empirically linked to emergent constructs, a combination of keywords were used, such as: *higher education*, *senior leadership team*, *top management team*, *cabinet*, *work groups*, *learning*, *presidents*, *team learning*, *shared leadership*, *collective leadership*, *sensemaking*, *sensegiving*, *shared cognition*, *shared mental models*, *interdependence*, *boundary crossing*, *loose coupling*, *real team*, *innovation*, *strategic change*, *organizational learning*, *distributed leadership*, *organizational change*, *institutional transformation*, *leadership*, and *transformation*. Table 1 summarizes the four subsequent sections of Chapter II identifying the primary researchers influencing the study's core theoretical constructs.

While the senior leadership team has long been an important part of institutional leadership and decision making, the same forces driving the need for innovation and transformation have also changed the roles of the president and his/her cabinet. The issues that occupy the majority of a president's time—financial management, fundraising, community relations, and strategic planning—are growing more complex (Cook & Kim, 2012; Gagliardi et al., 2017). Increased complexity has shifted responsibilities that

Table 1. Primary Researchers and Constructs for Core Theoretical Literature

Literature	Constructs / Concepts	Primary Researchers
Higher Education Presidential Senior Leadership Teams	- Higher Education History - Interdependence	Bensimon and Neumann (1993) Dean (2008) Kezar (2018); Eckel & Kezar (2002, 2011) Gaval (2009) Rudolph & Thelin (1990)
Shared Leadership	- Shared Cognition - Interdependence	Day (2004) Pearce and Conger (2003) Wageman and Hackman (2008, 2013)
Sensemaking	- Identity Formation - Sensemaking - Sensegiving	Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) Kezar (2018) Maitlis (2005) Weber and Glynn (2006) Weick (1976, 1995)
Team Learning	- Shared Cognition - Interdependence	Dechant and Marsick (1993) Garavan and McCarthy (2008) Knapp (2010) Van den Bossche (2006, 2010)

previously resided with the president to members of his/her cabinet and increased presidential reliance on the cabinet for expertise, knowledge, and decision making. Therefore, the presidential cabinet has become a more integral part of decision making.

Despite this growing reality, higher education leadership research has largely focused on the presidential role (Watson & Watson, 2013). Considering the stalled research on higher education senior leadership team (SLT) development and the increased relevance of transformation and change in higher education, research focused on higher education leadership helps fill the gap and focuses on both the president and the SLT. In an effort to fill that gap, this study utilized the presidential SLT literature, along with sensemaking, shared leadership, and team learning literature, to guide its examination of learning within the presidential SLTs.

Higher Education Senior Leadership Teams

> Financial pressure, growth in technology, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, and competition in the world both within and beyond our national borders make change an imperative for higher education…. Today's changes necessitate a rethinking of academic leaders' assumptions about how colleges work. (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 295)

A historical perspective on the evolving role of the presidency and the senior leadership team provides important context for the current realities of the relationship. As higher education institutions have changed, the role of the institutional presidency and structure of the senior leadership team have also changed. The American college and university presidency has followed a cyclical evolution driven by changes in access to and demand for higher education, shifting back and forth between chief administrators to chief academicians. During the dawn of American higher education, presidents, who were largely clergymen or theologians, had primary influence and authority over the academic life of the campus. In the colonial era, as student bodies expanded, faculty and tutors began to focus more on the educational mission, allowing the president to attend to organizational matters, including active engagement with the board of governors. This shift complicated the normal lives of presidents, who up to that time were "not absent for long periods of time, probably taught every member of the senior class, [and] knew most of the students by name" (Rudolph & Thelin, 1990, p. 165). It is also worth noting that while faculty bodies were becoming a source for the presidency, the financial challenges faced by colleges and universities following the Civil War opened the door for professional men to assume the presidency.

In the 19th century, the expansion of institutional size and services led to a steady increase in senior administrative roles, including vice presidents, deans, registrars, and chief business officers (McGrath, 1936). Institutional operations produced functional specialization among administrative officers. As these administrators assumed institutional management roles, presidents increasingly came from the faculty ranks and

were allowed to more deeply engage in the academic life of the campus. The massification of higher education following World War II thrust the administrative and operational priorities back into the presidential role and with redefined expectations from key stakeholders, including policymakers, local communities, alumni, boards, and students. With this change, the role of the American college and university president has settled into an administrative leadership focus for the last century (Birnbaum, 2005).

> The American colleges and universities, in their development from simple institutions to complex organizations, not only replaced the old-time professor with the academician, that trained specialist who knew the rights and privileges and responsibilities of a profession and who in so many of his experiences was indistinguishable from other organization men, but the colleges and universities also required a new kind of executive officers, new methods of financing, new areas of administration. (Rudolph & Thelin, 1990, p. 417)

In the present day, presidents have been tasked with managing external partnerships, financial sustainability, and strategic management of the enterprise (Cook & Kim, 2012). Driven by declining public investment in higher education, presidents are compelled to be entrepreneurial in their pursuit of institutional success. For many institutions, the time required to manage these new realities has changed the distribution of power among the senior leadership team, leaving presidents somewhat removed from day-to-day campus decision making. For example, on many campuses, this reality has led the provost/chief academic officer to step in as the primary on-campus manager (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Selingo, 2013). In light of this redistribution of power among higher education's senior level leaders, the senior leadership team has increased relevance in our understanding of how institutions engage in strategic change (Watson & Watson, 2013).

Prior to Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) landmark study of 15 college and university presidential leadership teams, the literature on presidential leadership teams in higher education largely focused on presidential reflections on their cabinets in narrative form and general advice to presidents on the management of their senior teams (Dean,

2008; Gaval, 2009). The concept of the individual leader as hero is deeply embedded into the American psyche and reinforced through leadership literature largely focused on individual leader traits, skills, and styles (Green, 1994; Neumann, 1991; Reich, 1987). The growing complexity of the higher education environment has called for expanded capacities at the senior level and increased presidential reliance on the senior leadership team to define strategic direction, advise the president, and influence key decisions and issues (Dee, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Several methods have been used in the literature to describe and define the group of senior executives working directly with presidents of colleges and universities. In a study of community college leadership teams, Chieffo (1990) defined them as "working with the college president and serving on his/her cabinet, executive council, or administrative team." (p. 5). Other studies left the definition up to the presidents. In a study of the executive leadership teams in private Catholic institutions (Perez, 2016) and administrative teams in liberal arts colleges (Mangano, 2007), teams were defined based on the president's identification of their top-tier administrative/managing staff, including the provost, vice presidents, and deans. In practice, the language used for this group includes *cabinet*, *council*, or *leadership team*.

In addition, higher education institutions operate with a context wherein increased complexity enables the primacy of the team. Cohen, March, and Olsen's (1972) organized anarchy organizational model for higher education institutions and Weick's (1976) extrapolation of the loose coupling framework for educational organizations presented the foundational paradigms higher education organizational theorists have largely relied upon for decades. The "organized anarchy" model, also referenced as the "garbage can" model, is characterized by inconsistent preferences, unclear processes, fluid boundaries; decisions made based on shifting goals and the shifting political potency of varying parts of the organization rather than a stable set of organizational goals; complicated interplay; and problems resolved during periods of ambiguity and competing priorities. Weick (1976) describes the loosely coupled system as one capable

of perseverance, innovation, and adaptation, allowing differing elements of the organization to persist when circumstances may cause other elements to fail. Such a system is tuned into multiple perspectives, realities, and environments to provide a broader base of intelligence.

While new paradigms are emerging (Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Wildavsky et al., 2011), the aforementioned schemas continue to reflect the operation of the higher education sector and were well in place when Bensimon and Neumann (1993) conducted their study of higher education leadership teams—reinforcing its enduring relevance. Bensimon and Neumann's study revealed *functional* and *cognitive* domains existing within presidential leadership teams, which operate in complex and/or simple ways. The *functional* domain is represented in three functions—utilitarian, expressive, or cognitive. The utilitarian function focuses on the tasks of information exchange, coordinating and planning, and decision making. A team's expressive function focuses on the social structure that provides colleagueship, mutual support, and counsel to the president. Finally, the cognitive function expresses the sensemaking work of the team by "viewing problems from multiple perspectives, questioning, challenging, and arguing, and acting as a monitor and feedback system" (p. 41).

The *cognitive* domain is represented through five roles that can be occupied by differing team members under differing circumstances—definer, analyst, interpreter, critic, and synthesizer. The definer frames the informal and formal agenda for the team. The analyst examines and assesses issues framed for the group. The interpreter translates the external views of issues. The critic departs from the team's agenda to explore additional or unrevealed considerations. The synthesizer seeks to create a summative picture of reality for the team to learn, act, and reflect upon as they move forward.

They argue that teams operating in complex ways in the functional and cognitive domains represent "real" teams, while those operating in simple ways represent "illusory" teams. When each of the functions and at least four of the cognitive roles are in operation,

complexity exists and a "real" team is working together. A "real" team requires a culture of collegiality; a mutually respectful atmosphere provides freedom for team members to provide honest feedback and to consider new courses of action that deviate from what is comfortable. Through this definition of "real" presidential senior leadership team, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) directly connect functional and cognitive complexity with a more advanced form of institutional leadership. Yet, their findings also reveal that operation must maintain *balance* to realize the benefits of "real" team leadership. For example, a team overly engaged in the expressive function may isolate itself from the rest of the university, limiting the team's access to information and potentially hindering its ability to process that information in a cognitively complex way.

Bensimon and Neumann (1993) place particular emphasis on the processing activity of teams by focusing on the pivotal role of the cognitive function in their framework. When team members share information within the team, rather than deliver it solely to the president, there is an opportunity to hear from the multiple perspectives that team members bring to the table. Team meetings and informal social interaction can enable trust and collaboration by creating opportunities to learn about one another and to test out ideas. Teams that function in this way examine issues from multiple points of view and bring unconsidered alternatives to light, as well as possible options to solve problems (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

While presidents may value the cognitive contributions of a team, research suggests that team members place higher value on the collegial function of a team (Knudson, 1997). Fulfilling this function compels team members to build relationships that go beyond political alliances and to consider both the personal and professional needs of each member. Adhering to functional roles and relying on our human tendency to connect with similar others can hinder the development of trust and collaboration in presidential leadership teams (Dee, 2001). Furthermore, if interactions occur among a limited number of individuals, rather than all members of the team, this can create a

"backdoor negotiation" situation that impedes information sharing and open discussion, and creates cognitive conflict among all team members (Dee, 2001).

Since Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) work, research on higher education senior leadership teams has largely been at the dissertation level. Gaval's (2009) and Dean's (2008) studies have particular relevance for this study. In her study of first-time presidents' experiences building their senior leadership teams, Gaval (2009) found that presidents placed high levels of importance on team member ability to operate with a shared focus on institution-wide needs. Dean's (2008) study of boundary spanning within a presidential leadership team found limited participation due to a lack of supporting structures, i.e., meetings, information management, to enable effective boundary spanning.

In their international investigation of senior leadership teams, Wageman, Hackman, Nunes, and Burruss (2008) suggest a four-level interdependence continuum moving from low to high: (1) information sharing, (2) consultative, (3) coordinating, and (4) decision making. Information sharing and consultative levels of interdependence place the formal leader at the center. In both of these types of interdependence, information or consultation is provided to enhance the formal leader's ability to perform. Teams with coordinating or decision-making levels of interdependence assume a broader focus and deeper relationship between the impact of one on the other. Ultimately, the criticality of interdependence conveys the importance of a shared approach to team leadership. Therefore, the next section examines the shared leadership literature, with a particular focus on interdependence and shared cognition.

Shared Leadership

> [C]ampus leaders face the challenge of implementing more changes than ever, in a shifting social, political, and economic landscape, shaped by complexity. Shared approaches to leadership that capitalize on the broader

> knowledge of the institution and foster learning are needed moving forward. (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017, p. 2)

As the emphasis on knowledge work, complexity, and ambiguity increases, organizations have begun to revise their structures and approaches to work. While information technology advances allow individuals to manage increasing volumes of information, the adaptive decision making required often leaves formal leaders at a knowledge disadvantage and increases their dependence upon team members to guide complex organizations during dynamic times (Christensen et al., 2015; Wageman & Hackman, 2013). Leadership that once originated from a single leader is now shifting to differing forms of team leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Several trends in team design, use, and structure point to the importance of internal team leadership. First, the complexity and ambiguity that teams often experience make it unlikely that a single external leader can successfully perform all necessary leadership functions (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004). Second, current forms of teamwork that emphasize knowledge-based work rely on employees who have high levels of expertise and seek autonomy in how they apply their knowledge and skills (DeNisi, Jackson, & Hitt, 2003) and therefore desire greater opportunity to shape and participate in the leadership functions for their teams. Therefore, whether organizational structures have increased their utilization of teams or external demands have increased reliance on teams, current realities have created an ideal context for shared leadership (SL) to occur (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007). This shift is further evidenced by the consistent integration of shared leadership concepts in modern leadership models focused on adaptation, and complexity and systems theory (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017).

The literature on shared leadership (SL) theory has theoretical roots in multiple strands of leadership research, including emergent leadership, distributed leadership, co-leadership, followership, and team leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2000). In their definitive work on shared leadership, Pearce and Conger (2003) define shared leadership

"as a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals" (p. 1). This definition distributes leadership among individuals rather than centralizing within a single person, and it distributes leadership among individuals rather than centralizing within a single person. The model emerging from this definition involves both the vertical influences from the formal leader and the horizontal influences of individuals upon each other. Extending from Day et al. (2004) and Pearce and Sims (2002), Carson et al. (2007) define shared leadership "as an emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members" (p. 1218). In this way, shared leadership is placed in direct contrast to traditional views of vertical leadership assigning authority to a hierarchical manager. Fletcher and Käufer (2003) define shared leadership based on the implicit interdependent nature of leadership, multi-directional social processes and relationships, and shared learning. The model extending from this definition emphasizes the contextual or emergent nature of shared leadership, in that different individuals assume leadership based on the needs and goals of the group.

In light of the importance of shared governance in the leadership and operation of higher education institutions, it is worth noting the distinctions between shared leadership and shared governance. Institutional shared governance focuses on the distribution of authority within a defined, and relatively stable, decision-making body serving as a check and balance on institutional power and a protective force against administrative failure. While shared leadership theory applied to shared governance might provide avenues to correct the fragmented decision making, tension, and conflict that often emerge from shared governance, they are not the same in practice or in concept (Burke, 2010; Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Shared leadership focuses on distributed accountability and flexible and adaptive decision-making structures, allowing for nimble responses to emergent issues (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017).

Criticism of shared leadership often stems from the conceptualization of the formal leader's role. Pearce, Conger, and Locke's (2008) letter exchange explores the source of disagreement in detail. Locke argues that, in general, shared leadership theory lacks the practical recognition of decision-making authority that must rest with an individual. In this way, he suggests that shared leadership theory operates under an illusion that decisions, particularly top-level decisions, cannot always be made by consensus. A formal leader must have the authority to make final decisions. Pearce and Conger counter that Locke's perspective applies an overly strict interpretation of shared leadership to be an "either-or" proposition—*either* the team demonstrates leadership *or* the formal leader does. However, in some cases, an examination of shared leadership theory does indicate an emphasis on the role of the formal leader. In their Denmark-based study of project teams within a manufacturing firm, Fausing, Joensson, Lewandowski, and Bligh (2015) validated the relationship between empowering leadership from the formal leader and task interdependence as conditions facilitating shared leadership. Their findings extend the previous work by Pearce and Sims (2000), Wood (2005), and Carson et al. (2007). The formal leader retains importance in SL, but in a different context. The formal leader must provide the empowering conditions for the team to engage in shared leadership. Additional criticisms stem from the notion that shared leadership is simply an extension of the adjectivalism of leadership (Day et al., 2004), wherein leadership research suffers from the additional of adjectives with largely semantic differences.

Across multiple conceptualizations of shared leadership, scholars suggest that leadership research needs to expand our notion of leadership beyond the vertical leader and deepen our understanding of the team as a leadership unit. Interdependence and the development of shared mental models among team members are seen as hand in glove within SL theory. Within the shared leadership literature, shared purpose is found to create heightened levels of information sharing and collaboration. Carson et al. (2007) define shared purpose as similar understandings among team members of their objectives

and focus on collective goals. This definition is conceptually aligned with shared mental models. Burke, Fiore, and Salas (2003) suggest that shared mental models are a foundation construct for the effective enactment of shared leadership. For shared leadership to occur, shared mental models allow team members to operate under a common set of assumptions to guide the coordinated action needed for smooth transference of leadership functions. Day et al. (2004) emphasize the role of the formal team leader in shaping the development of shared mental models among team members to promote a common understanding and ability to coordinate action.

Interdependence is a defining characteristic of the paradigm shift from individual or vertical leadership to leadership that recognizes the living relationship and connection between different levels, functions, and teams within an organization (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). Viewed along a continuum within the shared leadership literature, interdependence describes the degree to which team members rely each other's skills and interact to complete tasks (Fausing et al., 2015; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2000). Interdependence is defined with two variations—task and outcome interdependence (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche, Gijselaers, Segers, Woltjer, & Kirschner, 2010). *Task interdependence* describes the relationship between tasks when performance of one part of the work depends on the completion of another, and *outcome interdependence* describes the benefit and costs accrued to individual team members based on success or failure in goal attainment by other team members (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche et al., 2010). In their shared leadership conceptual framework, Pearce and Sims (2000) identify task interdependence as an antecedent condition of shared leadership. Uncertainty regarding role, task, and context presents significant challenges to recognizing and operating interdependently. When individuals face poor understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, or there is ambiguity in a situation, the occasion is ripe for sensemaking. Sensemaking is well suited to examining the process of

reviewing prior knowledge to frame a problem to understand it better (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005).

Sensemaking

> Students of sensemaking understand that the order in organizational life comes just as much from the subtle, the small, the relational, the oral, the particular, and the momentary as it does from the conspicuous, the large, the substantive, the written, the general, and the sustained. To work with the idea of sensemaking is to appreciate that smallness does not equate with insignificance. Small structures and short moments can have large consequences. (Weick et al., 2005, p. 410)

A derivative of the social construction paradigm, sensemaking is the process of "meaning construction and reconstruction by involved parties as they attempt to develop a meaningful framework for understanding" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442). The simplest definition of sensemaking is the work of "making sense." Weick (1995) argued that sensemaking is to be understood literally and without metaphor. Despite its informal phrasing, Weick reflects on previous analysis of sensemaking and articulates it as a process of making things sensible and ready for further understanding. Placing sensemaking as a precursor to problem solving, Weick presents sensemaking as a recurring cycle of how we structure and cope with unknown stimuli or the process of identifying the "things" within a situation to give structure and boundaries to the "problem" to be solved. In this same way, he places sensemaking as a predicate of interpretation in ambiguous and complex environments, where sensemaking filters or constructs the subjects that will be subsequently interpreted.

Weick et al. (2005) aim to explicate and enhance the view of sensemaking as "a process that is ongoing, instrumental, subtle, swift, social, and easily taken for granted" (p. 409). They set out to more clearly differentiate decision making from sensemaking. The differentiation is rooted in a differing treatment of evaluation as the driver for

decision making and interpretation as the driver for sensemaking. Evaluation is viewed as a formulaic assessment of the unknown to arrive at a reasonable set of logical next action steps where interpretation is viewed as the retrospective and prospective process of noticing factors that generate presumptions of actions.

The relationship between cognition and action, between thinking and acting, plays an important role in sensemaking theory. This relationship can be explored through a differentiation between interpretation and sensemaking—where interpretation is viewed as an individual cognitive meaning-making process and sensemaking is the extension of the cognitive meaning-making process into "actionable thinking." In this way, the interpretation represents the perceptual and reasoning processes to structure meaning—whereas sensemaking moves beyond meaning to analysis of discrepancy, accuracy, and negotiated meaning. Sensemaking emerges as an ongoing and retrospective activity where the plausible guides action (Weick et al., 2005). Extending this view to how people perform in organizations, sensemaking operates from the view of organizational life that is chaotic, malleable, ambiguous, and deeply tied to the flow of social interaction. There is much room and legitimacy in organizational theory for the importance of evaluation as a means of understanding actions and assessing accuracy in decision making. Weick et al. (2005) suggest that there is also room and legitimacy in organizational theory to view people's actions as a byproduct of fluid environmental forces, identity, and social feedback, where plausibility rather than accuracy influences action. The semantic subtleties between these two concepts, like differing sides of the same coin, can fill gaps in our understanding of individuals in organizations, especially in teams, and offers an additional way of viewing, understanding, and exploring how people operate in organizational life.

> From the perspective of sensemaking, who we think we are (identity) as organizational actors shapes what we enact … [and] often translates into questions such as who are we, what are we doing, what matters, and why does it matter? (Weick et al., 2005, p. 416)

Sensemaking activities allow individuals to establish clarity and enable action and are critical in contexts when institutional members face confusion and uncertainty. In the face of ambiguous information, social feedback from others, and retrospective views on past experience, the path an individual follows to make sense is connected to their issues of identity. “Who they are” becomes part of the process. Viewed within organizational life, shifting a person’s sense of identity therefore shifts how they make sense of situations. Therefore, organizational members receive and give cues about what is possible. Weick et al. (2005) extend institutionalist theory by arguing that an institution’s past and current macro states restrict the identities and independence of organizational members. Therefore, “who we are” within that organizational structure influences our sensemaking.

Weber and Glynn (2006) present Weick’s (1995) sensemaking theory as a process theory within an institutional context wherein “institutions function to contextualize sensemaking by imposing cognitive constraints on the actors who do the sensemaking” (p. 1642). They posit that employees “perform an identity” (p. 1646) based in the situations they find themselves in at work. These identities engage in an ongoing process of meaning construction based on their environment, expectations for performance, and negotiation with others. While institutions provide the frame, expectations, and situations where interpretation is necessary, sensemaking steers choices of action. The employment relationship ascribes a set of identities, expectations, and situations for employees by the employer/institution. This relationship positions institutions as building blocks for individual sensemaking, thereby framing, restricting, and normalizing the sensemaking process.

In essence, the employee’s sensemaking process repeatedly revisits a set of supporting questions: Who am I when I am here? What is going on here in this situation? and What is expected of me when I am here and in this situation?. In specific terms, Weber and Glynn (2006) specify three sensemaking mechanisms propelled by

institutions—priming, editing, and triggering. Priming occurs as institutional associations, codifications, conventions, and social structures cumulatively cue appropriate identities, frames, and actions. Editing occurs when deviations from prescribed expectations are evaluated and regulated based on situational realities. Triggering occurs when inconsistencies, contradictions, and gaps provoke sensemaking activities to help guide future action. Each of these mechanisms provides a context for sensemaking by employees within an organization with its own history, past and current leadership dynamics, and evolving feedback loops. In this way, organizations create a range of expected sensemaking activities, summarized by their conclusion that "people make sense with institutions, not in spite of them" (p.1657).

As a precursor to Weick's theoretical model of organizational sensemaking, Daft and Weick (1984) present a model of organizational interpretation strategies. Their work rests upon four assumptions about organizational activities. The first assumption defines detection and processing of information about the organization environment as a core survival practice for any organization. The second assumption argues that the cumulative individual interpretations about the organizational environment converge into an organizational interpretation of the environment. The third assumption states that those in top management roles have access to broad-ranging organization issues, which positions them as the primary strategists and decision makers in the organization. The fourth assumption asserts that organizations approach interpretation in different ways. These assumptions drive Daft and Weick's model of organizational interpretation, which pivots on two variables—the feasibility of analyzing the organization environment and the level of intrusiveness top management is willing to apply through its interpretation processes. The interplay of these variables yields four interpretation strategies: the prospector, analyzer, defender, and reactor. While the prospector organizational strategy reflects a high level of engagement in environmental interpretation of a complex and unorganized environment, the defender serves as its polar opposite, reflecting a low level of

interpretation of an environment deemed to be relatively stable and structured. The analyzer and reactor serve as the second set of polar opposites. The analyzer organizational strategy represents a highly engaged interpretation process in an environment judged to be stable and structured, while the reactor strategy assumes a low level of engagement in environmental interpretation of an environment thought to be complex and unorganized. Through the definition of these organizational interpretation types, Daft and Weick (1984) seek to prioritize the role of interpretation and the act of making sense of the organizational environment as core to the strategic mindset and decisional processes of an organization's top management.

Operating from a similar set of assumptions about the role of environmental interpretation, organizational survival, and top management in strategy and decision making, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) engaged in a 30-month ethnographic study of a strategic change effort at large, public university led by a newly appointed president and managed by the senior executive leaders, or the "top management team." The study established a link between sensemaking and sensegiving through a four-stage process of understanding and influencing—envisioning (understanding/sensemaking), signaling (influencing/sensegiving), re-visioning (understanding/sensemaking), and energizing (influencing/sensegiving). They define envisioning and signaling as the sensemaking and sensegiving stages for the president or formal leader. In these stages, the president works to make sense of a situation and then engage in a sensegiving effort for the senior leadership team. They define re-visioning and energizing as the sensemaking and sensegiving stages for the leadership team. In these stages, the team works to make sense of the information shared by the president and then engage in a sensegiving effort with their direct reports.

The first-order findings specify that movement between understanding and influencing is driven by sensemaking and sensegiving processes. For their study, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) define sensemaking as "meaning construction and reconstruction

by the involved parties as they attempted to develop a meaningful framework for understanding" (p.442) and sensegiving as "attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (p.442). By introducing sensemaking and sensegiving as a complementary cycle in the strategic work of organizations, Gioia and Chittipeddi expand the concept of sensemaking and offer a useful metaphor for the understanding, negotiation, and influencing processes often at play within top management teams. Simply stated, sensegiving helps direct the focus for sensemaking.

Kezar and Eckel (2002) articulate a transformational change process framework for higher education institutions based on a case study of six institutions engaged in transformational change initiatives over a four-year period. Sensemaking emerged as a core transformational change process strategy, allowing members of the institutions to make new meaning and revise their mental models to the shifting macro and micro realities within the institution. Kezar and Eckel define sensemaking as "the collective process of structuring meaningful sense out of uncertain and ambiguous organizational situations [allowing] people to craft, understand, and accept new conceptualizations of the organization and then act in ways consistent with those new interpretations and perceptions" (p. 314). Similar to other articulations of sensemaking, Kezar and Eckel describe sensemaking as a social activity engaged in throughout the organization and influenced by the sensegiving capacities of positional leaders. Therefore, they underscore the relevance of sensegiving as part of the interchange between organizational members. Weick et al. (2005) describe this as "distributed sensemaking" (p. 417), where shared understanding is sought between individuals after information is distributed and discrepant impressions persist. When multiple theories exist about what happened or what needs to be done, people may be compelled to work interdependently to develop shared meaning. Within the framework of a specific transformational change effort driven from the top down, Kezar and Eckel (2002) list cross-department teams,

roundtable discussions, and public presentations as settings for sensemaking and sensegiving.

Kezar (2012) extended her 2002 work with Eckel to examine the sensemaking and sensegiving process. Drawing from the national project, Facilitating Interdisciplinary Learning, which engaged 28 institutions developing strategies for successful interdisciplinary programs, Kezar identified key new insights about sensemaking and sensegiving. While she found a similar four-stage pattern defined by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) wherein individuals moved back and forth between sensemaking and sensegiving, rather than operating as separate "stages," they often were occurring at the same time. In addition, sensegiving was expressed as a more strategic act focused on building support and challenging barriers.

In a two-year qualitative study of three British symphony orchestras, Maitlis (2005) aimed to elaborate on organizational sensemaking theory. Maitlis's findings introduce two sensemaking processes—animation and control—and four forms of organizational sensemaking directly related to the sensegiving approaches of the positional leader and stakeholders: guided, restricted, fragmented, and minimal. Animation, defined as the continuous, iterative flow of information and discussions, and control, defined as formally organized one-on-one interactions, meetings, committees, and events, fuel the energy of the sensemaking process. The four sensemaking approaches are presented by Maitlis as providing different outcomes, which may be observed or practiced based on situational needs or organizational demands. Guided and restricted sensemaking occur in organizational environments with more controlled sensegiving from the positional leader. The variance between guided (high animation) and restricted (low animation) is driven by the degree of animation in the sensegiving between stakeholders. Fragmented and minimal sensemaking occur in organizational environments with less controlled sensegiving from the positional leader. The variance between fragmented (high animation) and minimal (low animation) is driven by the degree of animation in the

sensegiving between stakeholders. For example, in a restricted sensemaking environment, the positional leader is providing different structures for interaction, but the everyday sensemaking processes between stakeholders is not occurring. Therefore, simply providing a space for sensemaking does not automatically yield sensemaking. Instead, it can yield a search for compliance by individual members of an organization. In fact, the over-reliance on sensegiving by the hierarchical leader can undermine the exploration of issues and the development of the shared understanding necessary for senior leaders charged with execution (Maitlis, 2005). Peer-level sensemaking and sensegiving, while not devoid of its own complications, can play a critical role in the achievement of revised meaning construction.

Sensemaking activities allow individuals to establish clarity and enable action and are critical in contexts when institutional members face confusion and uncertainty. Gioia and Chittipeddi's (1991) sensemaking and sensegiving stages are presented as part of the strategic change process of senior leadership. Maitlis's (2005) study demonstrates that the interchange of sensemaking and sensegiving between the formal leader and the team influences the type of team activity. The next section extends the role of sensemaking and sensegiving as cognitive and social factors, respectively, into the team learning literature.

Team Learning

The definition of "team" is an important consideration in a discussion of team learning. Various team forms are described in research, including cross-functional teams, self-managed teams, project team, work groups, and task forces. In addition to the common and often casual use of the term outside of a research context, the imprecise nature of the word has generally led to differing approaches to defining teams in the literature. One approach accepts that "team" is an abstract concept encompassing a loosely connected set of interpretations (Edmondson, Dillon, & Roloff, 2007). This study

adopted an approach that distinguishes between a team and group, where a "team" represents a high level of interdependence, shared purpose, and collective responsibility for performance and a "group" represents little to none of these features (Gaval, 2009; Knapp, 2010). Based on the study's conceptualization of teams, Decuyper et al. (2010) offer an apt definition: "a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and who are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems" (p. 112).

Since Peter Senge's (1990) exploration of "team learning" as a driver of organizational learning, team learning literature has expanded across research streams and with differing areas of focus (Decuyper et al., 2010; Van den Bossche et al., 2010). Considering the expansive literature across these streams, this section will focus on literature within organizational learning theory and adult learning theory, largely built from Schön (1990), Senge (1990), Mezirow (1989), and Argyris and Schön (1996). The organizational learning research on team learning tends to emphasize the role of organizational dynamics on the structure and flow of learning, along with outcomes and performance. The adult learning research on team learning tends to emphasize reflection and group process. The view of team learning as a social process of shared cognition or shared mental model creation between structurally or performance interdependent individuals is consistent across multiple models despite slight variations in language (Knapp, 2016).

Viewing team learning through a constructivist paradigm, Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant (1997) present a process and condition structured team learning model derived from case study research conducted with work teams in two organizations. The model is based on the definition of team learning as "a process through which a group creates knowledge for its members, for itself as a system, and for others" (p. 229). Conceived as a learning system with dynamic flow through team processes, conditions, and outcomes, the model describes team learning as an evolution through four modes: fragmented,

pooled, synergistic, and continuous. The distinctions between each mode convey the shift from individualistic learning and knowledge possession to co-created knowledge shared within and outside the group, resulting in a habitual experience. Kasl et al. define five learning processes: (1) framing, (2) reframing, (3) experimenting, (4) crossing boundaries, and (5) integrating perspectives; and three learning conditions: (1) appreciation of teamwork, (2) individual expression, and (3) operating principles.

Framing is a cognitive process where an initial understanding of a situation is derived from present and past experiences. *Reframing* is a cognitive process where initial understandings are transformed into new understandings. *Experimenting* is a group action where team members test hypotheses and assess actions. *Crossing boundaries* is an active process involving communication, sharing, and reflection between and among team members that may have barriers impeding regular communication. *Integrating perspectives* is a social process involving the synthesis of divergent views through a dialectic process, not majority rules. *Appreciation of teamwork* recognizes the openness between team members and how they value playing a role in the team. *Individual expression* addresses how team members share input and their comfort with expressing dissent. *Operating principles* reflect structure, efficiency, and task achievement.

Edmondson (1999) conceptualizes team learning "as an ongoing process of reflection and action, characterized by asking questions, seeking feedback, experimenting, reflecting on results, and discussing errors or unexpected outcomes of actions" (p. 353), which drives team performance. A key thread within Edmondson's work is the importance of psychological safety built upon a foundation of trust, mutual respect, and caring. Embedded within psychological safety is the interpersonal connection among team members. Beyond the task and outcome relationships, Edmondson's work examines the affective experience of teaming as a mechanism for team efficacy (Edmondson, 2012). In the event of failed team learning, Edmondson (2002) indicates that organizations are deprived of adapting new ways of working and

integrating new knowledge. The differentiation of team learning by team type—top management, product development, middle management, internal services, and production—illustrates an important contribution to our understanding of team learning. Edmondson (2002) extends Argyris and Schön's (1996) single-double loop learning to incremental and radical learning, respectively, and identifies the importance of radical learning for top management and product development teams and incremental learning for other teams.

The empirical nature of Edmondson's (1999, 2002, 2012) and Kasl, Marsick, and Dechant's work (Dechant, Marsick, & Kasl, 1993; Kasl et al., 1997) on team learning provides important context for a more detailed discussion of shared mental models and interdependence in team learning models. The development of shared cognition or meaning construction is a core element reaching across multiple team learning models (Decuyper et al., 2010; Knapp, 2010, 2016; Raes et al., 2013). There is linguistic variation referencing shared mental models, including shared cognition, mutually shared cognition, and collective thought process. This section will use "shared cognition" as the overarching term and aims to describe the conceptualization of shared cognition in team learning theory. Using cognitive mapping techniques presented by Carley (1997) with student teams engaged in a business simulation game, Van den Bossche et al. (2010) investigated how teams create and develop shared mental models or cognition. These models represented shared understanding and acceptance of task and knowledge by the team. In other words, a shared mental model is the team members' overlapping mental representation of knowledge and how they make sense of their collaborative work. At its core, collaboration "is the process of building and maintain a shared conception of a problem" (Van den Bossche et al., 2010, p. 284). The development, modification, and reinforcement of shared mental models create the foundation for team learning based on three core behaviors: *construction, co-construction,* and *constructive conflict.*

Construction behavior within a team involves information exchange between team members through description and listening in an effort to construct meaning. Co-construction behavior within a team involves the creation of new meaning by refining and building from the initial information. Constructive conflict behavior involves the discussion of disagreement and divergent perspectives through argument and clarification to reach a genuinely co-constructed mental model. Their findings indicate that team learning is fully mediated by shared mental models, but the mere exchange of information without a renegotiation of the individual mental model does not lead to the development of a shared mental model. In these situations, sharing takes place as a distribution of knowledge, rather than an agreement on revised knowledge. Teams that pay attention to individual contributions and acknowledge each other are simply engaged in construction, but without constructive conflict, the emergence of a shared mental model is unlikely.

Operating from a dynamic and complex systems paradigm, Decuyper et al. (2010) synthesized research on team learning from numerous disciplines across four decades to develop an integrated team learning model. Their work was based on defining a team as an intact interdependent group with shared responsibility and organizational accountability. The model, structured around inputs, processes, catalyst emergent states, outputs, and developments, has descriptive and prescriptive elements. The descriptive elements, focused on what happens when teams learn, include construction and co-construction of information, constructive conflict, and information storage and retrieval. The prescriptive elements, focused on what is needed for effective learning, include reflexivity, boundary crossing, and team activity.

Van den Bossche et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study with 99 first-year bachelor student teams with a year of working group experience in international business degree program courses. The study utilized a composite questionnaire. The Team Learning Beliefs and Behaviors Questionnaire, built from a group of validated

questionnaires, identified task and outcome interdependence as a core team learning construct. As defined in the shared leadership section of this chapter, *task interdependence* describes the relationship between tasks when performance of one part of the work depends on the completion of another, and *outcome interdependence* describes the benefit and costs accrued to individual team members based on success or failure in goal attainment by other team members (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche et al., 2010). Decuyper et al.'s (2010) integrative analysis of team learning reinforced the role of outcome interdependence, describing it on a positive to negative spectrum; members can perceive goal attainment as positively linked to supporting others, negatively linked, or not linked at all.

Team structure was also identified within the literature as a contributor to interdependence (Ellis et al., 2003). Three structures were explored: (1) divisional structures, where team members share expertise and access to information; (2) functional structures, where team members have differing knowledge specializations and interpretations of knowledge; and (3) paired structures or "role partners," where dyads with common expertise and access to knowledge work together prior to working with other dyads with differing expertise. Ellis et al. (2003) found that the paired structures facilitated team learning most effectively and illustrated the most productive embodiment of interdependence.

The team learning processes defined by Kasl et al. (1997) serve as the foundational theory in this study. The team learning scholarship utilizing the team learning model presented by Dechant et al. (1993) and Kasl et al. (1997) extends over two decades, and numerous studies have validated the model and demonstrated its flexibility (Fahey, 2004; Gavan, 1996; Maxwell, 1997; Pasquina, 2018; Peraro, 2005; Rapposelli, 2003; Rogers, 2002; Sauquet, 2000). The distinction between processes and conditions is particularly relevant for this study (Kasl et al., 1997; Van den Bossche, Gijselaers, Segers, & Kirschner, 2006). While the conditions for team learning provide "fertile ground" for

learning and boost potential outcomes, conditions can exist without processes and vice versa. Therefore, this study intentionally decouples processes and conditions. Rather than focusing on conditions, this study investigates the relationship between Kasl et al.'s (1997) team learning processes and the social, cognitive, and action processes in the sensemaking and shared literature. The next section of this chapter presents the study's conceptual framework and examines the dominant core constructs that guided the study's research design and methodology, including the analytic framework used for deductive analysis.

Conceptual Framework

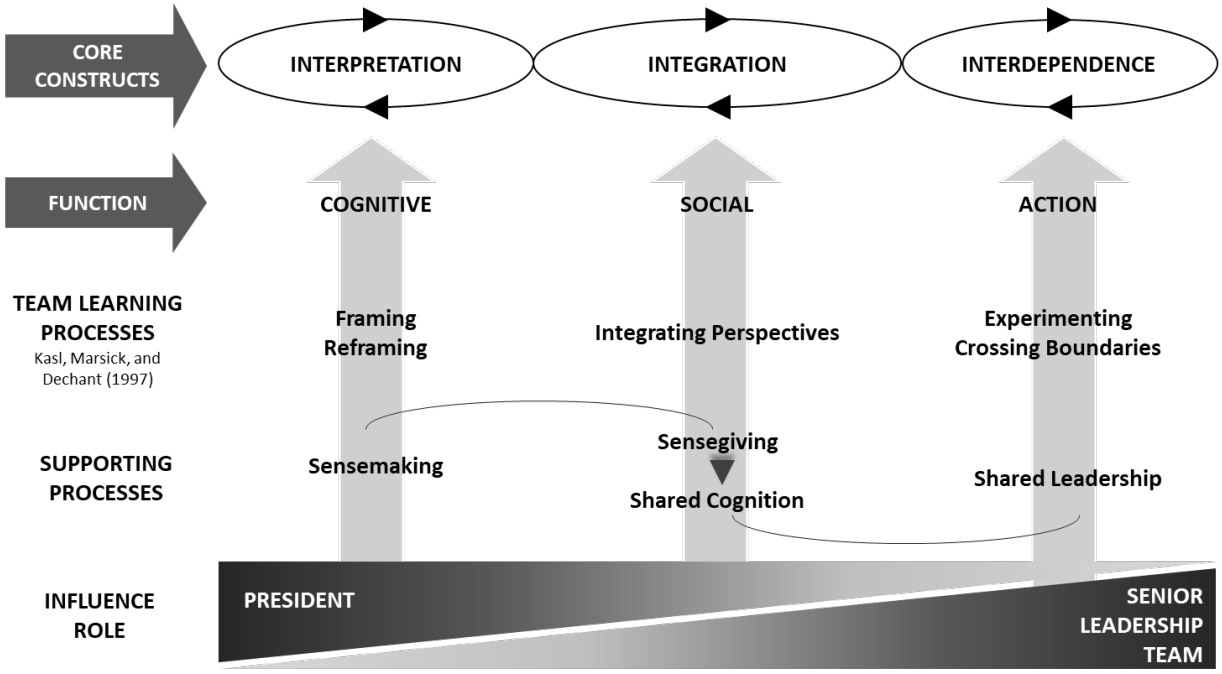

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Learning within Higher Education Presidential SLTs

The conceptual framework represents the intersections of sensemaking, shared leadership, and team learning literature in the context of a college/university president and their senior leadership team. Specifically, this study's conceptual framework

identifies three intersecting core constructs—interpretation, integration, and interdependence—across Kasl et al.'s (1997) team learning processes and sensemaking and shared leadership literature.

Interpretation is viewed as a cognitive meaning-making process aligned with the framing and reframing team learning processes described by Kasl et al. (1997) and the sensemaking strategies described by Daft and Weick (1984) and Kezar and Eckel (2002). From a team learning process lens, framing and reframing describes a process of meaning making beginning with an initial perception that transforms into a new understanding (Pasquina, 2018). Across the sensemaking literature, a similar form of meaning making is represented by an interpretation of past information and current input to "make sense" of the environment. Specifically, within an organizational context, sensemaking involves the interpretation of ambiguous and evolving information to guide future action. *Sensegiving* operates as a bridge to a social process of building shared mental models. Taken together, the conceptual framework defines interpretation as a cognitive process to make meaning out of initial perceptions of ambiguous and evolving information to create new understanding and guide future action. Based on the team learning, sensemaking, and shared leadership literature, the formal leader role has a distinct value. Viewed within the context of higher education presidents and senior leadership teams (SLT), presidents operate as the team's formal leader. While the senior leadership team members engage in interpretation processes, the conceptual framework indicates that the president has significant influence on the interpretation process. Looking specifically within organizational contexts, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), Kezar (2002), and Kezar and Eckel (2002) underscore the role of the position leader in the sensegiving process.

Integration is viewed as a social process aligned with the integrating perspectives team learning process described by Kasl et al. (1997) and the shared cognition processes described in team learning and shared leadership literature (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche et al., 2010). Integrating perspectives is viewed as a synthesis process to

examine and revise viewpoints by incorporating relevant points from the views of others. It forms a link between thinking and action (Gavan, 1996). Shared cognition, also referenced as shared mental models in the literature, allows team members to operate under a common set of assumptions to guide the coordinated action. In other words, a shared mental model represents a team's overlapping interpretations and how they make sense of their collaborative work. As a form of collaboration, shared cognition was a factor identified in many other studies of team learning (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson et al., 2007; Kayes, Kayes, & Kolb, 2005). Taken together, the conceptual framework defines integration as a social process of revising individual viewpoints by incorporating the views of others to operate under a common set of assumptions and make sense of their collaborative work. Viewed within the context of higher education presidents and senior leadership teams (SLT), the conceptual framework views both the president and the SLT members as having key influence roles on integration. Shared cognition and interdependence are intersecting constructs in the shared leadership and team learning literature (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche et al., 2010).

Interdependence is viewed as an active process aligned with the experimenting and crossing boundaries team learning processes described by Kasl et al. (1997) and the shared leadership literature. The experimenting and crossing boundaries team learning processes are viewed as active processes involving communication, discovery, and information exchange. Within the shared leadership and team learning literature, interdependence reflects the team's engagement with each other to complete tasks and a recognition of each other's skills to achieve specific outcomes. Heavily reliant on the development of a shared mental model or sense of shared purpose, interdependence is a defining characteristic of coordinated action within the team. Taken together, the conceptual framework defines interdependence as an action-oriented process of engagement with each other to coordinate action, complete tasks, and recognize each other's skills to achieve specific outcomes. Viewed within the context of higher

education presidents and senior leadership teams (SLT), the conceptual framework views the SLT members as having the key influence role on the enactment of interdependence.

Taken from the literature influencing the conceptual framework, with specific emphasis on Kasl et al.'s (1997) team learning processes, these three core constructs—interpretation, integration, and interdependence—enable each other. While not operating as distinct stages, the way a president and senior leadership enact one construct will influence the enactment of the other. Viewed more as building blocks, a team with behaviors and practices strongly aligned with the interpretation construct may "stop there" and not move on to develop integration or interdependence construct behaviors and practices. Jumping forward to the interdependence construct, a team with behaviors and practices aligned with this construct will likely reflect interpretation *and* integration constructs in their behavior and practices. This framework and the literature supporting it advance a view of team learning wherein teams that are more invested in cognitive functions, influenced largely by the president's leadership, are performing *less complex learning functions* than teams that are invested in more action-oriented learning functions, and even social-oriented learning functions. Action-oriented teams reflect the behaviors and practices of interdependence and are influenced largely by their own leadership. The following chapter will describe the approach this study took to investigate this view of team learning supported by sensemaking and shared leadership literature in the context of college and university presidents and their senior leadership teams.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This descriptive comparative case study examined the team learning processes of five higher education presidential senior leadership teams. The research design, including qualitative interview and survey data collection, was developed to examine team learning processes, analyzed through the social and cognitive constructs contained within team learning, sensemaking, and shared leadership literature. While the study is situated in the social constructivist paradigm "concerned with how individuals construct and make sense of their world" (Robson, 2011, p. 24), a pragmatic worldview informs the methodology. The pragmatic worldview assumes that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of the research problem and acknowledges the strengths of multiple lines of inquiry (Creswell, 2013). Along with the university president, the senior leadership teams (SLT), as defined by the university president, were selected for this research. The purpose of this research was to understand team learning through an exploration of the individual experiences, team experiences, and team interactions of SLT members and presidents and to identify enablers and barriers to their learning processes.

The major research questions for the study were:

1. How do these presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?

2. How do these presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?
3. What facilitates or impedes learning among these SLT members and between these presidents and SLT members?

This chapter includes an overview of the study's design supported by literature, including a description of the areas of information needed, site and participant selection, data collection and analysis approaches, validity and reliability measures, and study limitations.

Research Design

Based on the study's defined purpose to seek an understanding of team learning processes within and amongst university presidents and senior leadership team (SLT) members, a qualitative research method was selected. Qualitative research is designed to help the researcher "understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge" and is "concerned with people's views and actions" (Robson, 2011, p. 24). Focusing on context in naturalistic settings, qualitative research enables the study of social phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). As further described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 6). Fundamentally, qualitative research seeks to "understand the meaning people have constructed" (p.15).

This study relied upon an engagement with participants in their real-world context and conducting a deeper inquiry into their lived experience within that context. In fulfillment of these research goals, this study utilized a qualitative case study approach. As described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the case study approach allows for an intensive, holistic description and analysis for meaning and understanding. Case studies

produce rich descriptions through “how” and “why” research questions and are an ideal research strategy when an inquiry into the relationship between a phenomenon and its context is relevant for the research purpose (Yin, 2018).

The sample utilized for this research study included five Middle Atlantic region university presidents and their SLTs. This study’s comparative case study methodology was supported by semi-structured interviews and survey data collection. Interviews with both the presidents and their SLT members were conducted to obtain information about individual experiences, team experiences, and team interactions relevant to team learning processes and the enablers and barriers to their learning processes. The teamwork survey, developed by the researcher, was significantly influenced by the presidential team functions defined by Bensimon and Neumann (1993). The survey was administered to provide information about the frequency and purpose of team interactions. As described in Dechant et al.’s (1993) team learning model, the Team Learning Survey (TLS) developed by Dechant et al. was administered to interpret team learning processes. While the team learning model presented by Kasl et al. (1997) incorporates team learning processes *and* conditions, their “team learning” definition focuses on the thinking and acting processes engaged in by individuals to share and create knowledge. The purpose and research questions for this study specifically lend themselves to a focus on a processual view of team learning.

In particular, this case study was framed in descriptive terms using multiple sources and data collection methods to identify themes and allow for the identification of patterns and commonalities through cross-case comparison and contrast (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Robson, 2011). The study also relied on the theoretical premise that shared leadership, sensemaking, and team learning theories offer a conceptual framework for examination across multiple cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Areas of Information Needed

Structural, perceptual, and conceptual information were needed for the purpose of this study. An overview of the sources and methods for each category of information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Areas of Information, Sources, and Methods

Areas of Information	Methods	Sources
Structural	Organizational documents Semi-Structured Interviews	- University websites - Organizational Charts - Presidents and Senior Leadership Team Members - Participant LinkedIn profiles
Perceptual	Team Learning Process Survey Teamwork Survey Semi-Structured Interviews	- Presidents and Senior Leadership Team Members - Researcher notes
Conceptual	Literature Review	Peer reviewed shared leadership, team learning, and sensemaking theory research literature

Structural information was used to verify the overall service tenure at the institution for presidents and SLT members, confirm reporting relationships, and identify hiring/appointment dates into the specific senior leadership role. This information was gathered via university websites, organizational charts requested by the researcher, and, as needed, confirmation during interviews. While each university president defined the senior leadership team members for study participation, a direct reporting relationship to the president was defined as a criterion for participation. Information on the duration of participant tenure at the institution and in their role was collected during interviews and, as needed, verified by the researcher through a review of participant LinkedIn profiles or institutional website biographies, to allow for the identification of patterns and themes during data analysis and synthesis.

Perceptual information about team learning and interactions between team members was obtained through semi-structured interviews with the presidents and their

senior leadership team members, the team learning process survey (Dechant et al., 1993), and teamwork survey. The semi-structured interviews provided a deeper understanding of the individual's perception of self as a senior leader and their experiences as a member of the senior leadership team. Particular to the presidents, this information provided insight into their sense of self in relationship to their SLT and their beliefs about and approaches to the creation, support, and development of their SLT. Researcher notes prepared through the data collection process were instrumental in defining themes and observations utilized to support data analysis. The surveys provided information about the president's and senior leadership team members' perceptions of the extent of the team learning processes and the frequency and functional purpose of team interactions.

Conceptual information on how presidents and senior leadership team members work and learn together was gathered largely through a review of the peer-reviewed literature on shared leadership, team learning, sensemaking, and higher education leadership. The relationship between data collection methods and the research questions is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationship Between Data Collection Methods and Research Questions

	Team Learning Process Survey	**Team Work Survey**	**Semi-structured interviews**	**Documents**
1. How do these presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?			✓	
2. How do these presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?		✓	✓	✓
3. What facilitates or impedes learning among these SLT members and between these presidents and SLT members?	✓		✓	

Sample and Site Selection

The population sample for this study included five university presidents and their senior leadership teams (SLTs). This section describes the process for site and participant selection. The study utilized two sampling approaches: a *purposive* sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and a *snowball* sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The two sampling approaches yielded five sites for inclusion in the study. Table 4 summarizes the study's sampling strategies and sites.

Table 4. Sampling Strategies

	Strategy	Sites Invited	Sites Accepted
Sampling Round I	Purposive	11 sites within one state higher education system via system Chancellor invites to institutional presidents	**One site** accepted and included in study data analysis
Sampling Round II	Snowball	Four presidents invited via direct outreach from the researcher	**Four sites** accepted and included in study data analysis

Nearly 30% of all postsecondary students in the U.S. are served by 51 multi-campus systems operating within 38 states (Lane & Johnstone, 2013). These systems "provide a level of coordination among the campuses, allocate funding from the state to the campuses, enact and enforce regulations, serve as a common voice for higher education to the state government, and community the needs of the state to the campuses" (p. 10). The collective leadership role that state systems have on the broad direction of U.S. higher education and the unifying inputs and constraints on strategic institutional change faced by individual state systems make them an ideal focus for research (Zimpher, 2013). The *purposive* sampling approach used in this study focused on one Middle Atlantic state higher education system. Out of the 51 U.S. state higher education systems, the Middle Atlantic system selected for sampling included 11 institutions and

reflected a diverse representation of institutional urbanization and racial/ethnic student diversity (IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2018). The researcher outreached to the Chancellor for the selected state system to support institutional participation. The Chancellor subsequently agreed to extend invitations to the 11 institutional presidents in the state system.

Since previous higher education senior leadership team research (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Dean, 2008; Gaval, 2009; Mangano, 2007) strove for institutional diversity, based on Carnegie basic classification, size, and control (Carnegie Classifications, 2018), the researcher engaged in a *snowball* sampling strategy, seeking a similar diversity within institutions in the Middle Atlantic region (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For comparative purposes, the researcher believed this type of institutional diversity would influence both the scope and complexity of senior leaders' operation. The snowball strategy can rely on research participants or key informants to offer participant recommendations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 1990; Robson, 2011). As Patton (1990) describes, the process might begin by asking well-situated people: "Who knows a lot about __? Who should I talk to?" (p. 176). Through the researcher's connections at her place of employment, the American Council of Education, she solicited feedback from colleagues and board members for institutional presidents they believed might have a willingness to participate. To achieve variation and study credibility, institutional diversity was a key factor in assessing recommendations. Four Middle Atlantic institutions in two states (three in one state and one in another state) were suggested by multiple individuals. None of these four institutions was in the same previously selected state system. However, one of these institutions was in the *same state* as the previously selected state system. In addition, one of the suggested institutions was privately controlled. While the researcher initially focused on publicly controlled institutions within a state system, the inclusion of a privately controlled institution was deemed to provide additional sample variation. Additional variation included the

inclusion of a two-year associate's college (i.e., community college) and a minority-serving institution. Ultimately, the five sites selected for the study reflected a level of institutional diversity the researcher deemed to be important for the study's credibility. The researcher made direct outreach to the institutional presidents and their administrative support staff via email, and each president granted permission for themselves and their SLT to participate in the study.

The president of each institutional site was given the opportunity to define their SLT members based on the following definition provided in the research description included in the participation invitation: *senior executive staff reporting directly to the president leading a division, helping define the institutional strategic direction, and/or providing direct support and advice to the president*. Based on this definition and the consistency of these roles at each site, the following five *core* SLT member roles: (1) president, (2) chief academic officer/provost, (3) chief financial officer, (4) chief student affairs officer, and (5) chief advancement officer. In addition to these roles, additional roles identified by some presidents included chief of staff, general counsel, vice president for enrollment management, vice president for administration, executive director for access and inclusion, vice president for research, and vice president for information technology. Table 5 provides a site and participant summary with their Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Carnegie Classifications, 2018) and SLT role participants.

Table 5. Site and Participant Summary

Site	Carnegie Classification *(size, control, level, basic)*	Core Functional Roles	Additional Roles
A	Large (> 10,000 students) primarily residential, public, four-year master's university *Total Participants for Site A: 10*	1. President 2. Academic Affairs 3. Finance 4. Student Affairs 5. Advancement	6. Chief of Staff 7. Enrollment 8. Access and Inclusion 9. General Counsel 10. Strategic Planning
B	Small (< 3,000 students) primarily residential, private, four-year master's university *Total Participants for Site B: 5*	1. President 2. Academic Affairs 3. Finance 4. Student Affairs 5. Advancement	None
C	Large (> 10,000 students) primarily residential, public, four-year doctoral university *Total Participants for Site C: 10*	1. President 2. Academic Affairs 3. Finance 4. Student Affairs 5. Advancement	6. Chief of Staff 7. Enrollment 8. Information Tech 9. Research 10. General Counsel
D	Very large (> 10,000 students), public, two-year associate's college *Total Participants for Site D: 6*	1. President 2. Academic Affairs 3. Finance 4. Student Affairs 5. Advancement	6. Chief of Staff
E	Medium (3,000-10,000 students) highly residential, public, four-year master's university, minority serving *Total Participants for Site E: 7*	1. President 2. Academic Affairs 3. Finance 4. Student Affairs	5. Administration 6. General Counsel 7. Research
	NOTE: Site E did not include an Advancement officer.		

Pilot Interviews and Surveys

The pilot site, an institution in a Middle Atlantic state higher education system, was identified during the purposive sampling process. The institution is a medium-sized, public, special focus institution serving a professional student population (Carnegie Classifications, 2018) and without a chief student affairs officer role. In comparison to the sites included in the study, the institution's unique institutional profile provided an opportunity to examine assumptions of the study design, refine the teamwork survey and interview protocol, and for the researcher to reflect on her behavior.

Data Collection Methods and Protocols

This section describes each of the study's four data collection methods: interviews, team learning survey, teamwork survey, and documents. Combining multiple methods adds rigor, breadth, and depth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Principally, utilizing multiple methods that explore the purpose of this study and the research questions increases the validity and reliability of the study. In addition, the complementarity between the survey and interview data allows both data sets to enhance and clarify the results from each (Onwuegbuzie, Slate, Leech, & Collins, 2007). Prior to selecting the data collection methods, the researcher conducted a preliminary review of selected literature. This review contributed in part to the development of the conceptual framework, which informed the data collection methods. Figure 2 summarizes the data collection flow. Following the description of each collection method, Table 6 summarizes data collected by site.

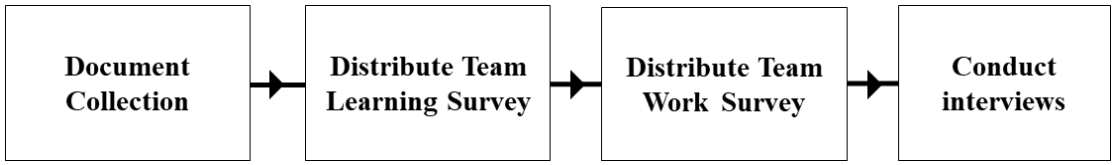

Figure 2. Data Collection Sequence

Documents

Organizational charts were obtained on the site's website or collected from each institution to confirm reporting relationships between the president and senior leadership team members. The researcher also used participant LinkedIn profiles as a secondary source of information to confirm the duration of participant tenure.

Team Learning Survey

The Team Learning Survey (TLS) was developed by Dechant et al. (1993), based on the foundational work of Schön (1990) and Mezirow (1989) and the experiential

learning literature (Boud & Walker, 1990; Jarvis, 1987; Kolb, 1984). The study of teams in a petrochemical and a manufacturing company guided the architecture of their team learning model, including a set of team learning processes, conditions, and outcomes. The resultant survey includes five scales—team learning outcomes, organizational learning outcomes, team learning processes, team learning conditions, and organizational learning conditions (Kasl et al., 1997). The team learning process scale, including 16 of the survey's 60 questions, was selected for use in this study (Appendix E). This scale demonstrates the highest internal consistency (Gavan, 1996) and aligns most closely with this study's emphasis on how individuals and teams engage during their interactions. The researcher discussed the exclusive use of the team learning process scale for this study with advisors during the proposal process and received approval to move forward. The researcher created an on-line version of the team learning process questions via Qualtrics. To facilitate data collection, analysis, and synthesis, participants were not anonymous. A separate survey was created for each participant with a specific designated link to allow the researcher to track completion of each participant. To protect anonymity, the researcher had sole access to the Qualtrics account used to administer the survey and accessed the survey on a password-protected personal laptop. The TLS was administered to participants *before the interview* through an online Qualtrics link using a seven-point ordinal scale. All participants completed the survey before their interview.

Teamwork Survey

Put an organizational chart in front of most any employee and they will tell you the boxes and lines only partially reflect the way work gets done in their organization. Informal relationships among employees are often far more reflective of the way work happens in an organization than relationships established by position within the formal structure (Cross, Borgatti, & Parker, 2003, p. 83). The questions used in the teamwork survey were developed to provide data about various combinations of team interactions.

These data provided insight into the interaction patterns between the president and SLT members, which implies greater access to and control over valued resources. Studies have also concluded that interaction patterns can be positively related to increased authority within a social network, which in turn helps in the identification of an individual's degree of influence. The teamwork survey included two sections: interaction frequency and purpose. *Frequency* was defined in four ways—daily, weekly/bi-weekly, monthly, and unclear. *Purpose* was defined by the purpose of interactions: share information, provide status updates, consult with each other, request advice, decision making, or planning. Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) landmark study on presidential senior leadership teams had a significant influence on the response options for the purpose of their interactions. These options were developed based on the activities described by the three presidential leadership team functions they defined: utilitarian (task related), expressive (integrative), and cognitive (dialogical). Social network theory, along with the literature on sensemaking and shared leadership (Fausing et al., 2015; Maitlis, 2005; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Wageman et al., 2008), also influenced the development of the survey. The survey required the president and SLT members of each site to identify the frequency and purpose of their interactions with each other (Appendix F). The teamwork survey was administered to participants *before the interview* through an online Qualtrics link. All participants completed the survey before their interview. To facilitate data collection, analysis, and synthesis, participants were not anonymous. To protect confidentiality, the researcher has sole access to the Qualtrics account used to administer the survey.

Interviews

Commonly used in case study research, interviews function as professionally guided conversations to gather information systematically from subjects (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Yin, 2018). Given the pragmatic paradigm guiding this study, the

knowledge generated by the study's interview data emphasizes the primacy of practice (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The case study methodology also leads the researcher to embrace the contextual relevance of the knowledge created. In particular, for this study, participant knowledge that their president was aware of and endorsed study participation likely influenced their experience. The interviews with presidents and senior leadership teams were a critical component of the study's central research question: How do presidential SLTs understand the purpose of *working* and *learning* together. Thus, semi-structured interviews were used to enable participants to describe their experiences using open-ended responses. The study's interview protocol is detailed in Appendix G.

Following each site's president granting permission for their SLT to participate in the study and their verification of their senior leadership (SLT) members, the researcher individually contacted each SLT member and their administrative support staff via email to invite their participation in the study (Appendix A). The participation invitation for each SLT member indicated that the president had provided permission for the institution to participate in the study. Each SLT member invited from each site accepted the invitation to participate. Following the receipt of their acceptance via email, the researcher coordinated with administrative support staff for each participant to schedule 60-minute interviews. Initial contact was made via email, with follow-up contact made via phone and confirmations sent via email. In addition, the researcher contacted the president's administrative staff to schedule their 60-minute interview. Following Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, an informed consent form and overview of the interview protocol (Appendices B and C) was provided in advance of each interview. One site required an additional approval of their IRB. Interviews were conducted between August 2017 and February 2018. With the exception of one interview conducted via phone, all interviews were conducted face-to-face in the participant's office. Due to scheduling issues, Team E's advancement officer, one of the core functional roles, was not able to participate in the study.

Interviews began with an overview of confidentiality and request for permission to record and a signed copy of the informed consent form. Each interview was audio-taped using a primary and back-up device. Audio transcription services were contracted, and a non-disclosure agreement was used with the contractor to ensure consistency with the study's confidentiality standards, including complete and immediate data destruction post transcription (Appendix D). Digital audio files for each interview and transcripts have been stored on a password protected external hard drive at the researcher's home and will be permanently deleted through a file wipe in February 2021. Researcher notes were prepared following each interview with key themes and highlights. All written materials will be kept secured at the researcher's home and destroyed in February 2021 through a cross-cut shredding process. Table 6 summarizes data collected by site.

Table 6. Data Collection Summary

Team Member	Core Role	Functional Role	Interviews Conducted	Completed Team Learning Surveys	Completed Teamwork Surveys
A1	✓	President	x	x	x
A2	✓	Academic Affairs	x	x	x
A3	✓	Finance	x	x	x
A4	✓	Student Affairs	x	x	x
A5	✓	Advancement	x	x	x
A6		Chief of Staff	x	x	x
A7		Enrollment	x	x	x
A8		Access and Inclusion	x	x	x
A9		General Counsel	x	x	x
A10		Strategic Planning	x	x	x
B1	✓	President	x	x	x
B2	✓	Academic Affairs	x	x	x
B3	✓	Finance	x	x	x
B4	✓	Student Affairs	x	x	x
B5	✓	Advancement	x	x	x
C1	✓	President	x	x	x
C2	✓	Academic Affairs	x	x	x
C3	✓	Finance	x	x	x
C4	✓	Student Affairs	x	x	x
C5	✓	Advancement	x	x	x
C6		Chief of Staff	x	x	x
C7		Enrollment Management	x	x	x
C8		Information Technology	x	x	x
C9		Research	x	x	x
C10		General Counsel	x	x	x

Table 6 (continued)

Team Member	Core Role	Functional Role	Interviews Conducted	Completed Team Learning Surveys	Completed Teamwork Surveys
D1	✓	President	x	x	x
D2	✓	Academic Affairs	x	x	x
D3	✓	Finance	x	x	x
D4	✓	Student Affairs	x	x	x
D5	✓	Advancement	x	x	x
D6		Chief of Staff	x	x	x
E1	✓	President	x	x	x
E2	✓	Academic Affairs	x	x	x
E3	✓	Finance	x	x	x
E4	✓	Student Affairs	x	x	x
E5		Administration	x	x	x
E6		General Counsel	x	x	x
E7		Research	x	x	x
		Total	**38**	**38**	**38**

Analysis of Data

This section provides an overview of the data analysis process used to extract insights from the survey data (team learning survey and teamwork survey) and qualitative data (semi-structured interviews). Qualitative data were given priority in this study, and the resultant data analysis from the survey data provides additional insight into the study's research questions. The plan for data analysis aligned with the analytic procedures described by Marshall and Rossman (2010), including organizing and structuring survey data and interview transcriptions, immersion in the data, scoring the survey data, deductive coding the qualitative data based on the core constructs in the conceptual framework, and inductive coding to identify emergent themes. An inductive and deductive approach allowed the researcher to organize data from the "bottom up" to identify emergent patterns and "top down" to test concepts in the literature (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Team learning process scores, teamwork survey results, and interview data were examined in context to understand how the teams reported and described their interaction and learning processes. Through analysis, emergent themes were compared to

relevant literature. Similarities and differences among the five teams were explored to identify findings. Ultimately, the synthesis resulted in a description of how different teams describe how they work and learn together.

Descriptive Data

Based on data collected in organizational documents, organizational charts, LinkedIn pages, websites, and participant interviews, a range of descriptive information was identified. These data included overall service tenure, physical proximity, and meeting structures. Since the accumulated experience at the institution is relevant to the participant's experience, service tenure included all of the years of service at the institution. Average service tenure among the core functional roles was calculated and compared to the tenure of the president. Physical proximity was defined in this study as the closeness of office locations for the core functional roles. Physical proximity between SLT members and the president was identified by the researcher's observations during the interviews conducted on-site at participant offices and discussed during interviews. Meeting structures were discussed during participant interviews. These structures included the range of meetings among senior leaders at the institution. The descriptive data are detailed in Chapter IV.

Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were designed to better understand the experiences of senior leadership team members, with a focus on how they operate and communicate with each other. An additional area of inquiry included the purpose of the senior leadership teams in higher education and future trends in higher education senior leadership. Each transcribed interview was saved as a separate Word document with an assigned pseudonym to protect confidentiality and correlate data. The gender of each participant was recorded based on the best judgment of the researcher after face-to-face interviews and review of organizational data, including bios on institutional websites and

LinkedIn profiles. The researcher listened to the audio recordings and reread each transcript for accuracy. As needed, minor corrections were made, including misspelled and omitted words. Repeated review of interview audio recordings and transcripts allowed the researcher to immerse herself in the data. The next section provides additional insight into the coding process, which was refined based on the literature, the researcher's insights, and emergent data from the participants. The findings were analyzed within and across the five core functional roles and each of the five teams.

Coding Scheme and Processes

An iterative coding process began with a deductive approach and transitioned to an inductive approach focused on recurring patterns that provided different ways of viewing and thinking about the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The initial deductive approach, displayed in Appendix I, was organized based on the study's research questions. Viewed within the context of the research questions, the conceptual framework and the researcher's insights influenced the foundation of the deductive approach and established the major coding scheme categories and sub-code themes. NVivo coding software was used to perform the coding process for the 38 interview transcripts. The researcher engaged in two rounds of inductive coding, looking for recurring patterns and themes to provide different ways of viewing and thinking about the data. During both rounds, the researcher refined the coding scheme through a process of adding, deleting, expanded, collapsing, and refining coding categories and sub-codes. For the third round of coding, two doctoral candidates working as graduate research associates at the researcher's employer, the American Council on Education, were enlisted to test and challenge the coding schematic and to establish credibility. Both associates were familiar with higher education senior leadership structures, roles, and environments. Each associate received a copy of two transcripts from a different team and the initial coding schematic. The researcher reviewed their findings, resulting in

rephrasing code names and descriptions. For the fourth and final round of coding, the researcher revised code descriptions, expanded a set of codes, and renamed coding categories. Each round of coding was captured in NVivo as a separate project, and each round of changes can be reviewed in Appendix I. A final version of the coding scheme reflects significant refinement and revision. This final coding scheme is found in Appendix J.

Team Learning Survey

Using the facilitator's guide (Dechant & Marsick, 1993), the 16 team learning process questions from Dechant et al.'s (1993) team learning survey (TLS) were scored based on a seven-point ordinal scale. Each participant completed the team learning survey. Participants were assigned a code, allowing the researcher to associate results with each site team and functional role, and the TLS survey data were exported from Qualtrics to an Excel spreadsheet. Individual scores were calculated on the Excel spreadsheet. The comparative case study approach is a core element of the data analysis procedures (Yin, 2018). Comparisons were made across SLT functional role and team. For example, data for chief academic officers, an SLT functional role, were combined across teams to allow them to be viewed as a group, and each institutional team's data were combined collectively to allow for team-to-team comparisons. Average scores and standard deviations were calculated for each team and for each of the five core functional roles. In addition, the researcher determined the team learning mode defined by Kasl et al. (1997) based on the Dechant and Marsick (1993) facilitator's guide. TLS team and functional role scores are detailed in Chapter IV. Appendix K includes a summary of results for each team and core functional role.

Teamwork Survey

Interaction data were gathered through the teamwork online survey containing two measures: frequency and purpose. The frequency and purpose of SLT member

interactions were exported from Qualtrics into Excel spreadsheets to calculate scores and averages.

Frequency. The frequency question in the teamwork survey allowed participants to report interaction frequency in four ways: daily, weekly/bi-weekly, monthly, and not applicable (Appendix F). While interaction frequency data were collected from all participants, the researcher determined that team-to-team comparisons needed to focus on the five core functional roles (president, academic affairs officer, finance officer, student affairs officer, and advancement officer). The focus on these roles allowed for consistent comparisons between teams. Two calculations were made based on the frequency section of the teamwork survey: average frequency and level of agreement. To calculate the average frequency, the researcher assigned a numerical value to the response of each of the five core functional roles: nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1. Based on the survey response, the associated value was used to calculate an average score for each team and across the five core functional roles in each team. For the team average, higher average scores indicate that more frequent contact with each other was reported. This survey focused on the reported perception of each participant.

To calculate level of agreement, the researcher compared the number of times the five core functional role members agreed with each other's report of interaction frequency. For example, if member A reported interacting daily with participant B, but participant B reported interacting monthly, the researcher assigned a "0" to their level of agreement, indicating that they did not agree. If they reported the same interaction frequency, the researcher assigned a "1" to the level of agreement, indicating their agreement. Based on the potential for complete agreement across all members of the SLT, the level of agreement was calculated as a percentage across the team. Appendix L contains teamwork interaction frequency results by team and across team by functional role.

Purpose. The purpose section of the teamwork survey allowed participants to report their perspective on the purpose of their interactions with other SLT members in six ways: share information, provide status updates, consult with each other, request advice, decision making, or planning. The researcher calculated the frequency each participant reported interaction purposes as percentage distribution across all options. Based on the literature supporting the selection of the six purpose options in the survey, the researcher expected the purpose options to be correlated into three pairs: information/status updates, consultation/advice, and planning/decision making. To assess the validity of this assumption, Pearson correlation coefficient calculations were calculated for each of the three pairs. In addition, other Pearson correlation coefficient calculations were calculated for other combinations of the six purposes to identify stronger or weaker correlations. Selected correlation coefficient results can be found in Table 7. Appendix M contains the teamwork purpose distribution results by team and functional role and overall correlation results.

Cross-Case Synthesis

Looking within and across teams and core functional roles, synthesis of data included five key data sets: (1) structural data, including proximity and service tenure; (2) the interpretation of learning mode based on team learning process score; (3) the reported interaction frequency; (4) the reported distribution of interaction purpose; and (5) the thematic coding frequency charts based on interviews. The researcher studied the data to compare and contrast the data to identify study findings in response to the study's research questions.

Reliability and Validity

Extending from Lincoln and Guba's (1985) reformative view of reliability and validity developed to suit the complexities of qualitative inquiry, the following four concepts will be used to evaluate this study.

- Credibility – addresses the fit with the 'truth' of the findings
- Transferability - demonstrating applicability of the findings to other contexts
- Dependability – establishing a logically and consistently documented process
- Confirmability – demonstrating findings are shaped by data, not by the bias or interests of the respondents or researcher

The researcher sought to address credibility by using multiple sources of data and external review and refinement of qualitative coding categories. The researcher sought to address transferability through the inclusion of multiple sites, which allowed for replication of data collection. The researcher provided a robust sample of sites with rich descriptive data, allowing for an assessment of generalization to future research and other senior leadership teams in higher education. The researcher intentionally sought variation in the selection of sites, including institutional size, private/public control, and differences in the service tenure duration of presidents and senior leadership team members. In addition, the use of multiple theoretical constructs in the literature review and construction of a conceptual framework allowed the researcher to converge multiple lines of inquiry. The researcher sought to address dependability through consistent data collection processes and established chain of evidence with the data. Similar to issues of credibility and transferability, the researcher sought to address confirmability by relying on multiple sources of data.

Limitations

While certain limitations are inherent in case study design, a review of the limitations is included in this section. These limitations include researcher bias, variation in interpretation of survey questions, participant bias, and incomplete participation. The researcher's professional history in higher education positioned her to be uniquely qualified to investigate senior leadership teams in higher education and served as a benefit for understanding and navigating the study environment. To mitigate bias extending from this history, the researcher consistently reflected on the influence of past experience, utilized external validators for the coding scheme, and referenced researcher notes during data analysis. Repeated immersion in the original data sources through listening to interview audio recordings and re-reading interview transcripts also helped refocus the researcher on the specifics of the data.

The study included a teamwork survey focused on the frequency and purpose of team interactions. The teamwork survey asked participants to report the purpose of their interactions with the president and/or other SLT members based on their impression of their various interactions. Since the participants were instructed to consider a wide range of interactions, they are likely to have considered various contexts for their interactions with senior leadership team members and interpreted interactions in different ways. Additional data collection procedures, e.g., meeting observations, agendas, or communications, would be needed to validate reported purpose. In addition, given communications with several participants' administrative assistants during the scheduling and coordination of interviews, the researcher considers the possibility that some participants may have allowed their administrative assistants to complete either the team learning or teamwork survey.

One of the sites that participated in the study responded to the chancellor's invitation to participate. Given the role the chancellor played in their participation,

participants may have been hesitant to reveal negative or conflictual aspects of the team experience. In addition, participants were aware that their president endorsed participation. Therefore, they may have felt obligated to accept the researcher's invitation to participate. Participants may have been similarly influenced to focus on the positive aspects of the team experience. While some participants may have discussed their involvement in the study, the researcher attempted to mitigate this issue by maintaining the confidentiality of each participant and not disclosing who agreed to participate.

Lastly, the advancement officer for Team D did not participate in the study. While they agreed to participate through email communication with the researcher, scheduling the interview was a challenge the researcher was unable to surmount. The researcher attempted to mitigate the issue through repeated follow-up emails and visiting the campus office of the advancement officer. Ultimately, following their acceptance to participate via email, they did not respond to further follow up.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this descriptive comparative case study was to better understand the team learning processes of presidents and higher education senior leadership team members. The research centered on the presidents and senior leadership teams from five Middle Atlantic institutions of differing size and public/private control. Participants included five core functional roles at each of the five sites—president, academic affairs officer, finance officer, student affairs officer, and advancement officer. Additional participants represented a range of positions, including chiefs of staff, general counsels, and enrollment officers. Thirty-eight participants participated in semi-structured interviews and completed a two-part online survey focused on teamwork and team learning. The teamwork survey explored the frequency and purpose of team interactions and the team learning survey explored learning processes defined by Kasl et al. (1997). The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do these presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?
2. How do these presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?
3. What facilitates or impedes learning among these SLT members and between these presidents and SLT members?

This chapter will present the key study findings in four sections. The first section will present an overview of team descriptive information, interview and survey findings. The second section will present descriptive information and interview and survey findings for the study's five teams. The third section will present interview and survey findings for the five core functional roles. Looking across the team and core functional role findings, the fourth section will summarize study findings organized by each research question.

Description of Findings

As described in Chapter III, the study's data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, a teamwork survey, and a team learning survey focused on team learning processes. This section provides background on each method and presents a description of findings to frame team and core functional role findings. Prior to a review of each method, a review of the descriptive information for each site and study participants is presented.

Descriptive Information

The five research sites represent a diverse set of institutional types, including public and private, large and small, residential and non-residential, and doctoral and associate level. The descriptive information for each site includes team size, recent hiring history for the core functional roles, service tenure, physical proximity, and meeting structures. Service tenure duration is defined in this study as the individual's complete service tenure at the institution. The relative service tenure duration of presidents and their SLT members may help frame an understanding of team descriptions of their work with each other. The median tenure for all participants in the study was 12 years. The median tenure for presidents in the study was 6 years. The researcher looked specifically at the relative tenure of the president in comparison to the median tenure of the senior

leadership team members. This information, displayed in Figure 3, indicates that the presidents of Team B and C have more experience at the institution than their senior leadership team members. Therefore, these two presidents selected each of their senior leadership team members for their roles as senior leaders. The presidents of Teams A, D, and E have less tenure than most of the members of their senior leadership team.

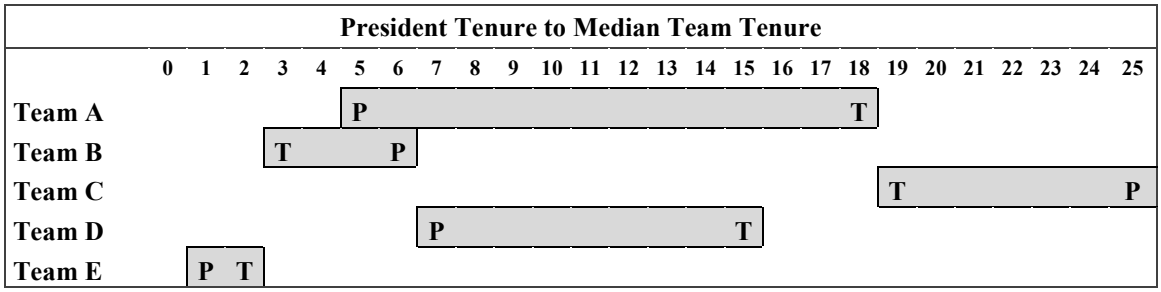

Figure 3. President to Average Team Tenure Comparison

Physical proximity is defined in this study as the closeness of office locations for the core functional roles. With a focus on the five core functional roles, three physical proximity configurations were defined: *full centralization* (all core functional roles in the same building), *partial centralization* (most of the core functional roles in the same building), and *minimal centralization* (most of the core functional roles in different buildings). Meeting structures are defined as the types and frequency of formal meetings of the senior leadership team and other institutional senior leaders (deans, executive directors, directors, and a range of provostial and dean roles). The presentation of findings for each team will also include a list of the participants' functional roles, pseudonyms, and gender.

Teamwork Survey

The teamwork survey focused on interaction frequency between senior leadership team members and the purpose of the interactions. Participants had four interaction

frequency options: nearly daily, bi-weekly/weekly, monthly, and not sure. Interactions were defined broadly to include meetings and communication by email and phone. Their selections were based on their perception at the time of survey completion. To calculate average interaction frequency, each option was assigned a score: nearly daily – 3, bi-weekly/weekly – 2, monthly – 1, not sure – 0. Higher average scores represent interactions that are more frequent. Fourteen of the 38 participants *did not* serve in the five core functional roles. The average reported interaction frequency calculations for each team *only* include the five core functional roles. In addition, the level of agreement between the core functional roles, including the president, is also reported. Appendix L summarizes the teamwork survey results.

Prior to reviewing the team and core functional role results, the overall results across all 38 study participants are presented. As displayed in Figure 4, 54% of reported interactions occur on a weekly basis, and 33% of the reported interactions occur on a daily basis. Only 7% of participants reported monthly interactions with other core functional roles, and 6% were uncertain about the frequency of their interactions.

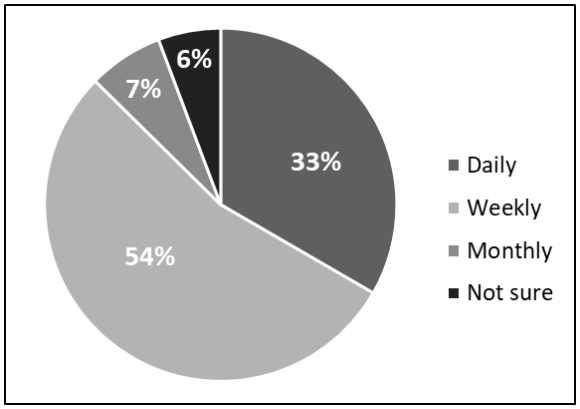

Figure 4. Overall Reported Interaction Frequency Results, All Participants

There was minimal variability in average reported interaction frequency across all five teams and across the core functional roles. The range of the average reported interaction frequency across the teams was 1.9-2.5. The range of the average reported interaction

frequency across the core functional role was 1.7-2.5. These results support the finding that **weekly interaction is the dominant interaction frequency, regardless of other institutional factors and functional role**.

Another portion of the teamwork survey included an exploration of the participant perception of the purpose of their interactions with other senior leadership team members. Participants selected any of the following six purposes that were relevant to their interactions: share information, provide status updates, consult with each other, request advice, decision making, and planning. Figure 5 displays the percentage of all participants reporting each interaction purpose. Nearly every participant (99%) reported sharing information as a purpose of their interaction with the president and other SLT members. In effect, this result indicates that **information sharing is a fundamental interaction activity**. The least frequently reported interaction purpose was requesting advice (44%). Given the study's findings regarding the importance of functional expertise, the nomenclature of "requesting advice" of other team members may conflict with the expectation of expert knowledge at the senior level.

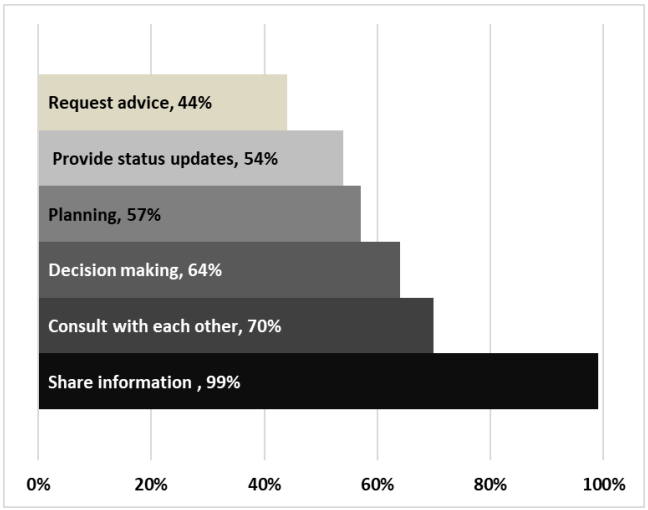

Figure 5. Percentage of Reported Interaction Purposes, All Participants

Supported by the three presidential leadership team functions defined by Bensimon and Neumann (1993), utilitarian (task related), expressive (integrative), and cognitive (dialogical), the researcher expected the six purpose options to be correlated into three pairs: information/status updates, consultation/advice, and planning/decision making. Based on Pearson correlation coefficient calculations summarized in Table 7, the decision making and planning pair was highly correlated, the consultation and advice pair was moderately correlated, and the information and status update pair was not correlated.

Table 7. Correlation Coefficients for Interaction Purpose Pairs

Purpose Pairings	Correlation Coefficient
Share information and provide status updates	-.09
Consult with each other and request advice	.45
Decision making and planning	.61
Consult with each other and decision making	.55
Consult with each other and planning	.53

In light of the overall distribution of reported interaction purposes, correlations of other purposes were explored. The most correlated purposes were consultation and decision making (.55) and consultation and planning (.53). This overall result supports a finding that **most participants share information during their interactions and those that consult with each other also tend to make decisions and plan together.**

Team Learning Survey

Across the five sites, each of the 38 participants completed the Team Learning survey (TLS) with the 16 questions on team learning processes. As described in Chapter II, Kasl et al.'s (1997) team learning processes examined in this study—framing, reframing, integrating perspectives, experimenting, and crossing boundaries. The TLS survey results include the average and standard deviation for each team and the core functional roles across all five teams. In addition, the team learning mode, based on the team learning process responses, is reported. The definition of the team learning modes

are summarized in Table 8. Appendix K describes the scoring and summarize survey results.

Table 8. Definition of Team Learning Modes

Mode	Definition
Fragmented	Individuals learn separately, not holistically. Members maintain separate views and lack commitment to work as a group.
Pooled	Individuals share information and perspectives in the interest of group efficiency and effectiveness. Small clusters of individuals learn together, but the group as a whole does not.
Synergistic	Group members create knowledge mutually. Divergent perspectives are integrated to create shared meaning. Individuals integrate team knowledge into personal meaning and knowledge is frequently shared outside the group.

From Kasl et al., 1997, pp. 230-231.

Overall, the presidents and senior leadership team members reported a pooled team learning mode. As displayed in Figure 6, team learning modes were fairly evenly distributed across the study participants. However, when looking specifically at the core functional roles, the synergistic learning mode dropped significantly by 24%, and the fragmented mode increased by 12%. This shift supports the finding that **those in core functional roles tend to report a more individualistic learning experience than other senior leadership team members**.

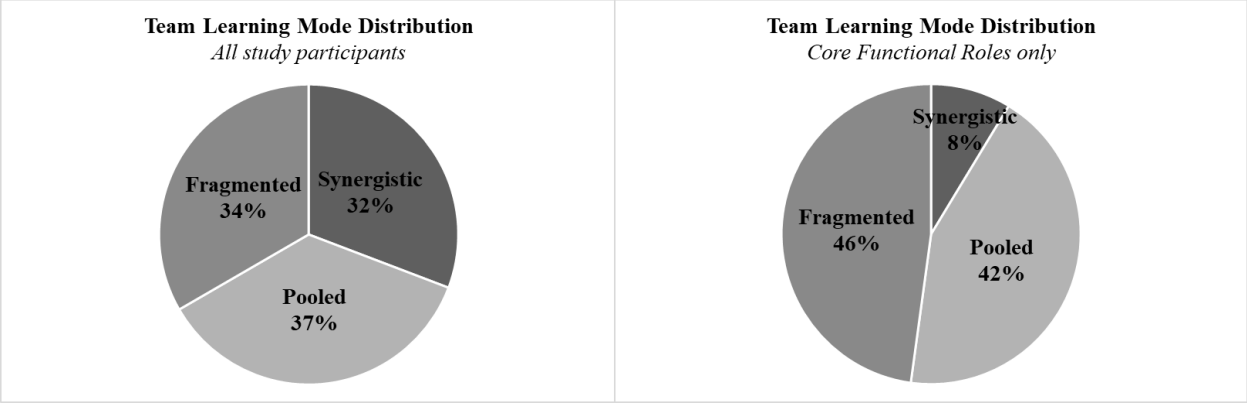

Figure 6. Team Learning Mode Distribution

Regarding service tenure, participants with longer tenure tended to report higher team learning scores. The teams with longer tenures, Teams A, C, and D, also reported the highest team learning scores. Team B and E, the two teams in the study with the lowest tenures, also reported the lowest team learning scores. This finding may indicate that prolonged experience within an institutional community expands senior leader capacity to engage in boundary crossing and enact interdependence. Relative to the 12-year median service tenure of all participants, participants with service tenure **above the 12-year median** reported an average team learning score of 80. Participants with service tenure **below the 12-year median** reported an average team learning score of 69. All the participants that reported synergistic learning had above median tenure. Given that longer tenure also aligns with age, this finding may represent the role of cumulative professional experience on individual capacity to engage in collective knowledge sharing and generation. The review of results by team and core functional role in subsequent sections of this chapter will provide additional insight to patterns of difference.

Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were designed to provide insight into each of the study's research questions. Following an iterative coding process, six coding categories were created with a range of sub-codes grouped by each research question. Two categories were associated with the first research question: *How do presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?* This inquiry targeted a broad view of the purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education, rather than an exclusive focus on the particular purpose of the participant's senior leadership team. While participants were undoubtedly influenced by their institutional experience, the researcher intentionally focused participants on their broader view of the purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. Given the influence of their own team's view of the purpose of their teams, the findings often reflect a mixture of participant views of

the broader higher education community viewed through the lens of their institutional reality. Participant views on purpose were grouped into two coding categories: present orientation and future trends. Present-oriented themes focused on perspectives of senior leaderships in the current higher education environment. Future trends focused on anticipated trends within senior leadership teams. Five sub-codes, listed below, emerged from the researcher's exploration of the participant conceptualizations of the purpose of senior leadership teams. Table 9 includes the percentage and *n* value of 38 participants that identified each theme.

Table 9. Research Question 1 Coding Categories

Present oriented
a. Strategic planning and long term thinking (71%; *27*)
b. Collaboration and boundary crossing (32%; *12*)
c. Enactment of vision and mission (53%; *20*)
Future trends
a. Development of new senior leadership roles (71%; *27*)
b. Increased collaboration and intersectionality (37%; *14*)

Overall, *strategic planning/long term thinking* and the *enactment of vision and mission* were dominant present-oriented themes. Reflecting on Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) landmark study of 15 college and university presidential leadership teams, the focus on these activities aligns with the functional domains focused on utilitarian and cognitive activities. *Collaboration and boundary crossing* was cited less frequently by participants as a purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. When collaboration and boundary crossing was cited, participants tended to couple it with either strategic thinking or vision/mission. The work of collaboration and boundary crossing also aligns with Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) expressive function. Overall, the *creation of new or redesigned senior leadership* roles was a dominant future trend. Based on the expectation that higher education will continue to respond to emerging needs and increased demands for accountability, participants anticipated an evolution of senior leadership roles. While

cited less frequently, some participants also identified a future trend of *increased collaboration and cross-functional work*. This trend was largely driven by their observations of calls to break down silos and challenges to traditional barriers in higher educational structures. The next two sections in this chapter will describe patterns in both the present-oriented and future-trend categories for each team and core functional role.

Inquiry into the second research question—*How do presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?*—targeted participant descriptions of formal team meetings, interactions between senior leaders, and interactions with the president. Participant views on team interactions expressed during the interviews were grouped into two categories: managing the institution and relationship building. Table 10 includes the percentage and *n* value of 38 participants that identified each category and the sub-codes.

Table 10. Research Question 2 Coding Categories

Managing the Institution
a. Information sharing (92%; *35*)
b. Determining ownership and key decision makers (55%; *21*)
c. Problem solving and issue resolution (63%; *24*)
Relationship Building
a. Developing personal rapport (50%; *19*)

Managing the institution included three sub-codes: *information sharing, determining ownership and key decision makers, and problem solving and issue resolution*. Managing the institution activities largely represent the formal interactions between SLT members and the president during regular meetings. As reflected in the teamwork survey, *information sharing* emerged as a core activity occurring during formal SLT interactions across all teams. This type of sharing included reporting progress on projects and providing status on issues and projects. *Determining ownership and key decision makers* was identified by the majority of participants as a key management activity. Akin to project management, this activity involved defining the scope of an issue

or project, clarifying roles, and determining which functional area(s) should be involved and be held accountable for key decisions. *Problem solving and issue resolution* was also identified by a majority of participants as management activity. This activity focused on strategizing on the way to handle emergent issues that require immediate attention. Relationship building included one sub-code—*developing personal rapport*—focused largely on the more informal interactions between senior leaders. While 50% of the participants described relationship building through personal rapport, this result varied considerably across teams. Relationship building to build personal rapport was described as a range of personally oriented social interactions between team members, including institution events and receptions (i.e., board meetings, community events, retreats, etc.), dinners and events at each other's homes, drinks after work, and serendipitous discussions about personal life and interests.

The exploration of senior leadership team operation and communication in the semi-structured interviews provided insight into the third question research question: *What facilitates or impedes learning within the SLT and between presidents and SLT members?* Based on the conceptual framework and supporting literature, the researcher categorized these themes into two groups: facilitating learning factors and impeding learning factors. This categorization required the researcher to interpret participant experiences and perform multiple iterations of coding analysis. Facilitating factors included three sub-codes—*member articulation of presidential expectation for collaboration, building trust through shared commitment to mission,* and *flexible view of functional expertise*. Impeding factors included two sub-codes—*building trust through shared history* and *fixed view of functional expertise*. Table 11 includes the percentage and *n* value of 38 participants that identified each category.

Table 11. Research Question 3 Coding Categories

Facilitating Factors
a. Member articulation of presidential expectation for collaboration (55%; *18*)
b. Building trust through shared commitment to mission (50%; *19*)
c. Flexible view of functional expertise (47%; *18*)
Impeding Factors
a. Building trust through shared history (50%; *19*)
b. Fixed view of functional expertise (53%; *20*)

Given the important role formal leaders play in the sensemaking and sensegiving processes for senior leadership teams (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis, 2005), the president's description of an expectation for collaboration was noteworthy. However, team member's ability to restate *presidential expectations for collaboration* represent increased capacity to develop shared meaning and coordinate action. This depends on the president articulating an expectation for collaboration amongst their senior team. Therefore, member articulation of presidential expectations for collaboration represents instances where a team member restated the presidential expectation or shared experiences of how the president worked with them directly to reinforce expectations. There was considerable variability in this sub-code across teams.

Building trust and managing expertise emerged as key themes in participants' discussion of senior leadership team operation and communication. Based on the study's conceptual framework, participants described these activities in ways that could serve to facilitate learning or impede learning. Participants tended to describe or believe in two different approaches to trust building—as a byproduct of *shared history* or as a byproduct of *shared commitment to mission*. While *shared history* and cumulative experience together create space to build trust, over-reliance on relationship history creates primacy for personal rapport and barriers for new members (Edmondson, 2012). Focusing on this pathway to building trust may not impede the strictly cognitive learning processes, i.e., information exchange, but it creates an unstable pathway for the social learning

processes, i.e., creating shared meaning. Therefore, this approach to building trust was viewed by the researcher as an impeding factor. The alternative view of building trust focused on *shared commitment to mission*. Participants that tended to describe building trust this way focused on an acceptance that each team member possessed a commitment to the same set of strategic goals and institutional success outcomes (Carson et al., 2007). This approach creates primacy for institutional strategy and opens opportunity to any member to negotiate their contribution to achieving strategic goals. Considering the value of shared meaning making to cognitive, social, and action learning functions, the researcher viewed this approach as a facilitating factor. Following the data that emerged through semi-structured interviews, this study focused on how participants described the pathways to building trust, rather than whether trust existed among team members.

The researcher categorized participant descriptions of functional expertise in two ways: a *fixed point of view* or a *flexible point of view.* Those with a *fixed view* tended to see themselves as advocates for and representatives of their functional expertise. They described problem solving from the lens of their function, i.e., the problem or issue belonged to them or didn't belong to them. When managing a problem or issue, these SLT members acknowledged that functions might share tasks, but still operated as guardians of their function. Those who described a fixed view identified closely with the specialized knowledge of their function and tended to express concern about the risk to the institution if that specialized knowledge was hindered from having clear ownership of issues and projects. Those with a *flexible view* of functional expertise defaulted to the idea that functions are linked in most situations. They tended to engage in problem solving by looking at the impact across all functions, i.e., even if one of us takes the lead, we are all impacted by the outcome. When managing an issue or project, these SLT members acknowledged the role of specialized functional knowledge, but looked for ways to discuss multiple points of view. Those who described a flexible view tended to assign the role of working through the specifics of functional expertise to their direct

reports and the direct reports of other senior leaders. Based on the study's conceptual framework and supporting literature, the researcher categorized the *flexible view* as a facilitating factor in learning and the *fixed view* as an impeding factor in learning. Drawing on the concepts of shared cognition and interdependence, the fixed view allows little room for SLT members to build and maintain a shared sense of purpose and limits the recognition of each other's skills to achieve specific outcomes. Given this limitation, the researcher assessed the fixed view as more likely to impede interdependence, a core team learning construct.

This section of the chapter was intended to provide an overview of each data source and identify connections to the study's conceptual framework. The next two sections of this chapter—Team Findings and Core Functional Role Findings—include a review of descriptive information, teamwork survey results, team learning survey results, and interview findings based on coding categories. The final section of this chapter will summarize the findings and explore the relationship to the literature in more detail.

Team Findings

Beginning with descriptive information about the team, this section reviews the findings for each team. The final section of this chapter will review compare and contrast findings across each team.

Team A

Beginning with a summary of descriptive information, this section reviews findings for Team A, the senior leadership team of a large, primarily residential, public, four-year master's university. Table 12 summarizes the descriptive information for the team. Team A's teamwork and team learning survey results are summarized in Table 13.

Table 12. Team A Descriptive Summary

TEAM A			
Carnegie Classification *(size, control, level, basic)* Large (> 10,000 students) primarily residential, public, four-year master's university			
Team Member	**Functional Role** *Core roles listed first*	**Pseudonym & Gender**	**Tenure Duration at the Institution**
A1	**President**	**Peter, male**	**5**
A2	Academic Affairs	Alice, female	.5
A3	Finance	Fred, male	21
A4	Student Affairs	Sam, male	33
A5	Advancement	Adam, male	15
A6	Chief of Staff	Carl, male	11
A7	Enrollment	Ellen, female	40
A8	Access and Inclusion	Aaron, male	18
A9	General Counsel	Ginny, female	20
A10	Strategic Planning	Steve, male	16
	Team A Total - 10		**Team A Average – 18.0**
Note. All tenures are based on their entire service tenure at the institution at the time of the participant interview, including time before their appointment to a senior leadership team role.			
Meeting Structures	**Physical Proximity of Core Functional Roles**		**Service Tenure Highlights**
- Weekly senior leadership team meeting - VP "pre-meeting" before weekly SLT meetings Academic Council meetings (twice a month) - Periodic Deans meetings	**Full Centralization** - All core functional officers in the same building - Strategy officer and diversity officer in separate buildings		- President tenure lower than team media

The senior leadership team meets on a weekly basis. The president's office sends a weekly call for agenda items to all SLT members. Several participants referenced inviting additional staff to portions of SLT meeting based on the agenda. In addition to the president, the SLT consists of five vice presidents, two directors, the general counsel, and the chief of staff. The academic affairs officer hosts a bi-weekly Academic Council meeting for academic deans and other key academic staff. In addition to the SLT meeting, the five VPs have a "pre-meeting," established 20 years ago by the student affairs officer, before each SLT meeting. These VPs oversee the following five functions: finance, academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment, and advancement. As described by Ellen and Fred, the VP meeting provides an informal forum for the VPs to share personal support, organize decision making, and enable an efficient SLT meeting. However, for

newer members, Alice and Carl, the pre-meeting raises some concerns about inclusion, decision making, and limiting perspectives.

> A lot of times we just talk about what's going on with ourselves…But other times it is nice to straighten out rumors or stuff that people have asked us. Then we say hey have any of the rest of you all heard this. And or how do we debunk it or whatever. (Ellen, Team A)

> We deal with a lot of different things across the divisions or things that may be coming up at the senior leadership team meeting that we want to know why it's on the agenda and make sure that we can be on the same page so we're not in there arguing with each other. (Fred, Team A)

> There is never an agenda. It is very low-key. Everyone sits back and somebody will bring something up. There is a deep shorthand and there's listening. It's the meeting before the meeting and cuts other people out of the discussion. On some level, I get it. It saves us time during the main meeting. But it is funky for me. (Alice, Team A)

> It is very clear that there are the VPs and then there are the other members of the senior leadership team. I don't think that certain opinions are treated as important as the VPs are. With the VPs meeting beforehand, I think they often come to agreement about what they are going to advocate for and what they conceived of as the acceptable range of solutions to bring up at the senior leadership team meeting. I think it becomes one of those situations where the president's options are often limited. (Team A)

At the time of data collection, the president had served five years in his role at the institution. The president inherited a senior team with an average of nearly 20 years' experience at the institution. Following one retirement, the president hired an academic affairs officer from outside of the institution. In addition, a chief of staff was brought on board, and the general counsel was added to the senior leadership team. With the exception of the new hired academic affairs officer, all of the SLT members rose through the ranks in the institution prior to their appointment to their senior role. In comparison to the other teams included in the study, this team had the highest average institutional tenure of 18 years. Prior to the addition of the new academic affairs VP, the previously referenced "pre VP meeting" included senior leaders with long-standing relationships ranging nearly 20 years. The pre VP meeting was established long before the current

president joined the institution. Peter expressed a mixed view of the meeting, which conveyed a tradeoff between efficiency and tradition.

> It seems like they felt it was valuable to run things past each other before bringing it to the larger group and sometimes I think it makes our meetings more efficient. As a president, your time is so precious, and if other people can work things out at that level than that can be very helpful. It is my sense that they have been doing this for a long time and it helps to build cohesion among them without the president in the room. They are all essentially equals that represent different parts of the university and they have to come together to think about things. If it didn't exist when I started, I might not have started it, but if I felt like it was getting in the way, then I would be concerned about it. (Peter, Team A)

At the time of data collection, SLT members were in the midst of office relocations. At the conclusion of the relocation, the president, chief of staff, and six members of the senior leadership team will be in the same building, representing the following areas: academic affairs, finance, student affairs, advancement, general counsel, and enrollment. In some cases, immediate direct reports will also be located in the same building, but in most cases, direct reports will be in different buildings on campus. For example, the academic deans will remain located in their respective academic buildings. The diversity officer and strategy officer, who have similar lengths of tenure at the institutions and moved into senior roles around the same time, are in separate buildings from each other and separate from the other members of the SLT. Without VP titles, these two members of the SLT are not included in the pre VP meeting and their physical distance recreates this separation. The diversity officer has spent most of their tenure in close physical proximity to several senior leaders. However, the strategy officer has spent most of their tenure separate from senior leaders. While some members see the advantage of adding the general counsel to the SLT, the president's decision to include the general counsel as a member of the senior leadership team was an adjustment for some members of the SLT. Fred's comment reflects the concerns raised by several SLT members, especially those with significant tenure.

> We currently have an attorney that is on the senior leadership team. We never did before. We do now. When they become a senior member of the leadership team, they come in thinking they are an expert in everything and have an opinion on everything. It's been frustrating for me because they're not experts in my area. I think there are times they should be invited to the meeting but not all of time. I think what is going to happen is that attorneys are going to have much more say on senior leadership decisions because we have become so litigious. (Fred, Team A)

Table 13. Team A Survey Results

TEAM A			
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
	77.3	15.2	Pooled
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Level of Team Agreement [2]**
	2.4		40%
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [3]	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	42%	**33%**	**25%**
President	**33%**	**33%**	**33%**
Academic Affairs	**45%**	**45%**	9%
Finance	**57%**	0%	43%
Student Affairs	**67%**	33%	0%
Advancement	**37%**	**37%**	26%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Comparison of member agreement with each other's report of interaction frequency
3 – Highest % is shared darkest.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results reflect a pooled mode of team learning where clusters of learning occur amongst some team members, but limited learning occurs within the team as a whole. The standard deviation indicates dispersion of results, with individual team members reporting all three learning modes. While the president and advancement officer results indicate a pooled learning mode, the finance, student affairs, and academic affairs officers reported a fragmented learning mode, and the diversity and enrollment management officer reported a synergistic learning mode. Length of service tenure did not align with the learning mode interpretations, i.e.,

individuals with longer or shorter service did not report similar learning modes or vice versa.

Teamwork survey. The average frequency results reflect a tendency toward weekly interactions among the five core functional roles, with 40% of them agreeing with each other's perception of the frequency of their interactions with each other. While Team A was the team with the lowest level of agreement on reported interaction frequency, the lower level of agreement could be attributed to variability in interpretation of interaction type or a general incongruity in perception of the relationship with other SLT members. Reflecting back on Team A's meeting structure, the senior leadership team holds weekly meetings with the president, and a sub-group of vice presidents within the SLT hold a pre-meeting immediately before the weekly SLT meeting. None of the SLT members reported holding regularly scheduled meetings with fellow SLT members. Meetings between two or more SLT members on Team A were held sporadically based on their work on a project, initiative, or issue. The reported interaction purpose distribution results reflect a slight tendency toward information and status updates. The president reported an even distribution of all purposes, reflecting no specific preference for any purpose. Notably, the academic affairs officer and student affairs officer rarely report decision making and planning, and the finance officer did not report any consultation or advice requests.

Interviews. Team A largely focused on the enactment of mission and vision (90%) as the primary purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. Collaboration and boundary crossing were identified by Team A's president and their access and inclusion officer. Overall, Team A viewed the development of new senior leadership team roles (70%) as an anticipated future trend for senior leadership teams. Team A's tendency to identify the development of new SLT roles may have been influenced by the relatively recent expansion of their SLT to include the diversity officer, strategic planning officer, and general counsel. Prior to this expansion, the SLT consisted only of leaders with direct

reporting lines to the president. As described above, the addition of the general counsel to the SLT, in particular, was raised by several members as a challenge.

When describing management of the institution, Team A identified information sharing as the primary activity during team interactions. Determining ownership/key decision makers and problem solving/issue resolution were identified as team activities in equal proportion, with most team members focusing on one or the other. More so than any other team in this study, Team A placed considerable emphasis on relationship building (90%) as a key activity for their senior leadership team. The value placed on personal rapport aligned with the lengthy service tenure of the team. Team A was also more inclined than any other team to identify shared history as the primary path to building trust (70%). The focus on personal rapport and shared history was most pronounced among the five members of Team A with a history of 15-30 years together—finance, student affairs, advancement, enrollment, and access and inclusion officers. Those with shorter tenures, including Team A's president, were most likely to focus on shared commitment to mission as the pathway to building trust.

Most of Team A described the president's expectation for collaboration among team members. As Fred's comment conveys, this was often described as a core component of the president's leadership style.

> This president came along after a pretty strong command and control style leader. That approach served [the previous president]. From the very beginning, and part of why he was picked, this president has stressed being collaborative. Really he sees the future of the university as needing innovation that brings us together. It is a strong theme in our conversations. (Fred, Team A)

It is noteworthy that while Fred and others were clear on the president's expectations, in general, they were described as the president's views, not their own. In relation to managing expertise, those with longer tenures on Team A tended to reflect a fixed view of functional expertise. As with perspectives on building trust, those with shorter tenures reflected a flexible view.

Team B

Beginning with a summary of descriptive information, this section reviews findings for Team B, the senior leadership team of a small primarily residential, private, four-year master's university. Team B was the only private institution in the study. Table 14 summarizes the descriptive information for the team. Team B's teamwork and team learning survey results are summarized in Table 15.

Table 14. Team B Descriptive Summary

TEAM B			
Carnegie Classification *(size, control, level, basic)* Small (< 3,000 students) primarily residential, private, four-year master's university			
Team Member	**Functional Role** *Core roles listed first*	**Pseudonym & Gender**	**Tenure Duration at the Institution**
B1	**President**	**Paul, male**	**6**
B2	Academic Affairs	Alex, male	.5
B3	Finance	Frank, male	3
B4	Student Affairs	Stephanie, female	3
B5	Advancement	Anthony, male	4
	Team B Total - 5		**Team B Average – 3.3**
Note. All tenures are based on their entire service tenure at the institution at the time of the participant interview, including time before their appointment to a senior leadership team role.			
Meeting Structures	**Physical Proximity of Core Functional Roles**	**Service Tenure Highlights**	
- Weekly cabinet meetings - Extended cabinet meetings twice a semester (includes deans and key leaders)	**Minimal Centralization** - Advancement and president's office in the same building - Other core members in separate buildings	- President tenure higher than team average	

The senior leadership team, the Cabinet, meets on a weekly basis. They operate using an organic agenda that stems from an informal call for agenda items by the president delivered via email or in person. In addition to the senior leadership team of the five core functional role officers, there is a broader structure—the extended cabinet that meets twice a semester, including the cabinet members, deans, and other key leaders. The advancement officer and the president work in the building, on the same floor. The remaining SLT members are located in separate offices from each other. With the

exception of the academic deans reporting to the academic affairs officer and several direct reports for the finance officer, SLT direct reports are located in close proximity to them within their office suite or on the same floor. Team B is the only team in the study with this level of decentralization in office location. Each SLT office location allowed them to be closer to their direct reports, but separated them from each other. While other SLT members didn't raise any concerns about the physical separation, Stephanie shared the following perspective about the impact of separation.

> The people I am able to pop in on are those closest to me. If I were situated in such a way that I could be in closer proximity to [other SLT members], we would know each other better and that would ultimately, ideally, lead to improved productivity. I think most importantly, creativity. So I think it does make a difference. (Stephanie, Team B)

In comparison to the other teams included in the study, this team had the second lowest average institutional tenure of 3.3 years. At the time of data collection, the president had completed six years in his role at the institution. The president hired every member of the senior leadership team directly into his or her senior roles. The most recent hire was the academic affairs officer. Of the senior staff inherited by the previous president, one person retired, two left for new positions, and one was terminated. Team C was the only other president in the study that appointed or hired every member of their team. While Team B and Team C are different institutional types and reported different findings across all aspects of the study, the opportunity to appoint or hire every member of the senior team allowed both presidents to shape their team. In contrast to Team C, which has one of the longest average service tenures in the study, Team B has a relatively short tenure. Therefore, while Team B's president has appointed or hired his team, he has had less opportunity to shape the team than Team C's president.

Table 15. Team B Survey Results

TEAM B			
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
	65.0	1.6	Fragmented
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Level of Team Agreement [2]**
	2.4		60%
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [3]	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	43%	**30%**	**27%**
President	**100%**	0%	0%
Academic Affairs	33%	**38%**	29%
Finance	**43%**	29%	29%
Student Affairs	**35%**	30%	**35%**
Advancement	**63%**	25%	13%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Comparison of member agreement with each other's report of interaction frequency
3 – Darkest shading represents highest percentage. Moderate shading represents second highest percentage.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results reflect a fragmented mode of team learning where learning occurs at the individual level rather than holistically. These results are similar for Team E—the only other team with a reported fragmented learning mode. The standard deviation indicates minimal dispersion of results, with all five individual team members reporting a fragmented learning mode. Team B represents the smallest institution in the study with smallest community of senior leaders and direct reports. While smaller team size does not inherently enable a more advanced stage of team learning, the distinguishing factor is noteworthy.

Teamwork survey. The reported interaction purpose distribution results reflect a slight tendency toward information and status updates. Team B's president was one of two presidents in the study that reported an exclusive focus on information sharing and status updates as the purpose of their interactions with the SLT members (the other was Team E's president). The academic affairs officer, who had recently joined the institution

at the time of data collection, reported a slight tendency toward consultation and advice, and the student affairs officer reported a nearly even distribution of purposes. The advancement officer indicated a strong preference for information sharing and updates. Their reported preference for sharing information and updates aligns with their low level of fragmented team learning.

Interviews. Drawing a direct link back to the institutional strategic plan as the foundation of a team's work, Team B focused on strategic planning and long-term thinking (100%) as the primary purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. As Team B's president, Paul, described, the senior leadership team is the best group to think "50 and 100 years down the road." Unlike any other team, *none* of the members of Team B described the enactment of mission and vision as the purpose of senior leadership teams. Team B's president and student affairs officer were the only members of the team that coupled collaboration and boundary crossing with strategic planning and long-term thinking as part of the senior leadership team purpose. As they considered external forces influencing higher education, Team B viewed the development of new senior leadership team roles (80%) as an anticipated future trend for senior leadership teams. Only the student affairs officer focused on the future trend of increased collaboration and reduction of silo thinking as a future trend.

When describing how their team worked together to manage the institution, Team B identified information sharing as the primary activity during team interactions (100%). While this was also common for other teams, it is noteworthy that within the teamwork survey, Team B's president solely focused on information sharing and status updates as the primary purpose of his interactions with the members of his senior leadership team. The team tended to view the interactions as more focused on problem solving/issue resolution (80%) than determining ownership/key decision makers (40%). Taken together, Team B described their interactions as a cycle of information sharing, status updates, problem solving, and issue resolution. Only two of Team B's members

referenced relationship building as an activity within their team. The researcher made note of a noticeable absence of references to personal rapport and social interactions among team members. Given the small size of this team, this absence was noteworthy. As reflected in Anthony's comment below, when mentioned, relationship building was described as an important activity, but one that is generally connected to other events.

> We get together during Board meetings or alumni events. Or maybe a breakfast or lunch before or after a team meeting. That type of thing. We aren't really getting together just for the team. But, when we do it's a chance to get to know each other a bit, and our families. It helps, but we don't do it often. (Anthony, Team B)

Team B had mixed beliefs on pathways to building trust, with some members, including the president, describing a belief that shared history is a better path to trust building (60%), while others emphasized a belief in shared commitment to mission as a better path (40%). Members of Team B did not emphasize a presidential expectation for collaboration (0%). This is largely driven by the absence of defined and consistent emphasis by Team B's president on collaboration. Instead, Team B's president adopted a more hands-off approach to his team and placed emphasis on providing autonomy.

> I want leaders to lead. They know they have my confidence that they can resolve issues on their own. I don't need to get in their way. The greatest gift I can give them is get out of their way. (Paul, Team B)

In relation to managing expertise, Team B reflected a fixed view of functional expertise (100%). They emphasized the importance of respecting functional expertise when solving problems and placed primacy on specialization as an important factor in determining ownership and managing the institution. As reflected in Alex's comment below, members of Team B tended to view functional expertise as means of credibility and risk management.

> Knowing the details and being informed on the special aspects of an issue matter. If someone is diving into to discussion without that expertise, we end up spending time trying to explain, which can distract from working through the issue. You have to bring that knowledge to the table. There is so

> much at risk nowadays. Our time is short and we have to move fast. The people with the expertise should always take the lead. (Alex, Team B)

Team C

This section includes a description of key components of Team C, the senior leadership team of a large primarily residential, public, four-year doctoral university. Table 16 summarizes the descriptive information for the team. Team C's teamwork and team learning survey results are summarized in Table 17.

Table 16. Team C Descriptive Summary

TEAM C			
Carnegie Classification *(size, control, level, basic)* Large (> 10,000 students) primarily residential, public, four-year doctoral university			
Team Member	**Functional Role** *Core roles listed first*	**Pseudonym & Gender**	**Tenure Duration at the Institution**
C1	**President**	**Patrick, male**	**25**
C2	Academic Affairs	Asher, male	27
C3	Finance	Frances, female	12
C4	Student Affairs	Sylvia, female	14
C5	Advancement	Alan, male	13
C6	Chief of Staff	Cassandra, female	6
C7	Enrollment Management	Evelyn, female	28
C8	Information Technology	Ian, male	38
C9	Research	Richard, male	4
C10	General Counsel	Gene, male	20
	Team C Total - 10		**Team C Average – 18.7**
Note. All tenures are based on their entire service tenure at the institution at the time of the participant interview, including time before their appointment to a senior leadership team role.			
Meeting Structures		**Physical Proximity of Core Functional Roles**	**Service Tenure Highlights**
- Monthly "trio" meeting: president, academic affairs officer, and finance officer - Bi-weekly VP and Deans meetings run by the academic affairs officer (president does not attend; all core functional roles do attend) - Bi-weekly President's Council run by the president (includes broad range of leaders across the university)		**Partial Centralization** - President, Academic Affairs, Finance, Advancement in the same building - Student affairs officer in separate building	- President tenure higher than team average

The size and level of the institution increase the complexity of Team C's leadership infrastructure. The president, academic affairs officer, and the finance officer hold a monthly meeting, sometimes referred to as the "trio" meeting. This meeting serves as a forum to manage strategy and make key decisions. Given the uniqueness of this structure, the researcher explored the views of the student affairs and advancement officer, the core functional roles not included in the "trio" meeting, about their perspectives on this structure. In both cases, their long-standing relationship with the president, trust in his judgment, and open access to him and their peers negated any concerns. They also referenced the other two meeting structures as sufficient settings to fulfill their roles and contribute strategic leadership. Team C hosts a joint meeting of *VPs and Deans* on a bi-weekly basis, which includes the core functional roles, but not the president. The meeting is the result of a merger of previously separate Council of VPs and Council of Deans. Working collectively, the *VP and Deans* meeting reflects the institution's view that senior leadership includes VPs and deans working together. The meeting is managed by the academic affairs officer with a relatively consistent standard agenda. The Council of Deans has also continued to operate under the leadership of the provost. While the official senior leadership team for the institution includes deans, based on the SLT member definition presented to the president, only the VPs were recommended for study participation. Therefore, the deans were not included in the site sample. In addition, there is a broader structure, the Presidents Council, which meets bi-weekly, including the cabinet members, deans, and other key leaders. This group, managed by the chief of staff, is described as an extension of shared governance, to drive consistent messaging, demonstrate the expanse of leadership across the institution, provide a forum to highlight key achievements, and advance emerging leaders on campus.

The president, chief of staff, academic affairs officer, general counsel, finance officer, and advancement officer have offices in the same building, with the first four members on one floor together. The student affairs, research, enrollment, and information

technology officers are in separate buildings. With the exception of the academic deans reporting to the academic affairs officer, the direct reports for each SLT members are located in close proximity to them within their office suite or on the same floor.

In comparison to the other teams included in the study, this team had the second highest average institutional tenure of 18.7 years. At the time of data collection, the president had completed 25 years in his role at the institution. The president hired or promoted every member of the senior leadership team into his or her senior roles. With the exception of the research officer, every other member of the senior team was promoted into their roles, rather than hired directly into the senior role. Affectionately referred to as a "dream team," the current SLT represented the president's ongoing efforts to cultivate and assemble the right team. In contrast to Team B's president, who also had the opportunity to appoint/hire each member of his senior team, Team C's president used his long tenure to build a team that demonstrates a commitment to the institutional mission.

Table 17. Team C Survey Results

TEAM C			
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
	79.5	9.9	Pooled
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Level of Team Agreement [2]**
	1.9		90%
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [3]	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	30%	31%	**40%**
President	25%	25%	**50%**
Academic Affairs	30%	30%	**40%**
Finance	30%	30%	**40%**
Student Affairs	28%	33%	**39%**
Advancement	**33%**	**33%**	**33%**

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Comparison of member agreement with each other's report of interaction frequency
3 – Darkest shading represents highest percentage. Moderate shading represents second highest percentage.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results reflect a pooled mode of team learning with clusters of learning amongst some team members, but limited learning within the team as a whole. The standard deviation indicates minimal dispersion of results, with seven team members (70%) reporting a pooled learning mode. The president, information technology, and enrollment management officer, who also have the longest service tenures of any team members (over 25 years), reported a synergistic learning mode. Team C's president was the only president in the study to report a synergistic learning mode. Team C's president view of team learning may be influenced by the time invested in building his team, his pride in the performance of the team, and the "dream team" moniker.

Teamwork survey. The average frequency results reflect a tendency toward weekly interactions among the five core functional roles. Team C reported the highest level of agreement, 90%, in perception of the frequency of their interactions with each other. Unlike any other team, the reported interaction purpose distribution results reflect a tendency toward decision making and planning. The president also reported a strong preference for decision making and planning as the purpose of interactions with the SLT members. The advancement officer reported an even distribution of purposes. While the other roles reported a tendency toward decision making and planning, they also reported fairly even distribution across all purposes. Their reported preference for more complex purposes of decision making and planning align with their higher degree of agreement on reported interaction frequency and highest level of pooled team learning.

Interviews. Team C largely focused on strategic planning and long-term thinking (70%) and the enactment of mission and vision (70%) as the primary purposes of senior leadership teams in higher education and viewed the development of new senior leadership team roles (80%) as an anticipated future trend for senior leadership teams. Team C's president, academic affairs, student affairs, and information technology officers coupled collaboration and boundary crossing with strategic planning and long-

term thinking as part of the purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. While only two members of Team C identified the enactment of vision and mission as part of the purpose of senior leadership teams, Team C often described their institutional strategy as inextricably linked to their mission and vision. In fact, the preamble statement to Team C's mission and vision statement, posted on the institution's website, specifically states the bond of the institutional community to a shared sense of mission and vision. In addition, unlike the other institutions in the study, the institutional tagline is derived specifically from the mission and is prominently displayed across campus. Institutional mission and vision will be explored in more detail in Chapter V.

Therefore, their focus on strategic planning and long-term thinking as the purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education reflects their belief that mission, vision, and strategy should be directly aligned. The researcher observed the consistency in Team C's language regarding strategy and mission. Given this consistency, the researcher viewed Team C's description of purpose as equally aligned to a focus on strategy and mission. Reflected in a comment from Team C's president, institutional strategy serves the mission, not the other way around.

> Universities are truly mission driven. But, it's easy to talk about mission. We have to live it. Everything we do and what we believe comes back to it. It's great for people to know the mission. They should. But, leaders have to live it so well that people see it, not just talk about it…our strategy has to drive our mission forward. (Patrick, Team C)

When describing how their team worked together to manage the institution, Team C identified information sharing as the primary activity during team interactions (80%). Determining ownership/key decision makers (70%) and problem solving/issue resolution (50%) were identified as team activities in relatively equal proportion, with most team members focusing on one or the other. Given the uniqueness of Team C's meeting structure, including the president, academic affairs officer, and finance officer monthly "trio" meeting, a specific look at their view of management activities is relevant.

As a group, they were in agreement that information sharing (80%), determining ownership and key decision makers (60%) were key management activities. Problem solving and issue resolution was also identified as a management activity, but with slightly less frequency (50%).

Team C placed some emphasis on relationship building (60%) as a key activity for their senior leadership team. Similar to Team A, the lengthy service tenure of Team C has enabled the development of personal rapport over the spans of decades of working together. Team C's president has the longest tenure of any president in the study, which has afforded him considerable time to develop deep relationships across the institution. He has used that time to establish and reinforce expectations for collaboration, which are reflected in all of Team C articulating his expectations for collaboration. Gene's comment below reflects the way in which Patrick conveyed this expectation in the process of appointing senior leaders. In addition, Asher's comment acknowledges the role of lengthy tenure and the ubiquity of the institution's focus on mission.

> I have vivid recollections of them getting into screaming matches. That is not [the president's] style. And once he got a set of people that didn't have those kinds of communication styles and valued the collegiality and the teamwork, he started referring to them as his dream team. And I have noticed that there is a civility that set in after that, that he values. (Gene, Team C)

> We are expected to be keepers of the culture of the institution. We not only set the tone, but here at least, that's where a lot of the really deep institutional memory exists. We really have a lot of really long serving deans and vice presidents. But it really comes down to being deeply rooted in our mission and committed to each other's success. No matter how long you have been here. He keeps us focused on that. (Asher, Team C)

Given Team C has the longest service tenure of any team in the study, and the institution tends to have leaders with lengthy service tenures; they were more inclined to identify shared commitment to mission (80%) as the primary path to building trust. In relation to managing expertise, Team C tended to reflect a flexible view of functional expertise (70%). Those with a fixed view, the student affairs officer, information technology

officer, and general counsel, tended to describe concerns about the specialized knowledge of functions and a need to ensure protection of that knowledge for the institution's benefit.

Prior to a discussion of Team D's findings, the researcher would like to recognize Team C as an exemplar in the study. This team reported the highest team learning score, nearly reaching a synergistic mode. Despite lengthy service tenure, the members of this team defy other patterns by reflecting a flexible view of functional expertise and relying on shared commitment to leadership as the primary means of building trust. In addition, relationship building activities were reported by a majority of the team. The leading distinction of this team lies in the 25-year tenure of its president and the lengthy service of team. With the average presidency lasting seven years (Gagliardi et al., 2017) and steadily declining (Seltzer, 2017), this president's service coupled with his approach to leadership distinguishes the institution. It was common for participants to point out that the president's identity and influence were deeply infused into the culture of the institution. Given the significance of his influence, the researcher did explore the assessment of team members' reliance or deference to his leadership approach. Without exception, each member of the team described that the "mission first" mindset of the institution was omnipresent, but it was so deeply infused that it could exist without him. A comment from Alan summarized the idea well.

> [Patrick] holds up a mirror for us to see ourselves and each other in mission. He holds it. He isn't in the reflection. He makes it more important that we see ourselves. He will pass that mirror on to someone else at some point. (Alan, Team C)

Team D

This section includes a description of key components of Team D, the senior leadership team of a very large public, two-year associate's college with three separate

campuses. Table 18 summarizes the descriptive information for the team. Team D's teamwork and team learning survey results are summarized in Table 19.

Table 18. Team D Descriptive Summary

TEAM D			
Carnegie Classification *(size, control, level, basic)* Very large (> 10,000 students), public, two-year associate's college			
Team Member	**Functional Role** *Core roles listed first*	**Pseudonym & Gender**	**Tenure Duration at the Institution**
D1	**President**	**Patricia, female**	**7**
D2	Academic Affairs	Aiden, male	13
D3	Finance	Felicia, female	20
D4	Student Affairs	Sabrina, female	14
D5	Advancement	Adrian, male	8
D6	Chief of Staff	Chris, male	28
	Team D Total - 6		**Team D Average – 15.0**
Note. All tenures are based on their entire service tenure at the institution at the time of the participant interview, including time before their appointment to a senior leadership team role.			
Meeting Structures		**Physical Proximity of Core Functional Roles**	**Service Tenure Highlights**
- Weekly Senior Administrative Leadership Team (SALT) - Monthly President's Executive Council		**Full Centralization** - All SLT members in the same building	- President tenure lower than team average

The senior leadership team, the Senior Administrative Leadership Team (SALT), meets on a weekly basis. In addition to the SALT meetings, there is a broader structure, the President's Executive Council, which meets monthly and includes the cabinet members, deans, and other key leaders. SALT meeting agendas are developed by the Chief of Staff in consultation with SALT members. Depending on the agenda topics, members are welcome to invite guests to attend a portion or all of the meeting. In addition to the president and the core senior leadership roles, a few months before data collection began, the president expanded SALT to include four additional roles: government affairs, equity and inclusion, compliance and ethics, and communications officers. While these four additional officers participate in weekly SALT meetings, the president recommended the five core senior leaders—academic affairs, student affairs,

finance, advancement officers, and the chief of staff—as study participants. Aside from the chief of staff role, the core senior leadership roles are at the *senior vice president* level, and the officers recently added to SALT are all at the *chief* level. In practice, the president and chief of staff independently described this new structure as a blending of horizontal and vertical thinking—with the senior vice president level representing vertical thinking and the chief level representing horizontal thinking. The SALT expansion eliminated what was, in effect, a meeting for the four senior vice presidents, the chief of staff, and the president. Adaptation to the new team dynamic resulting from the expansion of SALT to include the chief level senior leaders was a theme in many discussions. As demonstrated by Patricia's and Chris's comments below (president and chief of staff), this "matrix" of leadership and authority has caused the team to adjust their ways of working.

> So there's a power dynamic that it becomes very different…. So these folks, the chiefs, they see the organization horizontally. They don't own any of these divisions so they kind of round out what we do. And that can be uncomfortable sometimes because if you're talking administrative services, Felicia is supposed to be the lead and know everything but [one of the chiefs] says, "Well, here's a nuance." It starts to challenge what expertise means. (Patricia, Team D)

> The siloed work is still happening. Like after a SALT meeting, where maybe three or four out of the eight will meet and talk about what just happened, without talking about it in the room. We introduced new people into the dynamic and it doesn't mean you work perfectly together over night, and then there's always going to be alliances and things like that. I think we're getting better at it, but we still have a lot of work to do. (Chris, Team D)

In response to this change, the four senior vice presidents recently expressed an interest in hosting a separate meeting for senior vice presidents to allow them space to explore topics the broader meeting does not allow. In essence, as Aiden's and Felicia's comments below reflect, the loss of a meeting for the senior vice presidents has inhibited their ability to coordinate effort. As Team D's president, Patricia was open to this type of

meeting, but made it clear that a senior vice president meeting could not be used as a separate channel to "go around" the other members of SALT.

> SALT is a very new thing. Some new colleagues have been added and that I think was a very brilliant idea. Because those people bring a really very fresh perspective and make us think in a very different way. But at the same time, some of the topics where senior VPs need to focus more. So we aren't able to focus as much. Maybe we should meet at least informally once in a while. (Aiden, Team D)

> The senior vice presidents need to come together. We need to make those decisions together. And then come to the president and say, "We looked at this at every which way to Sunday. We've argued. We disagreed. But we've come up with…." You need to meet separately. You need to come to the leader with a plan, with all the kinks worked out, with the gaps addressed and be a team together whether we agreed or disagreed in our own team group, we come forward with the recommendation and the solution to whatever the issue is we're trying to address. (Felicia, Team D)

> I've actually encouraged them to meet together and without me before SALT. On certain issues, it makes sense that they get together and sort out options. This helps them hear each other out and help us make better decisions. Now, it can't be a way to go around SALT. But that type of discussion sets us up for a strategic discussion during SALT. What I am not ok with, and they know this, is the meeting after the meeting. We have glass doors here and I can see them sometimes gathering by the elevator having that meeting after the meeting. Sometimes those conversations are needed to work through an intense discussion, but they can also negate what we decided or process the heck out of it. I am working to get them to a place where those discussions happen in the room. I'd like to see more of the before meeting and less of the after meeting. (Patricia, Team D)

Unlike the other teams in this study, Team D operates in an institution with three campus sites, and their teams were scattered across three separate buildings. The senior administrative leaders were consolidated into one building serving all of the institution's campuses one year before data collection for this study began. The consolidated building design includes multiple collaborative workspaces, integrated technology, and glass doors enabling transparency. As demonstrated in the comments below, the relocation into one building has facilitated communication, particularly face-to-face interactions, but the need to spend time on the other campuses continues to create communication challenges.

For example, the academic affairs officer estimated spending 30% of their time in the central building and most of their time on the other campuses.

> We spent many years with the people in this building right now being in three different locations, not physically far, probably five-minute drive, and we spent a lot of time making those five-minute drives back and forth. There's just no substitute to face-to-face and being able to gather people here really quick. (Chris, Team D)

> I think the original notion was that we could be more collaborative and work together if we were all on the same building—I don't really think it makes a difference because we're rarely here. We are working between three campuses or meetings all day. So I think the original notion was a laudable one, but in reality, it wasn't going to work. (Adrian, Team D)

> I spend time on campuses. I try to do a lot of my meetings on campuses. It almost feels as if you're operating out of four different locations at the same time. (Aiden, Team D)

At the time of data collection, the president had completed seven years in her role at the institution. The president executed restructuring of the senior vice president level, including redistributing areas of responsibility resulting in a shift from two to three senior vice presidents, and changed the chief of staff role to include more strategic responsibility. The resulting senior vice president team included student affairs, administration and finance, and academic affairs officers. During the president's tenure, multiple senior vice presidents were hired directly from outside of the institution. Ultimately, those hires were unsuccessful, resulting in the promotion of internal staff. As a result, the senior team members have an average institutional tenure of 15 years, with all team members having longer tenures that the president.

Table 19. Team D Survey Results

TEAM D			
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
	71.3	9.9	Pooled
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Level of Team Agreement [2]**
	2.0		80%
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [3]	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	39%	**26%**	**35%**
President	**40%**	25%	35%
Academic Affairs	**40%**	25%	35%
Finance	**42%**	25%	33%
Student Affairs	**38%**	24%	**38%**
Advancement	**35%**	30%	**35%**

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Comparison of member agreement with each other's report of interaction frequency
3 – Darkest shading represents highest percentage. Moderate shading represents second highest percentage.

Team learning survey. While the average team learning survey results reflect a pooled mode of team learning, the standard deviation indicates dispersion of results spanning all three learning modes. While the academic affairs officer reported a pooled learning mode, the president, finance officer, and advancement officer results indicate a fragmented learning mode, and the student affairs officer and chief of staff reported a synergistic learning mode. Length of service tenure did not align with the learning mode interpretations, i.e., individuals with longer or shorter service did not report similar learning modes or vice versa.

Teamwork survey. The average frequency results reflect a tendency toward weekly interactions among the five core functional roles, with 80% of them agreeing with each other's perception of the frequency of their interactions with each other. The reported interaction purpose distribution results reflect a slight tendency toward information and status updates, but also a relatively even distribution across all purposes.

There is a high degree of consistency across all roles. The president reported a generally even distribution across all purposes, with a slight preference for information and status updates. The student affairs and advancement officer reported similar preferences for information sharing and decision making/planning.

Interviews. Team D largely focused on the enactment of mission and vision (83%) as the primary purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education and viewed increased demand for collaboration and cross-functional work (83%) as an anticipated future trend for senior leadership teams. Similar to Team A, the recent expansion of Team D's senior leadership team meeting likely influenced their view of the external forces in higher education changing how senior leadership teams work. In particular, Team D's president and chief of staff made sense of the decision to expand the team as an effort to infuse *horizontal* influence into the *vertical* functions of the core functional roles. Given this approach to changing how Team D manages the institution, Team D's president, advancement officer, and chief of staff coupled collaboration and boundary crossing with the enactment of mission and vision as part of the purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education.

When describing how their team worked together to manage the institution, Team D identified information sharing (100%) as a primary activity during team interactions. Problem solving/issue resolution (50%) and determining ownership/key decision makers (67%) were viewed in relatively equal proportion as management activities. Unlike any other team, none of Team D's members identified developing personal rapport as part of their team interactions. The absence of this component of Team D's descriptions of their interactions was noteworthy. The challenges of team members' regular travel to multiple campus locations was raised repeatedly by team members, including the president, as a significant obstacle for creating personal rapport and social interactions among team members. In addition to the multiple campus structure, the team member residences are scattered across a large metropolitan region.

The logistics of scheduling social interactions were cited as an obstacle for building relationships outside of the professional context.

Team D had split views on trust building, with half of the team describing shared history as a better path to trust building and the other half describing shared commitment to mission. Team D's president, Patricia, the chief of staff, and the advancement officer had a different view of trust building and focused on shared commitment to mission as the better path. This difference in view reflected the president's concern that the team has relied on shared history to build trust. In partnership with her chief of staff, who has the longest service tenure on the team (28 years), the president has been focused on coaching the team to adopt more collaborative approaches to work in service to the mission. Thus far, her efforts have been most effective with the advancement officer, Adrian, who was the only team member to articulate the president's expectation for collaboration. Patricia's and Adrian's comments below reflect the efforts to operate more collaboratively.

> I see what she is working towards. We have fallen into certain patterns of working with our teams and being pretty siloed. It takes extra effort to cut across these silos and it takes more time. If nothing is on fire, it is hard to make the effort. She is clearly appealing to us to break those habits and look at the connections. (Adrian, Team D)

> We are on a journey together. The pace of work and demands on them—it's high. My time with them individually is often focused on challenging their instincts to see things only through their lens. We all have to do the work and grapple with the broad view to serve our students and the community. (Patricia, Team D)

In relation to managing expertise, Team D tended to reflect a flexible view of functional expertise (67%), with the academic affairs and finance officer describing a fixed view. Similar to members of other teams that described a fixed view, Team D's academic affairs and finance officer referenced concerns about protecting specialized knowledge as a rationale for a fixed view.

Team E

This section includes a description of key components of Team E, the senior leadership team of a medium-sized, highly residential, public, four-year master's university. Team E was also the only minority-serving institution in the study. Table 20 summarizes the descriptive information for the team. Team E's teamwork and team learning survey results are summarized in Table 21.

Table 20. Team E Descriptive Summary

TEAM E			
Carnegie Classification *(size, control, level, basic)* Medium (3,000-10,000 students) highly residential, public, four-year master's university			
Team Member	**Functional Role** *Core roles listed first*	**Pseudonym & Gender**	**Tenure Duration at the Institution**
E1	**President**	**Perry, male**	**1**
E2	Academic Affairs	Andy, male	1
E3	Finance	Fitz, male	2
E4	Student Affairs	Sally, female	2
E5	Administration	Amir, male	6
E6	General Counsel	Georgia, female	2
E7	Research	Ray, male	1
	Team E Total - 7		**Team E Average – 2.1**
Note. All tenures are based on their entire service tenure at the institution at the time of the participant interview, including time before their appointment to a senior leadership team role.			
Meeting Structures		**Physical Proximity of Core Functional Roles**	**Service Tenure Highlights**
- Weekly SLT meetings - Monthly university council meetings with cabinet, deans, and other key leaders		**Partial Centralization** - President, Academic Affairs, and Finance officers in the same building - Student affairs and Advancement officers in separate buildings	- President tenure lower than team average

Team E is the only team with an administration officer on the senior team. Given this uniqueness and his long relative tenure on Team E, additional context on his role may be relevant. Team E's administration officer is responsible for campus facility planning, capital projects, strategic planning, information technology, and campus security. The senior leadership team, the Cabinet, meets on a weekly basis. They operate using a relatively consistent standard agenda. The general counsel participates in

meetings on an as-needed basis. The other six study participants regularly participate in the cabinet meetings. In addition, there is a broader structure, the University Council, sometimes called the *expanded cabinet*, meets monthly including the cabinet members, deans, and other key leaders. With the exception of the student affairs officer, all of the senior leadership team members have offices in the same building, with four members on one floor together, and two members on another floor together. With the exception of the academic deans reporting to the academic affairs officer, the direct reports for each SLT member are located in close proximity to them within their office suite or on the same floor.

At the time of data collection, the president had completed one year in their role at the institution. The president hired the academic affairs officer and inherited the rest of the senior leadership team, not making any leadership changes. The most experienced member of the team had six years of institutional experience, and the rest of the cabinet had 1-2 years of experience. Every member of the cabinet was hired directly into their senior role from outside the institution. In comparison to the other teams included in the study, this team had the lowest average institutional tenure of 2.1 years. In the presidents' first year, the development of the team was a critical area of emphasis. Specifically, the president was focused on engaging the team in more strategic, collaborative thinking. Initial assessment of their approach to work revealed a tendency toward silo thinking and operational problem solving. The president described his observations and perspectives on his role in the following way.

> I need them to work together collaboratively and to develop a sense of trust to be able to figure things out on your own, to start to walk down the road of, "You don't need me for everything." We haven't gotten here yet and that's where the teammates really understand and appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses. They're not doing this because they're still focused on, "This is what I have to do. How can you help me do this?" They're not yet focused on, "This is what you have to do. How do I help you do that?" (Perry, Team E)

Table 21. Team E Survey Results

TEAM E			
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
	67.0	5.8	Fragmented
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Level of Team Agreement [2]**
	2.5		50%
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [3]	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	48%	**30%**	**22%**
President	**100%**	0%	0%
Academic Affairs	**40%**	30%	30%
Finance	**38%**	**38%**	24%
Student Affairs	**80%**	20%	0%
Advancement	Did not participate in study		

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Comparison of member agreement with each other's report of interaction frequency
3 – Darkest shading represents highest percentage. Moderate shading represents second highest percentage.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results reflect a fragmented mode of team learning where learning occurs at the individual level rather than holistically. The standard deviation indicates dispersion of results across two learning modes, with four team members reporting a fragmented learning mode, including the finance officer, student affairs officer, general counsel, and administration officer. The president and academic affairs officer reported a pooled learning mode. While the overall the service tenure for Team E is low, the team member with the longest tenure, the administration officer, did report a fragmented learning mode.

Teamwork survey. The reported interaction purpose distribution results reflect a slight tendency toward information and status updates. The president reported an exclusive focus on information sharing and status updates as the purpose of their interactions with the SLT members. The studen t affairs officer also indicated a strong preference for information sharing and status updates. The focus on information sharing

may be influenced by the president's approach to managing the financial pressures facing the institution, which emerged across multiple interviews.

> We're operating on tighter margins than other schools operate on and so a mistake can have one drastic consequence … a few months ago, we met once a week for two hours that's because we ran some serious financial challenges. In order to manage our way out of it, I want to look at every dollar, every week. I want to know all about financial stuff on the top of my head. (Perry, Team E)

Interviews. Team E largely focused on the enactment of mission and vision (57%) and strategic planning and long-term thinking (43%) as the primary purposes of senior leadership teams in higher education. They tended to view the development of new senior leadership team roles (86%) as an anticipated future trend for senior leadership teams. Team E's president was the only member of the team to couple collaboration and boundary crossing with strategic planning and long-term thinking as part of the senior leadership team purpose. When describing management activities, Team E identified information sharing (100%) and problem solving/issue resolution (86%) as the primary activities. Only two of Team E's members, the president and student affairs officer, referenced developing personal rapport as a key team activity. Similar to Team B, which also had few references to relationship building, Team E's president and student affairs officer described team social interactions within the context of other institutional events.

Team E, which had the shortest tenure of any team in the study, was more inclined than any other team to focus on shared commitment to mission (71%) as the primary path to building trust. As the only minority-serving institution (MSI) in the study, members of Team E referenced the legacy of the institution's role in higher education as part of their mission. In most cases, members of Team E referenced spending their entire professional careers at minority-serving institutions. Given the community orientation found in MSI faculty (Blake, 2018), the commitment to the institutional mission represents the passion Team E's members bring to their work. It is noteworthy that the finance and student affairs officers referenced shared history as a preferred path. While they both had

relatively short tenures at the institution, they were the only team members that knew each other prior to their time at the institution. Therefore, they brought a shared history into their service at the institution, which may have influenced their tendency to focus on shared history as a preferred path to building trust. Only the finance officer articulated the president's expectation for collaboration. Similar to Team D's president, Perry, Team E's president described his focus on helping the team develop more collaborative approaches to managing their work and their teams. Given his relatively short tenure and the pressing financial concerns he tackled in the initial months of his leadership, Perry was in the initial stages of setting expectations for collaboration with his team. The institution's financial pressures caused him and the finance officer to spend significant time together, which influenced the finance officer's focus on the president's expectations. As Perry describes in the comment below, he has encouraged the SLT members to engage their direct reports in tactical work, opening up space for the senior leaders to work more collaboratively.

> In a perfect world, they will foster, and I think they're beginning to do this, they will foster an environment from their number twos to be able to work with the other number twos, operationally to not be in their lane, to solve the issues before they even come to VPs…. For some, I had to push to say, "You need to get your people because you're doing too much work. You're chasing paperwork." A president has to find a way to as best he can have the team come together. Because a loose team member, not operating together, can sink the whole ship and everybody, and to make sure that the team understands, that we are all in the same boat together that's the key. (Perry, Team E)

The president's efforts were reflected in the finance officer's and administration officer's flexible views of functional expertise. However, most of the team (57%) reflected a fixed view of functional expertise. Distinct from participants in other teams that described fixed views of functional expertise, Team E didn't emphasize issues of specialized knowledge or institutional risk. They tended to focus on the operational efficiency associated with fixed views of functional expertise.

Core Functional Role Findings

This section provides descriptions of the core functional roles—president and the academic affairs, finance, student affairs, and advancement officers. The core functional role descriptions also provide information regarding the number of direct reports for each senior officer. In general, the number of direct reports tended to align with institutional size, i.e., larger institutions tended to require additional administrative staff. The number of direct reports did not demonstrate alignment with reporting team learning scores by the core functional officers. The final section of this chapter will review, compare, and contrast findings across roles. Role descriptions include a discussion of service tenure, physical proximity, responsibilities, and functions.

President

The presidents in this study have considerable range of experience, from 1 year to 25. Based on the 7-year average presidential tenure (Gagliardi et al., 2017), three presidents in the study had below average tenure—ranging from 1 to 6 years. One president reached the average tenure of 7 years, and the longest serving president in the study has been in the role for 25 years. Each of the presidents in the study was in their first presidency and was hired from outside of the institution. With the exception of Team E with the student affairs officer located in a separate building, the core functional role officers are located in the same building as the president. The roles that are physically closest—same floor or suite—are the advancement officer, chief of staff, or academic affairs officer. All of the presidents maintained heavy travel schedules. Given the multiple campuses managed by Team D, the president, along with the other core functional role officers, travels frequently to the other campuses within 20 miles of the central campus.

Regardless of their experience and tenure at their institution, each president made initial and ongoing structural adjustments to their team. Initial changes included

evaluating the senior leader competencies and mindsets and restructuring the team itself. For example, Team A's president made internal promotions and completed a senior leader search that was in progress when they began their presidential service. As expressed in the comments below from the newest (Perry) and most experienced (Patrick) presidents in the study, assessing the needs of the institution was identified as a key factor in building the team.

> The institution needed different types of people at different periods in its development. At some point, I needed people who could calm the waters and build some trust and help take down some cynicism and have people believing they matter here. (Patrick, Team C)

> The first thing was to make sure that I felt the right people were here, who can get in right seats, who can do the work I needed them to do. The very first time was just reconfiguring that team. That meant new people. It also meant new roles. (Perry, Team E)

Ongoing adjustments resulting from retirements or leaders leaving for presidencies or other jobs created opportunities to redefine or restructure roles. For example, Team B's president worked through senior level changes, as described in this comment.

> The CFO retired and it was very timely. The former CFO got us to a certain point and then I think he was about tapped out in terms of feasibilities. And so just as good luck would have it, he decided to retire. Our new CFO is just extremely skilled. So that's worked out fantastic. So with some of these things maybe it's time for a change, nothing dramatic, but we just need somebody with a little bit stronger skills. With some people it is good that they had move out on his own terms. (Paul, Team B)

Presidents also discussed the importance of setting expectations for communication and conflict resolution. As demonstrated in the comments below, presidents placed a heavy emphasis on honesty and open discussion.

> I want people to be able to disagree I want people to have different tolerance for different types of risks. Because then we can talk about that and think intentionally…. I know that there are challenges with that because there are strong personalities—as they're always will be at any institution. But my hope is that people would treat each other with respect and that they will listen to each other and have enough trust with me that we can have that kind of conversation. (Peter, Team A)

> I want them to debate with me. I tell them all the time, "If I surround myself with people who think like me, you do me no good. That means I can do your job. I need you to be able to have thoughtful debate with me and offer perspectives that I may not have considered before." (Patricia, Team D)

The presidential role in relationship to the senior leadership team was explored with study participants. By far, most senior leaders, including the presidents themselves, saw the president as a member of the team rather than the team being "in service" to the president. Team A's president expressed this in the comment below.

> When I look at how our meetings actually operate, I am just a team member and a facilitator. My goal is actually just to ask a lot of questions. To make sure that we are getting all of the information that we need…I don't mind healthy debate and discussion. (Peter, Team A)

While the president was viewed as a member of the team, there was consistent reference to the presidential role as the final decision maker and the importance of demonstrating respect for their decision-making authority. The most frequently discussed presidential responsibilities to the senior leadership were decision making and listening.

> I recognize my role as president there are times when I'm going to have to have to be the final decision maker, but the last thing that I want to do is to do that without input and without hearing the different arguments and points of view on decisions. (Peter, Team A)

> Now ultimately, it is my decision, but when people feel that they have had their say, and that I listened carefully and that when we have made a decision, the vast majority, the consensus would say, "Yeah, this is the right direction." - it's a much better decision…. I don't have any kind of control over the best ideas. My job is to make sure that the best ideas flourish and are listened to. That means asking good questions, being engaged, being respectful. My job is to empower those around me. (Patrick, Team C)

> The role of the president is to help the group reach consensus. Because you do have, in my case, nine different personalities with different perspectives including my own, how do you bring this group to cohesion, how do you engage them where they feel valued, how do you sometimes bring levity to a conversation. So it's a combination of factors. I don't think there is one clear role that the president plays in there except to be the decision maker when necessary. (Patricia, Team D)

Table 22. Presidents' Survey Results

PRESIDENTS					
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Average Results**		**Standard Deviation**		**Interpretation**
	73.6		10.7		Pooled
	Team A	**Team B**	**Team C**	**Team D**	**Team E**
	78	67	90	63	70
	Pooled	Fragmented	Synergistic	Fragmented	Pooled
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Most Frequent Contact**		**Least Frequent Contact**
	2.5		**NEARLY DAILY** Academic Affairs Finance Advancement		**WEEKLY/BI-WEEKLY** Student Affairs
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [2]	**Share information & Provide status updates**		**Consult with each other & Request advice**		**Decision making & Planning**
	41%		**25%**		**34%**
Academic Affairs	**44%**		25%		31%
Finance	**41%**		24%		35%
Student Affairs	**41%**		24%		35%
Advancement	**39%**		28%		33%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Highest % is shared darkest.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results for the presidents across all five team sites are displayed in Table 22. The team learning survey results reflect that the presidents tended to perceive a **pooled** mode of team learning, implying tendency toward the dissolution of boundaries and the creation of shared meaning between individual team members. While on average the presidents reported a pooled mode of team learning, the dispersion of results indicates differences in presidential perspectives. The presidents of Team A, B, and E reported a mode of team learning similar to their team average. The president of Team C reported a **more** advanced mode of team learning than their team average, and the president of Team D reported a **less** advanced mode.

Teamwork survey. The average reported interaction frequency displayed in Table 22 reflects that presidents report a tendency toward daily interaction with the members of their senior leadership team. Most of the presidents reported daily interaction

with their academic affairs, finance, and advancement officers. Presidents reported having less frequent contact with their student affairs officers, who are also most likely to be located in a different building or different floor of the same building as the president. The interaction purpose distribution results reflect that presidents reported a slight tendency toward sharing information and status updates. Overall, the presidents reported a relatively consistent distribution of purposes across all core functional roles.

Interviews. Presidents across all of the teams identified strategic planning and long-term thinking (100%) and collaboration and boundary crossing (100%) as the primary purposes of senior leadership teams in higher education. The presidents of Teams A and D also described the enactment of mission and vision as a purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. They had mixed views of future trends in senior leadership teams, with some anticipating the development of new senior leadership roles (60%) and some anticipating increased demand for collaboration and cross-functional work (60%). When describing the management of the institution, presidents identified information sharing (100%) and determining ownership and key decision makers (80%) as primary management activities. Presidents tended to place less emphasis on problem solving/issue resolution (40%) and developing personal rapport (40%). The presidents with the longest (Team C) and shortest (Team E) tenures as president did describe developing personal rapport as an important aspect of team interactions. These two presidents also had the highest and lowest team learning scores. Presidents had mixed beliefs on pathways to building trust. The presidents of Teams A, C, D, and E focused on shared commitment to mission as the primary path, and the president of Team B focused on shared history. Presidents tended to have a flexible view of functional expertise. Team B's president was the only president that described a fixed view of functional expertise. This view is attributed to an extension of his hands-off approach and belief that his senior team is responsible for maintaining a focus on their functional expertise.

Academic Affairs

With 43% of college presidents coming from academic affairs (Gagliardi et al., 2017), the chief academic affairs officer, or provost, has a unique position in the senior leadership team. The view of the academic affairs officer as second in command was validated by comments in participant interviews. The relationship between the president and the academic affairs officer had unique aspects for each team. This uniqueness was represented by close physical proximity (i.e., offices next to each other or on the same floor) or more frequent meetings.

The role of academic deans within senior leadership has important implications for the academic affairs officer charged with the oversight of the academic mission. As direct reports to the academic affairs officer, each of the institutions participating in the study hosts regular deans meetings that include senior leaders. In the case of Team C, the academic affairs officer leads the VP and Deans meeting, which functions as the senior leadership team meeting. Considering their relationship to senior leaders, several study participants articulated perspectives about the role of academic deans. In particular, the academic affairs officers tended to view academic deans as senior leaders.

> Deans are absolutely the key—they are the gateway. I see them is absolutely essential and definitely senior leaders. Regardless of institutional type or structure. Because they know more than anybody else what they're doing. They are directly managing personnel, faculty life, student life, curriculum, fundraising—everything. (Alice, Team A)

> I believe that deans have to be seen as important leaders on the campus…. If we don't give them the opportunity to be important members of the decision-making body, then we handcuff our ability to really try and be the kind of public research university we want to be. (Alan, Team C)

> Deans are essentially a leadership group within Academic Affairs. The senior leaders of the academy. Just like Student Affairs will bring together their leadership group within their division. Deans are the leadership team within Academic Affairs. (Aiden, Team D)

> Deans are responsible for an entire area; that span of control and in the different academic programs. In addition to that I am a little old fashioned in the sense that we're all here for the educational part and that's directly

> related to the mission; your deans and the quality, your academic programs. Clearly, they would be a major part of the senior leadership. (Fitz, Team E)

Team B was an exception, with the academic affairs officer articulating a view of academic deans as largely managers of a defined unit.

> It's hard for me to say that they are senior leaders because most deans don't need to have an institutional perspective. It is hard to get them to have one. I think the dean is the hardest job in the academic lineage. They always want a fallback of being able to return to the faculty and that constraints their ability to really be a leader. They tend to carry themselves like managers of their silo. (Alex, Team B)

On average, the service tenure for the academic affairs officers in the study was eight years, the shortest of the core functional roles. Two of the academic affairs officers in the study had less than one year of service tenure and one had a little over a year tenure. These three academic affairs officers were external hires and new to the institution in this role. Two of the academic affairs officers had longer tenure—one with 13 years' experience and the other with 27 years' experience—and were promoted into their roles via the faculty-to-dean pathway. While the president appointed them to their senior role, the academic affairs officers for Team C and E had more experience at the institution than their president. A summary of each academic affairs officer's direct reports is included in Table 23.

Table 23. Summary of Academic Affairs Officer Direct Reports

Team A	19	11 academic deans 8 executive directors, vice/associate provosts, and assistant vice presidents
Team B	4	4 academic deans
Team C	15	6 academic deans 9 vice provosts, associate provost and vice president
Team D	7	4 academic vice presidents 3 associate senior vice presidents and vice presidents
Team E	15	7 academic deans 3 associate vice provost and assistant vice president 5 directors

The academic affairs officers for Teams C, D, and E included responsibility for enrollment management. With the exception of Team B, all of the academic affairs officers were located in close proximity to the president—either on the same floor or in the same suite. As is the custom, deans for all teams were located in separate buildings near the faculty of their respective academic programs. Regardless of the academic affairs officer's location—near the president or in a different building—their administrative direct reports were in close proximity to them.

Table 24. Academic Affairs Survey Results

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS					
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**		**Standard Deviation**		**Interpretation**
	73.4		7.5		Pooled
	Team A	**Team B**	**Team C**	**Team D**	**Team E**
	67	64	80	80	76
	Fragmented	Fragmented	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Most Frequent Contact**		**Least Frequent Contact**
	2.2		**NEARLY DAILY** President		**WEEKLY/BI-WEEKLY** Student Affairs
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [2]	**Share information & Provide status updates**		**Consult with each other & Request advice**		**Decision making & Planning**
	38%		**31%**		**31%**
President	**38%**		31%		31%
Finance	**33%**		**33%**		**33%**
Student Affairs	**36%**		27%		**36%**
Advancement	**43%**		33%		24%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Highest % is shared darkest.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results for the academic affairs officers across all five team sites are displayed in Table 24. The team learning survey results reflect that academic affairs officers tended to perceive a **pooled** mode of team learning, implying tendency toward the dissolution of boundaries and the creation of

shared meaning between individual team members. Similar to presidents and advancement officers, the majority of the academic affairs officers reported a pooled learning experience. While on average academic affairs officers reported a pooled mode of team learning, there were some differences. The academic affairs officers for Teams B and C reported a mode of team learning similar to their team average. The academic affairs officer for Team A reported a **less** advanced mode than the average of their teams. Teams D's and E's academic affairs officers reported a **more** advanced mode than the average of their teams. The academic affairs officers for Teams A, B, and C reported a **more** advanced mode than their president, and the academic affairs officers for Teams D and E reported a **less** advanced mode than their president.

Teamwork survey. The average reported interaction frequency displayed in Table 24 reflects a tendency toward weekly interaction with the members of their senior leadership team, with most academic affairs officers reporting a tendency toward daily interaction with the president and weekly interaction with the advancement officer. The interaction purpose distribution results reflect a slight tendency toward sharing information and status updates. Academic affairs officers reported relatively even distribution of purposes with finance officers. With student affairs officers, they reported a tendency for information and status sharing and decision making/planning.

Interviews. Academic affairs officers identified strategic planning and long-term thinking (60%) and enactment of mission and vision (60%) as the primary purposes of senior leadership teams in higher education. They focused on the development of new senior leadership roles (80%) as the leading future trend in senior leadership teams. When describing the management of the institution, academic affairs officers identified information sharing (100%) as the primary management activity. As a group, they placed less emphasis than any other core functional role on determining ownership/key decision makers (40%) and problem solving/issue resolution (40%) as key management activities for senior leadership teams. While other academic affairs officers coupled information

sharing with either determining ownership/key decision makers or problem solving/issue resolution, Team D's academic affairs officer solely focused on information sharing. Similar to presidents, academic affairs officers tended to place less emphasis on developing personal rapport as an important aspect of team interactions. In addition, similar to presidents, the academic affairs officers that did describe the relevance of developing personal rapport had the longest (Team C) and the shortest (Team A) tenure. Team B's academic affairs officer, who had the same short tenure as Team A's academic affairs officer, did not reference developing personal rapport as a key team activity. Academic affairs officers had mixed beliefs on pathways to building trust. The academic affairs officers for Teams A, C, and E focused on shared commitment to mission as the primary path, and the academic affairs officers for Teams B and D focused on shared history. Academic affairs officers also had mixed views of functional expertise, with Teams A and C describing a flexible view of functional expertise and Teams B, D, and E describing a fixed view. In most cases, the academic affairs officers' views mirrored the president's views. The most frequent exception was in Teams D and E, where the president and academic affairs officer had differing views on expertise.

Finance

The finance officers articulated a consistent theme of the importance of accountability in their role. In the execution of their responsibilities, they stressed the importance of developing a strategy to communicate and negotiate the tensions involved in protecting the financial security of the institution.

> We have to hold each other accountable. So being able to talk openly and honestly about what's going well and what's not going well, is really important. (Frances, Team C)

> You'll never see me always talking about the risk, and the business, and the financial aspects, and the security and safety aspects of an issue they bring to me…. I have to come at it from a different sense of the organization issues. (Felicia, Team D)

> In my role as the fiscal officer and the type of responsibilities that I have here, there's friction that naturally would occur. As a fiscal officer, one of the things that are really important to me is reserve, save, protect; those type of things. (Fitz, Team E)

Finance officers are often faced with making difficult decisions that require institutions to cut services or deny requests. Fred and Felicia offered two different examples. In Fred's situation, the decision-making communication was complicated and created friction. In Felicia's example, she faced a difficult decision that exposed an internal conflict between what she wanted to do and had to do in her role as finance officer.

> We needed to make a decision about paving a green space on campus for parking. It all made perfect sense to me. Athletics wanted me to pave it and needed additional space for parking. We looked at the design and knew we could afford it. I went to the president and gave all the reasons why we should do this and the president approved it. I took it to the vice presidents and said here's what I'm up against here's what's driving this and gave them all the same reasons that I gave the president. And I was 99% sure they would have said well we don't like it, but you've made the case. But I had to backtrack because it's caused some friction among our donors and people that tailgate there. We ought to pave that lot. I think it is the right thing for the University. We have 700 more registrations than we did last year and we are 2,000 spaces short compared to the people registering their cars. When it rains on that field, the people that give you the most money for athletics have to move and they're never happy. We are getting ready to double the size of the College of Business on that campus and they will need parking. So all of those reasons would lead you to think that we ought to do this. But they brought up things I didn't consider. Now, it ends up back on my plate to sort out. Adam [advancement officer] and Ellen [enrollment] could be involved, but I really need to take the lead and will keep them informed. (Fred, Team A)

> You know, we had to close down childcare centers because we were running three childcare centers, and we had 19 students using the centers. Now, we had employees and we had communities in our childcare centers. But we were operating and have always been operating at a loss. That's a hard discussion, "Oh, but what about the students? What about their children? How can you do this?" Normally, I would say, "You can't do this to people" on my outside world. But as the senior vice president who's trying to mitigate risk and manage loss, you have to come to the table and say, "You know, I appreciate all that you guys, and I really love them. I will work my darndest to find a place for those 19 students in the organization.

> We will manage it. We will phase it out. We will do what we need to do. But we all have to come to Jesus and realize this a no-win. This is a losing situation for us," so it brings that. You have to be practical, and it makes it difficult because those are hard conversations because we want to be everything to everybody. I think it makes me come with that realism issue which is not the person I am. (Felicia, Team D)

Finance officers shared a view that developing relationships with other SLT members was challenging. Summarized by Fred (Team A), they are often in the position of saying "no" and feel the need to maintain some distance.

> Oftentimes I feel isolated. Oftentimes I don't have the personal relationships outside of his job that some of the other vice presidents have with each other. Because so often I have to say no. You're always a little bit hesitant that if you get too close someone is going to take advantage of you and then it is going to be tougher for you to say no. (Fred, Team A)

On average, the service tenure for the finance officers in the study was 12 years, ranging from 2 to 21 years. The two finance officers with the highest service tenure—Team D with 20 years and Team A with 21 years—had significantly more tenure at the institution (13 and 15 years, respectively) than their presidents. In both cases, neither were appointed into their role by their president. The finance officers for Teams B, C, and E were hired into their role by their president. Team E's finance officer was an internal hire, and Team B's and Team C's finance officers were external hires. A summary of each finance officer's direct reports is included in Table 25.

Table 25. Summary of Finance Officer Direct Reports

Team A	8	5 assistant/associate vice presidents 3 directors
Team B	4	3 assistant vice presidents 1 director
Team C	4	3 assistant/associate vice presidents 1 director
Team D	5	2 senior vice presidents and vice presidents 3 chief officers
Team E	5	2 associate/assistant vice presidents 3 directors

The finance officer for Team A includes responsibility for government relations, human resources, athletics, public safety, and information technology. The finance officer for Team C includes responsibility for public safety, administration, and facilities management. The finance officer for Team D includes responsibility for facilities, human resources, and information technology. With the exception of Team B, all of the finance officers were in the same building as the president, but none were located on the same floor of the building. As a result of being located closer to the president, these finance officers were not in close proximity to their direct reports. The finance officer for Team B was located in the same building with their direct reports.

Table 26. Finance Survey Results

FINANCE					
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**		**Standard Deviation**		**Interpretation**
	65.0		3.9		Fragmented
	Team A	**Team B**	**Team C**	**Team D**	**Team E**
	61	66	70	61	67
	Fragmented	Fragmented	Pooled	Fragmented	Fragmented
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Most Frequent Contact**		**Least Frequent Contact**
	2.2		**NEARLY DAILY** President		**MONTHLY** Advancement
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [2]	**Share information & Provide status updates**		**Consult with each other & Request advice**		**Decision making & Planning**
	39%		**28%**		**32%**
President	**36%**		27%		**36%**
Academic Affairs	**35%**		30%		**35%**
Student Affairs	**40%**		27%		33%
Advancement	**50%**		29%		21%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Highest % is shared darkest.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results for the finance officers across all five team sites are displayed in Table 26. The team learning survey results reflect that finance officers tended to perceive a **fragmented** mode of team learning,

implying minimal boundary sharing between individual team members and limited sharing of individual learning. Similar to student affairs officers, the majority of the finance officers reported a fragmented learning experience. While on average finance officers reported a fragmented mode of team learning, Team C's finance officer reported a pooled mode. The finance officers for Team B and E reported a mode of team learning similar to their team average. The finance officers for Teams A, C, and D reported a **less** advanced mode than the average of their teams. All of the finance officers reported a **less** advanced mode than their presidents.

Teamwork survey. The average reported interaction frequency displayed in Table 26 reflects a tendency toward weekly interaction with the members of their senior leadership team, with most finance officers reporting a tendency toward daily interaction with the president and monthly interaction with the advancement officer. The interaction purpose distribution results reflect a tendency toward sharing information and status updates. With presidents and academic affairs officers, finance officers report a tendency for information and status sharing and decision making/planning.

Interviews. Finance officers identified strategic planning and long-term thinking (80%) and enactment of mission and vision (60%) as the primary purposes of senior leadership teams in higher education. Their views were relatively similar to those of academic affairs officers. All of the finance officers identified the development of new senior leadership roles (100%) as the leading future trend in senior leadership teams. When describing the management of the institution, finance officers identified information sharing (100%) and problem solving/issue resolution (100%) as the primary management activities. The finance officers for Teams C, D, and E also described determining ownership/key decision makers (60%) as the key management activity for senior leadership teams. Similar to presidents and academic affairs officers, finance officers tended to place less emphasis on developing personal rapport as an important aspect of team interactions. While long and short tenure seemed to align with view of

personal rapport for presidents and academic affairs officers, there was not a similar alignment for finance officers. Finance officers had mixed beliefs on pathways to building trust. The finance officers for Teams B and C focused on shared commitment to mission as the primary path, and the finance officers for Teams A, D, and E focused on shared history. Finance officers also had mixed views of functional expertise, with Teams C and E describing a flexible view of functional expertise and Teams A, B, and D describing a fixed view. The tendency toward a fixed view of functional expertise may be related to finance officer references to specialized knowledge in their function. Finance officers are particularly cognizant of the role proper fiscal management plays in institutional success, which may influence their tendency toward protection of the function's expertise. In the following section, student affairs officer findings will be described. It is noteworthy to call out the similarities between finance and student affairs officers. These two officers were the only officers reporting fragmented learning modes along with a tendency toward fixed views of functional expertise and a focus on shared history to build trust. The demands for accountability on their functional domains in the current higher education environment may be a contributing factor in their approach to leadership.

Student Affairs

The perception of student affairs in relationship to other functional areas was discussed by several student affairs officers. As described by Sally, Sam, and Sabrina below, student affairs officers sometimes expect to have to make the case for the importance of their work.

> For whatever reason student affairs thinks so we are second-class citizens and sometime we wallow in that. For me it is our job advancing learning and development is just as important has what happens in the classroom. I'm not bashful about it and there is some faculty members that don't like what we do and think we get too many resources. (Sam, Team A)

> Student Affairs, in some institutions, sit on the periphery of what's happening when in fact, the work that we do in student affairs is critical to the success of students. The work that you see in academic affairs and student affairs, which naturally go hand in hand. (Sabrina, Team D)

> For some in Academic Affairs, there is a belief that we are just a party people, just the touch feeling kind of folk. But understanding that there are some learning outcomes that we are working on as well and selling the resources that we have available to the faculty to help them understand. (Sally, Team E)

The student affairs officers for Teams B, C, and E were located in student union or student center buildings separate from their SLT colleagues. While they all preferred being closer to student traffic and their direct reports, they also noted the challenges and advantages of that distance.

> I have to pick up a phone a lot, I walkover a lot. You're kind of working with each other as colleagues, but just not in same way. I think it does make a difference. I think the closer you are in proximity, the greater opportunity you have for informal communication, the greater opportunity you have to structure communication, the greater opportunity you have to do cross teamwork because it's easy. If I were situated in such a way that I could be in closer proximity to Alex or to Frank or to Anthony, we would know each other better and that would ultimately, ideally, lead to improved productivity. I think most importantly, creativity. (Stephanie, Team B)

> There are certainly conversations that spark that I'm not a part of and later I have to go catch up. But the president has us all on speed dial and so I am never more than a text away. It can be frustrating because I missed something that happened without me present. But those days are far fewer than the days I'm grateful for the space to do what I need to do. (Sylvia, Team C)

> While I may not see my colleagues but once a week, I'm connected to them daily either texting or calling. We're in a constant state of communication. The advantages of everybody being in close proximity is certainly being able to run across the hall, instead of shooting a meeting or text. But the benefit for me is being close to the people in my unit and knowing what is going on. For me that is more important. (Sally, Team E)

On average, the service tenure for the student affairs officers in the study was 13 years, the longest of the core functional roles, ranging from 2 to 33 years. Team A's student affairs officer, with the longest tenure of 33 years, and Team E's student affairs office

with the shortest tenure of 2 years, were not appointed by their president. The student affairs officers for Teams B, C, and D were appointed by their president. A summary of each student affairs officer's direct reports is included in Table 27.

Table 27. Summary of Student Affairs Officer Direct Reports

Team A	3	2 associate vice presidents 1 dean
Team B	5	4 directors 1 dean
Team C	4	2 associate/assistant vice presidents 2 directors
Team D	9	1 associate vice president 2 directors 6 deans
Team E	9	1 assistant vice president 8 directors

All of the student affairs officers were charged with a traditional range of student affairs responsibilities, including student success offices, health service/counseling, orientation, disability services, ministry, diversity, greek life, career services, residence life, and orientation. The student affairs officers for Teams A and D were located in the same building as the president—largely away from their direct reports. Teams B, C, and E's student affairs officers were located in buildings separate from the president—closer to their direct reports.

Table 28. Student Affairs Survey Results

STUDENT AFFAIRS					
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**		**Standard Deviation**		**Interpretation**
	65.2		3.8		Fragmented
	Team A	**Team B**	**Team C**	**Team D**	**Team E**
	64	63	72	64	63
	Fragmented	Fragmented	Pooled	Fragmented	Fragmented

INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**	**Most Frequent Contact**	**Least Frequent Contact**
	1.7	**WEEKLY/BI-WEEKLY** Academic Affairs	**MONTHLY** Advancement

INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [2]	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	40%	**29%**	**31%**
President	**42%**	32%	26%
Academic Affairs	**37%**	32%	32%
Finance	**41%**	24%	35%
Advancement	**40%**	27%	33%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Highest % is shared darkest.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results for the student affairs officers across all five team sites are displayed in Table 28. The team learning survey results reflect that student affairs officers tended to perceive a **fragmented** mode of team learning, implying minimal boundary sharing between individual team members and limited sharing of individual learning. Similar to finance officers, the majority of the student affairs officers reported a fragmented learning experience. While on average student affairs officers reported a fragmented mode of team learning, Team C's student affairs officer reported a pooled mode. All of the student affairs officers reported a **less** advanced mode than the average of their teams and their presidents.

Teamwork survey. The average reported interaction frequency displayed in Table 28 reflects a tendency toward weekly interaction with the members of their senior leadership team, with most student affairs officers reporting a tendency toward weekly/ bi-weekly interaction with the academic affairs officer and monthly interaction with the

advancement officer. The interaction purpose distribution results reflect a tendency toward sharing information and status updates. With presidents and academic affairs officers, student affairs officers also reported a consultation and advice interactions. Overall, the student affairs officers reported a relatively consistent distribution of purposes across all core functional roles.

Interviews. Student affairs officers identified a diverse range of purposes for senior leadership teams in higher education, including strategic planning and long-term thinking (40%), enactment of mission and vision (60%), and collaboration/boundary crossing (40%). They had mixed views of future trends in senior leadership teams, with some anticipating the development of new senior leadership roles (60%) and some anticipated increased demand for collaboration and cross-functional work (40%). When describing the management of the institution, similar to finance officers, student affairs officers identified information sharing (100%) and problem solving/issue resolution (100%) as the primary management activities. The student affairs officers for Team A and C also described determining ownership/key decision makers as key management activity for senior leadership teams. More so than any other core functional role, student affairs officers described developing personal rapport (80%) as an important aspect of team interactions. While Team D's student affairs officer didn't reference personal rapport, Team D as a whole didn't recognize it either. Student affairs officers tended to focus on shared history (80%) as the primary path to building trust. Student affairs officers tended to describe a fixed view of functional expertise. Similar to finance officers, student affairs officers articulated concerns about the specialized knowledge of their function. Given the vulnerability institutions face following a failure in the student affairs function, student affairs officers described an increased need to both defend and advocate for their function's role in leading the institution. In addition to their similar reports on managing the institution and views of functional expertise, student affairs and finance officers also reported fragmented learning modes. Collectively, these two officers

are facing significant functional demands that, through these findings, demonstrate that their approach to leadership may inhibit their capacity to engage in team learning.

Advancement

On average, the service tenure for the advancement officers in the study was 10 years, ranging from 4 to 15 years. The advancement officer for Team E did not participate in the study. All of the advancement officers were appointed by their president. The presidents of Team A and Team D have shorter service tenures than the advancement officers, and the presidents of Teams B and C have longer service tenures than their advancement officers. All of the advancement officers were in the same building as the president. Team B's advancement officer was in the same suite as the president. None of the other advancement officers are located on the same floor as the president. A summary of each advancement officer's direct reports is included in Table 29.

Table 29. Summary of Advancement Officer Direct Reports

Team A	6	6 associate/assistant vice presidents
Team B	3	1 director 2 managers
Team C	8	2 associate/assistant vice president 6 director
Team D	2	2 associate senior vice presidents
Team E	Did not participate in study	

With the exception of Team A, the advancement officer's direct reports were located in the same building or suite with them. Travel is a uniqueness of the advancement officer role. Therefore, all of the advancement officers reported busy travel schedules. Team A's, Team C's, and Team D's advancement officers were also charged with communications and marketing oversight.

Table 30. Advancement Survey Results

ADVANCEMENT					
TEAM LEARNING SURVEY	**Averaged Results**		**Standard Deviation**		**Interpretation**
	72.8		5.3		Pooled
	Team A	**Team B**	**Team C**	**Team D**	**Team E**
	76	65	74	76	Did not participate in study
	Pooled	Fragmented	Pooled	Pooled	
INTERACTION FREQUENCY	**Average Frequency [1]**		**Most Frequent Contact**		**Least Frequent Contact**
	1.7		**NEARLY DAILY** President		**MONTHLY** Student Affairs
INTERACTION PURPOSE DISTRIBUTION [2]	**Share information & Provide status updates**		**Consult with each other & Request advice**		**Decision making & Planning**
	40%		**32%**		**28%**
President	**42%**		32%		26%
Academic Affairs	**40%**		32%		28%
Finance	**40%**		35%		25%
Student Affairs	**38%**		29%		33%

1 – Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0
2 – Highest % is shared darkest.

Team learning survey. The team learning survey results reflect that advancement officers tended to perceive a **pooled** mode of team learning, implying a tendency toward the dissolution of boundaries and the creation of shared meaning between individual team members. Similar to presidents and academic affairs officers, the majority of the academic affairs officers reported a pooled learning experience. While on average advancement officers reported a pooled mode of team learning, Team B's advancement officer reported a fragmented mode. The advancement officers for Teams A and B reported a mode of team learning similar to their team average. The advancement officer for Team C reported a **less** advanced mode than the average of their teams. Team D's advancement officer reported a **more** advanced mode than the average of their team. The advancement officers for Teams A, B, and C reported a **less** advanced mode than their president, and the advancement officer for Team D reported a **more** advanced mode than their president.

Teamwork survey. The average reported interaction frequency displayed in Table 30 reflects a tendency toward daily interaction with the president. Most advancement officers reported monthly interaction with the student affairs officer. The interaction purpose distribution results reflect a tendency toward sharing information and status updates. Overall, the advancement officers reported a relatively consistent distribution of purposes across all core functional roles. The team learning survey results for the advancement officers across all five team sites are displayed in Table 30.

Interviews. Advancement officers identified strategic planning and long-term thinking (75%) as the primary purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. Their views were relatively similar to those of finance officers. Advancement officers had mixed views of future trends in senior leadership teams, with half of them focused on the development of new senior leadership roles and half focused on the increased demand for collaboration and cross-functional work. When describing the management of the institution, advancement officers identified information sharing (100%) and problem solving/issue resolution (75%) as the primary management activities. Similar to student affairs officers, advancement officers described developing personal rapport (80%) as an important aspect of team interactions. While Team D's advancement officer didn't reference personal rapport, Team D as a whole didn't recognize it either. Advancement officers all focused on shared history as the primary path to building trust. Advancement officers also had mixed views of functional expertise, with Teams C and D describing a flexible view of functional expertise and Teams A and B describing a fixed view.

Summary of Findings

Through a cross-case review of the research findings and reflection on the literature supporting the study and the conceptual framework, this section begins with a synthesis

of findings organized in response to each research question. Table 31 presents a summary of key findings organized by research question.

Table 31. Summary of Key Findings

1. How do presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?	a. Strategic planning/long-term thinking and the enactment of vision and mission were identified as primary purposes for senior leadership teams in higher education. b. Presidents emphasized strategic thinking and collaboration, in their views of the senior leadership team purpose – placing less emphasis on the enactment of vision and mission. c. Overall, the creation of new or redesigned senior leadership roles was identified as future trend.
2. How do presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?	a. SLT members tend to interact with each other on a weekly basis. Academic affairs, finance, and advancement officers were more likely to interact with the president on a daily basis. Less frequent interaction was reported with advancement and student affairs officers. b. Information sharing was reported as a fundamental management activity across all teams and functions. Determining ownership/key decision makers and problem solving/issue resolution were also identified as key management activities. Team B, Team E, finance officers, student affairs officers, and advancement officers tended to report engaging in problem solving/issue resolution more frequently. **c.** Developing personal rapport among senior leadership team members was inconsistently described as a key aspect of team interactions. Teams with longer tenure tended to place higher value on this type of relationship building.
3. What facilitates or impedes learning within the SLT and between presidents and SLT members?	a. The teams with the highest team learning scores - Team A and C – were the only teams to articulate their president's expectations for collaboration. b. Views on building trust were mixed. Most participants focused on shared history as the primary path to building trust and presidents largely focused on shared commitment to mission as the primary path. c. Team member's views of functional expertise didn't consistently align with their president's view. Team members tended to express fixed views of functional expertise, while most presidents expressed flexible views of functional expertise. Academic affairs, finance, and student affairs officers tended to have fixed views of functional expertise.

Prior to reviewing findings organized by each research question, it is important to recall the team learning survey results, specifically how teams were grouped by their learning

mode. Teams B and E reflected a fragmented learning mode, and Team C reflected the highest pooled learning score. Given these results, special attention will be paid to these teams' findings in the next three sections of this chapter.

Research Question 1

This study sought to answer the research question: *How do presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?* Organized into three key findings, this section explores data across all teams and core functional roles to illuminate the understanding of this question.

Finding 1a.

Strategic planning/long-term thinking and the enactment of vision and mission were identified as primary purposes for senior leadership teams in higher education.

Participants tended to identify strategic planning and long-term thinking as the primary purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. This finding is supported by literature on strategic thinking (Christensen & Eyring, 2011) and transformational change (Kezar, 2001, 2018) in higher education. While this was the overall finding, the view was more of a consensus within Teams B and C. Teams A, D, and E tended to also identify the enactment of mission and vision, and Team B was the only team that didn't link vision and mission to team purpose. As stated by Aiden on Team D, "leadership is thinking about tomorrow while taking care of today"; strategic planning and long-term thinking included navigating the tension between the immediate and the long term and tackling institutional priorities and plans.

> Often, you'll find some people in your leadership team who can see the future and then start taking the institution in that direction. 90% of leaders' job is to just think of our future, 10% is present. So these teams have prepared their institution for future—that is most important. (Aiden, Team D)

Along with other participants, Team A's president articulated the importance of intentionally looking at the big picture despite the need to resolve immediate campus issues.

> There is a responsibility within the senior leadership team to always think ahead and trying to make sure that you are not losing sight of the big picture or the longer-term even as you focus on all of the immediate needs. That is hard when you are caught up in the day-to-day work and mission of your unit. So that is a very deliberate balance that you have to make. (Peter, Team A)

The senior leadership of Teams A, D, and E placed a higher value on the enactment of vision and mission as the primary purpose of senior leadership teams in higher education. Summarized in the following comments, vision and mission were often linked with the importance of strategic planning and long-term thinking.

> We protect and advance the mission and vision of the institutions. I think it is our job to make sure there is a direction. One way we do that, operationally, is to create a strategic plan. (Sam, Team A)

> The [senior leadership] team provides the vision and direction for where the university is headed or should be headed. (Felicia, Team D)

> We are stewards of the mission. I believe that that should always be the function of the senior leadership team. (Sally, Team E)

When cited, collaboration and boundary crossing tended to be coupled with one of the other themes. Teams B and C tended to couple collaboration with strategy. This type of coupling emphasized the collective role each team member has on achieving institutional goals.

> Senior leadership teams should essentially take the strategic objectives and turn them into actionable programs that lead to the achievement of the objectives. The team really functions to align those objectives across all of the individual responsibilities of the team leaders. The strategy feeds how the team works together. (Stephanie, Team B)

> These teams have to understand and provide broad leadership to the mission of the institution and then working together, articulate a strategy and a plan to help achieve that mission. Bottom line, we look ahead to future, we set the goals, collaborate on those goals, share or collect resources and

> constantly be reassessing our progress toward those goals. We have to be able to draw a straight line back to the mission. (Alan, Team C)

When reviewing the pattern of Team C's views on the purpose of SLTs, the researcher recognizes the unique structure of Team C's meeting structure, which engages deans and a larger executive council. As compared to the other teams in the study, Team C is the only meeting structure that brings the president, finance officer, and academic affairs officer together, while the academic affairs officer runs the regular meeting with other core functional leaders and the university's deans.

Finding 1b.

Presidents emphasized strategic thinking and collaboration, in their views of the senior leadership team purpose – placing less emphasis on the enactment of vision and mission.

Presidents emphasized strategic thinking and collaboration in their views of the senior leadership team purpose, placing less emphasis on the enactment of vision and mission than other core functional roles. Presidents also tended to place more value on collaboration and boundary crossing than other roles as a key purpose for senior leadership teams. Given the mission-driven nature of colleges and universities (Mitchell & King, 2018), the lack of presidential focus on the enactment of mission and vision was unexpected. However, the ubiquity of the educational mission was intertwined with the description of strategy and strategic thinking.

Academic affairs and student affairs officers tended have a view of the purpose that reflected all of the themes, with slight emphasis on the importance of strategic thinking and the enactment of vision and mission. Finance and advancement officers tended to focus more on strategic planning than vision/mission. Finance officers expressed this by emphasizing the need to define and manage strategic goals and objectives. As stated by Frank (Team B), "the senior leadership team needs to stay focused on operationalizing the strategic objectives of the university". The impact of strategic and tactical decisions is

directly aligned with the responsibilities of the finance officer to manage objectives and outcomes. These comments from Frank and Felicia express that perspective.

> We spend a lot of time talking about the priorities for the university. We've developed a whole new strategic plan and we need to be successful – especially when it comes to the budget and priorities. (Frank, Team A)

> [Finance officers] have to think about consequences. The consequences of changing direction can have some pretty significant implications on the institution. So that's the kind of thing that senior team ought to talk about. (Frank, Team B)

> I'm going to be pragmatic because I'm the business person. Their [SLT] role is, obviously, is to direct the strategy or implement the strategies, action plans, goals of the institution, to lead. And have oversight for those outcomes—to be accountable. That's their purpose and role. (Felicia, Team D)

For Team E, *only* the president expressed a coupling between collaboration/ boundary crossing and vision/mission. None of the other members of Team E identified collaboration and boundary crossing with SLT purpose. Instead they focused either on strategic linking or vision/mission. While Team D's leadership team agreed that the enactment of vision/mission is a primary purpose of leadership teams, Team D's president had a mixed approach to collaboration coupling. Expressed in a comment below, Team D's president described all three purposes as critical for senior leadership teams in higher education.

> Senior leadership teams that act in one accord with a very clear sense of mission, vision and strategy can help move an organization significantly. I am of the opinion that senior leadership teams, when they're done well, have the ability to help mobilize the entire organization around student success. These teams set the tone and the goals all in service to the mission. And therefore, the team break through silos and be reflective of all divisions, units within the institution. (Patricia, Team D)

While framed within the context of strategy and decision making, participants in Team E discussed "service to the president" as part of the work of the SLT. These comments are summarized by Ray and Fitz.

> The team supports the president - his or her vision. The direction that they want to take the university and work with your colleagues to make sure that things are moving in that direction (Fitz, Team E)

> [The team] has to provide the president with all of the information that he needs to decide if that division is moving in the proper direction. They have to give the president evidence that they are keeping their division moving in the right direction. If it's not, then the president redirects or advises the leader to accomplish the goal. (Ray, Team E)

In light of the study's purpose, it is noteworthy that four participants (three in Team C and one in Team D) mentioned the role senior leadership teams play in broader leadership development within the organization. As demonstrated in the quote below, this was expressed within the context of succession planning.

> We are not all going to be here forever. We have to ask ourselves, "How am I going to replace myself?". We have to look ahead and build the skills of the leaders coming up behind us - whether they stay here or go somewhere else. (Alan, Team C)

Finding 1c.

Overall, the creation of new or redesigned senior leadership roles was identified as future trend.

Overall, participants identified the development of new SLT roles as a future trend for senior leadership teams. Christensen and Eyring (2011) support this trend through their discussion of the disruptive forces influencing higher education and creating demand for fundamentally new approaches to delivering value and meeting student and community needs. Evidence of this trend is reflected in the changes made by Teams A and D to expand the senior leaders engaged in senior leadership team meetings. The proliferation of diversity and inclusion officers and senior-level student success roles serves as additional evidence of this future trend. With more than two-thirds of U.S. university senior leadership teams including a senior-level diversity officer (Pihakis, Paikeday, Armstrong, & Meneer, 2019), the diversity and inclusion role reflects the way in which changing needs manifest in a new senior-level role. Diversity and inclusion roles, which emerged in the 1970s to address compliance issues and student affairs needs,

have consistently grown in significance, complexity, and influence. Most recently, chief student success officers are emerging as the next trend in senior leadership roles. Driven by the growth in data-enabled decision making and integrated performance metrics, institutions are better equipped to conceptualize diverse factors in student pathways to degree completion. While the phrase "student success" is plagued by numerous definitions and can be viewed as a buzzword, the conversation about higher education's accountability for degree completion is here to stay. To date, the student success conversation has been the primary channel for addressing calls for institutional accountability and robust solutions (Higher Learning Commission, 2018). Many institutions have responded by creating chief student success officer positions. The growth of these roles and movement into the senior suite was not anticipated by many institutions. Paul's, Asher's, and Perry's comments below describe the ways increased complexity of work, demand for financial stability, and expectation for measurable outcomes can lead to the development of new SLT roles.

> Ten years from now, there may be a job that we haven't thought of yet. (Paul, Team B)

> It's this more comprehensive view of learning in higher education that is essentially driving with increase in the level of collaboration and boundary dissolving that we're seeing. (Asher, Team C)

> We have to seek out our blind spots. That will probably mean having people on the team that we didn't before. People that can ask those questions and play devil's advocate. That kind of skill and voice on senior leadership teams is going to be really important as we continue to evolve. (Perry, Team E)

Team A and Team D recently experienced the expansion of their SLT to include additional senior leaders. While Team A's and Team D's core functional officers expressed challenges with the expansion, they may have influenced their view of future trends in different ways. Team A tended to imagine the continued growth and expansion of senior leadership teams to accommodate new roles and demands, whereas Team D

identified a future trend of increased collaboration and intersectionality. While a few other participants foresaw increased collaboration and intersectionality as a future trend, it was most pronounced in Team D.

> We are facing completely new ways of conceiving of the work. While that may look like new roles, it less about that. Higher education needs to reimagine how our work connects to each other. I think we are too focused on new jobs. We need to talk more about new intersections. (Chris, Team D)

> There is so much more interconnectedness among the roles. We all have to do a better job of how we work together. Looking back 10 or 15 years, we definitely have to become more multidisciplinary and less silo-ed. The trajectory is moving towards more integrated teams. (Adrian, Team D)

There was less variability in view of future trends across the functional roles. Presidents, student affairs officers, and advancement officers identified the development of new SLT roles and increased collaboration and intersectionality as future trends, with a slight leaning toward the former. The anticipated need for increased collaboration and intersectionality was driven by calls for more efficient, scalable delivery of services and streamlining processes and costs of service. When describing their view of anticipated future trends for senior leadership teams, academic affairs officers and finance officers were more focused on the future trend of developing new SLT roles. They based this trend on their observation of the evolving understanding of student success and learning environments and growth of robust data-driven approaches to financial management.

Research Question 2

This study sought to answer the research question: *How do presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?* Organized into three key findings, this section explores data across all teams and core functional roles to illuminate the understanding of this question.

Finding 2a.

SLT members tend to interact with each other on a weekly basis. Academic affairs, finance, and advancement officers were more likely to interact with the president on a daily basis. Less frequent interaction was reported with advancement and student affairs officers.

Looking across all teams, participants generally reported weekly interactions with each other. In most cases, these weekly interactions took place during formally scheduled meetings. It was rare for SLT members to describe regularly scheduled interactions with other SLT members outside of these meetings. Variations in physical proximity facilitate or impede the likelihood of SLT members and the president encountering each other in more informal, casual ways. Based on the teams in the study, student affairs officers tended to be located farther from other SLT members, and advancement officers were likely to report consistent travel schedules. When interaction frequency was viewed through the lens of the core functional roles, certain roles reported daily interaction with the president—and the presidents tended to agree with this report. Specifically, academic affairs, finance, and advancement officers were more likely to report daily interaction with the president. With the exception of Team B, where only the advancement officer was located in the same building as the president, the roles reporting daily contact with the president were also located in the same building or same floor as the president.

In addition to exploring the reported interaction frequency between senior leadership team members, a review of meetings between the officers in the core functional roles and their president provides important context to the understanding of how teams described their work together. There was surprising consistency across all five teams: presidents largely held monthly one-on-one meetings with the officers in the core functional roles—academic affairs, finance, student affairs, and advancement officers. Team C was an exception, in that the president, academic affairs officer, and finance officer meet on a monthly basis as a group. Outside of that meeting, the academic affairs and finance officer do not meet with Team C's president. Therefore, the relatively

consistent meeting cadence across the teams in this study is a formal weekly meeting among the SLT members with the president and monthly one-on-one meetings between core functional role officers and the president.

By creating space for the president, finance officer, and academic affairs officer to come together, Team C's president has established a "role partner" structure defined by Ellis et al. (2003) as an opportunity for a smaller team to work together and access knowledge prior to working with a broader group of differing expertise. This variation on team structure was also identified within the literature as a contributor to interdependence (Ellis et al., 2003). It is important to contrast this structure with Team A's VP pre-meeting. The long-standing VP pre-meeting is experienced in conflicting ways. For those with long service tenures who have participated in the meeting for a long period of time, it provides a rich opportunity for sensemaking among colleagues (Weick et al., 2005) and sets the stage for active engagement in interdependence (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche et al., 2010). However, for those without long tenures and those that don't attend, it creates a shadow leadership team that inhibits the broad exploration of ideas. While Team A's president expressed cautious acceptance of the pre-meeting, this split experience may fracture the capacity of the team to engage in a robust learning experience. Reflecting on the study's conceptual framework, the dual weekly meeting sets up two approaches to sensemaking and development of shared mental models.

Finding 2b.

> *Information sharing was reported as a fundamental management activity across all teams and functions. Determining ownership/key decision makers and problem solving/issue resolution were also identified as key management activities. Team B, Team E, finance officers, student affairs officers, and advancement officers tended to report engaging in problem solving/issue resolution more frequently.*

Information sharing and providing status updates emerged consistently, regardless of team and role, as core management activity. This type of interaction closely aligns with the cognitive team learning process of framing defined by Kasl et al. (1997). This

primarily transactional and tactical activity was the foundation of team interaction across all teams. In contrast, while Team C, the team with the highest team learning score, described the importance of information sharing in interviews, when reporting the purpose of team interactions in the teamwork survey, they demonstrated a preference for decision making and planning. It is noteworthy that Team C has one of the longest serving presidents and the overall team has the longest average service tenure. Teams B and E, the two teams in the study with fragmented team learning modes, are led by presidents that report information sharing and status updates as the primary purpose of their interactions with their senior leadership teams over other interaction purposes. This exclusive focus on information sharing and status updates was unique to these two teams.

Determining ownership/key decision makers and problem solving/issue resolution were also identified as key management activities by participants. Determining ownership/key decision makers included understanding the scope of particular issues and grappling with the ambiguity of who should lead or collaborate to navigate complex issues. As described by Adam, Chris, and Amir, issues of scope require the senior leader to project how a particular issue will evolve over time and acknowledge that issues are often interconnected.

> If it affects the whole institution and it is a big picture issue, I look to the senior leadership team and bring it up during the meeting. But, if I need my people to move it forward, I start with them. Do we get that right every time? No. Things can change scope. My success is a leader depends on my ability to see the path an issue will follow and who it will impact. We all need to be good at that. (Adam, Team A)

> Some of our most interesting conversations are when we get it wrong. There are some issues that are so intertwined that it is hard to tell whose area it is in. And in those instances I think we make what seems like a logical call, when the truth is it doesn't fall into any one person's responsibility. When we treat it like it is a one-person thing, that is when we often get in trouble. Because we treat something as a student affairs issue and then all the sudden we get 20 angry emails from faculty because it also affected them. (Chris, Team D)

> It is very rare for that only person is clearly the owner. Most of the times, multiple people could be pulled in to work on a problem. Sometimes we take the time to sort that out in the meeting and other times we get a few people working on something and they end up having to sort out authority afterwards. It gets muddy sometimes and that can cause conflict. (Amir, Team E)

Another component of determining ownership/key decision makers involved navigating the collaboration between lower-level staff and avoiding SLT involvement in tactical issues.

> It is frustrating when problems bubble up and I'm dealing with a fellow VP and I'm thinking, why are we involved in this. Operational issues, need to be solved at the lower levels. Strategic decisions, risk-based decisions, those need to come up. When tactical stuff does come up to our level, that let's us know we needed to give our people more authority or coaching. (Frank, Team B)

> Sometimes we look around the room and we were like, "Whoa! This is a very expensive meeting". That's when we are talking about something that we don't need to be involved in. Our teams could have worked on it. I think we need to spend more time discussing issues, than just being informed about something. (Sally, Team E)

Participants identified a range of problems and issues that the researcher organized into long-term and immediate categories. Table 32 presents examples of the problems and issues described by participants. Long-term problems and issues were connected to essential activities and required ongoing attention. Immediate problems and issues were emergent and required rapid response. When an SLT member's team was engaged in problem solving or issue resolution, access to information emerged as a factor for some SLT members. There were differing viewpoints on the expectations for receiving information and updates. When a member of their team is pulled into a project, some SLT members expressed a strong preference to stay informed. This preference ranged from general professional courtesy to asking for specific permission to involve team members.

Table 32. Examples of Problems and Issues

Long Term	Immediate
Transforming first year student advising strategies	External communications following student protest on campus
Preparation for upcoming board meeting	Conflict with community leaders over child care center closure
Accessing decision to purchase local hotel	Faculty opposition within working group on student retention
Establishing policy on student data sharing	Faculty opposition to changes to benefits policy
Establishing leadership for athletic task force	Settling disagreement over changing security staffing for campus events

> I need folks to give me a heads up that this is something they need from someone on my team because we may have that person on a very different trajectory and that request is going to set us up for a problem. It's not really permission, more as a professional courtesy. (Stephanie, Team B)

> So I'm sort of the go-between between my people and my senior leadership team. I'm in constant contact with them no matter what's at the table because everything impacts us. (Felicia, Team D)

As described by Asher and Fitz, the differences in preference can cause conflict.

> You don't want to be policing things. But sometimes if somebody is making a major decision and already collaborated with another unit, and then you are put in a situation that it's too late to give any input, and then everything has been done. That is not good. (Asher, Team C)

> Some of us are bigger delegators and some of us are more autocratic and we want all the decisions to flow through us and so not everybody is the same in that regard in terms of their own personal philosophies in terms of management. I want my people talking to people over here solving problems. But if they're dealing with another unit and that other unit is like, "We got to ask such and such…" it doesn't really work. (Fitz, Team E)

While determining ownership/key decision makers and problem solving/issue resolution were described in a relatively balanced frequency, Teams B and E tended to focus more heavily on problem solving/issue resolution activities. Finance officers and student affairs

officers also described problem solving/issue resolution as primary activities in work of their senior leadership teams. A focus on problem solving and issue resolution conveys the importance of responding to pressing issues and the immediacy of the moment. In light of the functional scope for finance and student affairs, their work can lend itself to the immediate. These two core functional roles most frequently described high risk situations that required an "all hands on deck" approach and the full commitment of senior leadership to inform decision making. Therefore, the tendency to leverage to elevate this activity aligns with their dynamics of their function. This focus on the immediate through solving problems and resolving issues as a team allows teams to engage in cycles of sensegiving and sensemaking. But, without intentional engagement in integrating new perspectives and points of view, problem solving and issue resolution can remain largely cognitive activities of interpreting details and information. The tendency of Teams B and to focus on problem solving and issue resolution aligns with their presidents' strong focus on information sharing and status updates.

Finding 2c.

Developing personal rapport among senior leadership team members was inconsistently described as a key aspect of team interactions. Teams with longer tenure tended to place higher value on this type of relationship building.

Overall, developing personal rapport was less frequently identified by all participants, with student affairs and advancement officers referencing it most frequently. The teams and participants that most frequently described the importance of personal rapport were more likely to have longer service tenures. Given the importance of social experience outside of the professional settings (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993) and the stronger ties developed through collegial personal rapport (Edmondson, 2012), the researcher was surprised that tenure influenced this activity to such a degree. In particular, the two participants with the shortest tenures, the academic affairs officers on Teams A and B, both described a desire to engage socially, but only had this type of

experience with their respective presidents. This finding underscores the critical role that time played in the development of deeper personal bonds for study participants with longer tenures. The presidents of Teams B and C also had the opportunity to appoint or hire every member of the senior leadership team. Team C's president's lengthy tenure provided him an opportunity to make changes to the team over time, and the team's overall lengthy tenure has given them more opportunities for social interactions outside of professional settings.

Teams B and E, the two teams in the study with fragmented team learning modes, expressed the lowest levels of personal rapport and social engagement with each other. Both of these teams are the most physically decentralized of the teams in the study. Team B's members were located in separate buildings, with only the president and advancement officer in close proximity. While Team E's members were located in the same building, their consistent travel to multiple campuses interfered with their regular contact. These proximity obstacles may explain the lack of relationship building within the teams. Overall, Teams B and E described a pattern of more transactional interactions of information sharing, status updates, problem solving, and issue resolution. In addition, the presidents of both teams shared this view, and neither emphasized collaboration expectations. Viewed in the context of their low emphasis on relationship building and proximity decentralization, there is a possibility that this more transactional approach to team interactions inhibits certain aspects of team learning.

Research Question 3

This study sought to answer the research question: *What facilitates or impedes learning within the SLT and between presidents and SLT members?* Organized into four key findings, this section explores data across all teams and core functional roles to illuminate the understanding of this question.

Finding 3a.

The teams with the highest team learning scores—Teams A and C—were the only teams to articulate their president's expectations for collaboration.

While most presidents described an expectation of collaboration, only members of Teams A and C consistently verified this expectation through their own comments. This may indicate that the collaboration expectations of Teams A's and C's presidents extend beyond espoused beliefs. The officers in Teams A and C expressed the expectation of their president both in broad terms and through active coaching between the president and an SLT member. To demonstrate the alignment, comments below from presidents Peter and Patrick are followed by comments from Alice and Sylvia serving as apt examples of the reinforced expectation expressed by their president.

> The most healthy institutions, from my perspective, function inter-connectively. They are working on problems by pulling in the people around the problem, issue, or initiative in a way that makes functional sense to get to the solution or to move the initiative forward. I do my best to remind the team to stay in alignment. I expect them to get out of their lane as often as possible. (Peter, Team A)

> [The president] likes people to get together face-to-face and hash it out. That is when he puts things on the agenda. It is when he wants to make sure that everyone on the senior leadership team is going to be on the same page. (Alice, Team A)

> I really want my senior team to feel we are in this together. I have found, over the years, when people take ownership of the problem and ownership of the strategies, if they work, everybody feels brilliant. I needed a team of people who want to roll up their sleeves talk it out. People who are not into their own egos, and most important, look for people who know how to play in the sandbox. (Patrick, Team C)

> I was having a bit of a tiff with one of the other members of the crew. I was irked and I got a phone call from him [the president] and he said, "You get up right now and you walk across campus. You walk into his/her office and you have a conversation. Do you hear me?" (Sylvia, Team C)

Team B's president did not describe an expectation for collaboration among the members of his senior leadership team. Therefore, his team did not articulate this

expectation. While Teams D's and E's presidents did express an expectation for collaboration among the senior leadership team, this expectation was articulated by very few members of the team. Team D's chief of staff and advancement officer both openly described their understanding of the president's expectation that the team work collaboratively. Team E's finance officer, who has spent extensive time with the president following a financial crisis, was well acquainted with the president's expectation for collaboration. While the members of Teams D and E that did not describe the president's expectations may be aware of them, these expectations did not emerge during interviews.

Finding 3b.

Views on building trust were mixed. Participants relied on shared history and shared commitment to mission and presidents largely focused on shared commitment to mission.

Two different approaches to building trust were described by participants. One approach tended to rely on shared history, and the other focused more on trust built through shared commitment to mission. Teams A, B, and D tended to focus on shared history as the primary path to building trust. While time working together was described by many participants as a necessary ingredient for trust, lengthy shared history has the potential to create obstacles for new team members. Members of Team A with longer tenure placed high value on lengthy shared history as the core driver for building trust, but the team's newest members and the president focused on shared commitment to mission. SLT members with longer tenures, like Ellen and Adam, tended to discuss trust through the lens of lengthy shared history, leaving new member Alice to grapple with the consequences.

> The people that I trust. The people that I have a great deal of respect and confidence in. Are the people that I have a long history with. With new people, the trust isn't there yet. It takes times to build. (Ellen, Team A)

> Sam is the godfather to my children. I've known him most of my life. Of course, I trust him more. We take a lot of pride in our history together. I'm not sure you can build trust without that kind of time invested over time. (Adam, Team A)

> There is still a lot of distrust among the senior leadership team whenever someone new comes in. They've all been together so long and outsiders are scary. My newness is threatening. (Alice, Team A)

Team E, the team with the lowest overall tenure in the study, focused on shared commitment to mission as the primary path to building trust. Team C, the team with the longest serving president and longest overall average team tenure, also focused on shared commitment to mission. Despite the lengthy tenures of Team C's senior leaders, members with longer tenures, like Alan, focused on shared commitment to mission, allowing team members with less tenure, like Cassandra, to engage differently.

> Several of us have been here for a long time. We have seen several staff members move on to different roles. We have to be able to connect and trust each other without holding on to the past. If we focus on our work, on the mission, and connect as human beings, trust is simply based on how we treat each other every day. (Alan, Team D)

> I was concerned at first. This group has a lot of history together. People have been at the institution for a long time and moved in different roles. Ultimately, I found out it was about the work and my commitment. They welcomed me like I'd been here for years. He [the president] wouldn't have had it any other way. (Cassandra, Team C)

It is noteworthy that, while Cassandra acknowledged that shared history was not an obstacle for her as someone with less service tenure, the president's expectation played a role in her treatment. In addition, Cassandra described a prior connection to a long-standing member of the SLT. This amounted to, as she acknowledged, an endorsement of trust. The 25-year tenure of Team C's president played a role in his assessment of the value of shared history. While acknowledging the benefits of his lengthy tenure and the dedicated long service of much of his senior team, he also acknowledged the role of a commitment to institutional mission to establishing a foundation of trust.

> I realized some years ago that the test of my leadership will be my ability to lead this campus and watch them thrive. It has taken time to get

> there and that time has created a community that shares the same values. We're about the same things. We have confidence in other. It's about who we are. It's our DNA. And because of that, anyone committed to mission can step right in. That is all that matters. The trust starts there. (Patrick, Team C)

Team B's president was the only president to describe shared history as the primary path for building trust. Team B's president described that his life experience has taught him that "there is nothing like time together to build trust." Members of Team D had a split view of trust building. It is worth acknowledging the role that their president's lower relative tenure may play in how they conceptualize trust. Chris, Team D's chief of staff, who has the longest tenure on Team D and works most closely with the president, focused on shared commitment to mission, while acknowledging the team's reliance on history to build trust. Since their president does not have the benefit of their shared history with each other, the team has navigated trust building differently and largely viewed trust as a byproduct of their lengthy history.

Finding 3c.

> *Team member's views of functional expertise didn't consistently align with their president's view. Team members tended to express fixed views of functional expertise, while most presidents expressed flexible views of functional expertise. Academic affairs, finance, and student affairs officers tended to have fixed views of functional expertise.*

Views of expertise reflected differing perspectives on the level of functional control and ownership over projects and issues. Teams A, B, and E tended to describe fixed views of functional expertise by emphasizing the importance of protecting the role and relevance of their specialized functional knowledge when managing institutional issues. This was often expressed as the "language" associated with a specific function, i.e., the language of finance, the language of student affairs, etc. This language included the particular policies, practices, and norms of each function within a particular functional area. As expressed by Frank and Adam, some participants operating from a fixed view of expertise focused on the obstacles to interaction with other functions.

> I am very careful about how I raise certain issues, especially when it high level institutional and outside the clear walls of finance and definitely when it is on the academic side. With most academics, all you have to do is just ask a question and off they go. (Frank, Team C)

> So the language of advancement is a language that not everyone speaks as in-depth and fluidly. So if I am dealing with an issue that is on the advancement side, I am probably going to work it out with my team. (Adam, Team D)

Presidents tended to operate from a flexible view of functional expertise, expressing the idea that boundaries between functions can and should be crossed.

> So learning to speak each other's language is important. One of the most important skill sets for leadership teams is the ability to talk across those different areas of expertise whether it is budget or academic affairs or legal. To be able to present ideas and share ideas and talk about them in a way that is not just in your own language. I think a really good leadership team learns how to get beyond the jargon. (Peter, Team A)

> We're going to have specific areas of expertise that they must bring to the table, absolutely. The more they can understand and speak each other's language, the better. They all represent the university in a lot of different contexts. I can't be every place. So it is really useful if your vice president for advancement knows what is going on on the academic side. And can talk about it. There are a lot of advantages to having that cross-pollination. (Patricia, Team D)

In some cases, fixed views connected to respect for expertise. This view can set up a dynamic of avoidance of conflict and tacit expectation that leaders will agree to stay out of each other's "way," i.e., I will respect your expertise and expect that you will stay out of mine. In some contexts, this type of respect for expertise is viewed as a method of collegiality to prevent duplication of effort.

> I'm going to look for him to solve that problem because it's his. I'm not going to try and solve it for him or come in even if I know how to do it—that's not my role here so I'm going to let you do your role. I'm going to respect their expertise and their decision-making—even if I disagree. (Stephanie, Team B)

> I think a lot of higher ed and deans in particular work very much like that. I'm doing my job. You trust me to do my job. Thank goodness, you're doing your job because I don't know how to do it and I wouldn't want to do it. Go for it. (Sam, Team A)

> There are certain things in the academic environment where non-academics have to tread very carefully in asking questions, making suggestions, challenging ideas. So there are times when it's important for people to stay in their lane because you don't know what you're doing and I do. (Fitz, Team E)

Risk management was a common rationale for a more fixed view of expertise. In particular, the specialized knowledge of academic affairs, finance, and student affairs was identified as a means to protect the institution from harm. Several of the leaders in these functional roles expressed a concern that if they didn't protect their expertise, others without the expertise would unwittingly make mistakes and expose the institution to risk. Andy, Fitz, and Sylvia offer examples below of how this tension emerges in the relationship between student affairs, finance, and academic affairs.

> People in student affairs don't know what it's like to be a faculty member and the faculty members don't know what it's like to be in student affairs. Because the faculty culture—unless you've lived it—is sometimes hard for people to appreciate. It is important to help them understand the faculty perspective, but we have to hold fast to the core academic mission of the institution – that comes first. (Alex, Team B)

> We charged with different roles and I think that that makes it a little harder. We aren't talking the same talk. We are almost set up to be in conflict. Student affairs and faculty need more resources and I have to protect those resources. (Fred, Team A)

> When faculty jump in the student affairs lane, it can be frustrating. There is often a tone of thinking they know better. As much as I would like to just let it go, we have to jump in to make sure they aren't missing something that causes an issue down the road. When I can I look for ways leverage our expertise and connect, but I have to make sure to keep the students at the forefront. (Sally, Team E)

In the context of operational decision making and management of the institution, flexible views of functional expertise were described by some participants as inefficient and not an ideal management strategy. For example, in the face of managing financial challenges, members of Team E intentionally prioritized financial expertise to manage tasks. At the same time, their president, Perry, recognized the risk of that choice.

> It is hard for me to say this, but we got into this financial issue because we were letting too many people make decisions. Finance people need to keep a strong hold on the finances of the institution. We are accountable in serious ways, whether it's the state or the feds or the auditors. There are rules to follow. To deal with this, we didn't have time for everyone to weigh in. I hope we can keep a stronger hold and at the end of the day, let finance make the financial decisions. (Fitz, Team E)

> I wanted more people at the table to work through this. But, we needed to buckle down and the best I could do was keep people informed. That can't be the norm. It was easier in some ways, but that's not how I want the team to make decisions moving forward. The risk was it sent them back into their corners so to speak. But, I need them to understand the norm is to not play defense, but work together as coaches on the same team. (Perry, Team E)

The tendency of Teams C and D to express flexible views of functional expertise reflected a recognition of the interdependent nature of functions and tasks. Those who expressed flexible views grappled with conflict and risk, but as described by Asher, they looked for ways to balance their specialized knowledge with the need to understand each other's perspectives.

> Frances and I have very different philosophical views, but at the same time, our intent is to support students and the end goal is student success. Faculty are the experts in their discipline and as educators. At the same time, we both need to be open to hearing other thoughts and other perspectives about the work. (Asher, Team C)

Considering the dynamics between academic affairs, student affairs, and finance, Sabrina's and Sylvia's perspectives are noteworthy. Sabrina, Team D's student affairs officer, described a flexible view of expertise, while Team D's academic affairs officer and finance officer expressed fixed views. Sylvia, Team C's student affairs officer, was the opposite. She expressed fixed views, while Team C's academic affairs officer and finance officer expressed flexible views. Sabrina tended to emphasize the long-term relationship between the functions, while Sylvia focused on a commitment to consistently representing her team.

> We are all working towards the same end. I try to keep that in mind. Day-to-day we can lose sight of that. When Aiden and I disagree, I try to remember that at the end of the day, everything we do connects. Even when

> it comes to the money, if I need something for student affairs, I can connect with Felicia on the long-term and back up from there. (Sabrina, Team D)

> I have to represent my team. Our staff works incredibly hard and each day I work on their behalf and on behalf of our students. I see that as core to my role. Of course, I am a team player. As part of the senior team, I have to wear the jersey for student affairs and speak for them. It can be exhausting, but I am here to stand our ground every day. (Sylvia, Team C)

Ultimately, the fixed and flexible views of expertise reveal the dynamic negotiation of roles among senior leaders.

Chapter V

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to better understand the team learning processes of presidents and higher education senior leadership team members. In completing this study, the researcher sought to provide insight into how presidents and senior leadership teams perceive their work and the factors influencing learning within the team. The study focused on the following research questions:

1. How do presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?
2. How do presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?
3. What facilitates or impedes learning within the SLT and between presidents and SLT members?

Based on the researcher's synthesis of findings and the literature supporting the study, this chapter begins the analysis and interpretation structured into four key insights. The chapter continues with a presentation of the study's broad conclusion, followed by recommendations and researcher reflections.

- Insight 1: Strategic planning and long-term thinking are critical roles of senior leadership teams in higher education.
- Insight 2: Perspectives on functional expertise (fixed or flexible) reflect the team's approach to interdependence and sensegiving.
- Insight 3: Length of tenure influences perspectives on trust building.

- Insight 4: Senior leadership teams primarily engage in problem solving-oriented management activities with limited time invested in relationship building.

Analysis and Interpretation

Through a cross-case review of the research findings, the researcher provided analytical and interpretive insights. By looking at the data and the findings themes that emerged, the researcher has identified insights in an attempt to answer the research questions. The insights include references to the conceptual framework and relevant literature.

Insight 1

Strategic planning and long-term thinking are critical roles of senior leadership teams in higher education

When looking broadly at senior leadership teams in higher education, the participants in the study largely reported strategic planning and long-term thinking as a primary purpose of these teams. The enactment of mission and vision was also identified as a significant purpose for senior leadership teams by three institutions in the study. Yet in these instances, strategic planning and long-term thinking were also recognized as an important element of the purpose of SLTs. The tendency to identify both reflects the relationship between strategic plans and long-term thinking and the institutional mission and vision. The strategic plans redefine, revisit, or reinforce the institutional mission and vision statement. As an institution reflects on its vision for the future and manifestation of their mission, their strategic plan commonly structures their approach to delivering on their mission (Eckel & Trower, 2019). While the frequent citing of strategic planning and long-term thinking as a core purpose for senior leadership teams was not surprising, the confirmation of this reported purpose led the researcher to explore the role of strategic

planning for each site in the study. In practice, institutions operate in one of three stages relative to their strategic planning: preparing to launch the planning process, executing the planning process, or implementing the plan. While the direct impact of strategic planning was not evidenced by the study's findings, at the time of the study's data collection, each of the institutions was in one of these three stages. One of the institutions was preparing to launch a planning process, and the remaining four institutions were in the implementation stage of a five- or ten-year strategic plan. Viewed in comparison, there were two structural differences in the vision, mission, and strategic plan of each institution in the study—the inclusion of a list of values and the presidential role in the planning process. Team C was the only institution *without* a list of values and the only institution where the academic affairs officer was the senior leader managing the strategic planning effort. Each of the other institutions included a list of values, and the plan's preparation was directly connected to the president. The presidential role in the strategic planning process was evidenced through introductory letters in the final plan, references to the president launching the planning process, and meetings chaired by the president. Team C reflected none of these markers. With the exception of the comprehensive planning retreat, Team C's president operated in the background of the planning process. Otherwise, the vision, mission, and strategic plans were structurally similar across all institutions in the study. Regardless of public and private control, all of the institutions referenced the role of their board in the planning process. Vision and mission statements, of various lengths, were accompanied by a range of approaches to strategic initiatives, areas of focus, goals, and success measures.

The consistency of the strategic planning process across all of the institution reflects a relatively recent normalization of this practice. As Eckel and Trower (2019) point out, the growth in strategic planning in higher education, which saw a significant uptick between 1950 and 1970, has various origins, including the investment in

administrative resources needed for institutional research and the growing demands for accountability and measurable outcomes.

Given the rapid pace of change in higher education, participants' recognition of the importance of strategic planning and long-term thinking was not surprising. In addition, strategic thinking and decision making are typically associated roles for senior leadership teams (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 2008; Schein & Schein, 2016). As described in the study's problem statement, higher education is facing numerous demands for transformation and change. Introduced by the U.S. Army War College to characterize the shifts in the global environment following the end of the Cold War, higher education's current environment might be best described as a VUCA environment (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous). The concept has taken hold in non-military, professional environments to represent the forces of change driving transformation and threatening survival to a wide range of institutions (Lawrence, 2013). Christensen and Eyring (2011) prescribe that colleges and universities must reform their organization DNA to survive disruptive forces and achieve meaningful success. Kezar (2018) describes eight issues driving the forces of change in higher education. The proliferation of competition and declining governmental support position the strategic planning process as a leading mechanism to structure and define the future of institutions. Crow and Dabars (2015) issue a bold call for a renewal of higher education that builds new and scalable models dedicated to the realization of human potential, societal transformation, and the discovery of new knowledge. Within this larger context, the direction of higher education institutions is commonly expressed in their strategic plans.

The strategic planning process is largely an episodic venture occurring every five to ten years (Eckel & Trower, 2019). These processes provide an opportunity for the organization to push limits and challenge the status quo. As Patricia, president of Team D, articulates, long-term institutional success depends on moving beyond the expected.

> One of the challenges within any organization is relying too much on the status quo. If you rely on that status quo and over time, you will continue to get further and further behind. I describe the world in three moves; moves that basically help you to run an organization, moves that help you transform an organization and then moves that help you grow in an organization. If you're not doing the latter two, over time, you're going to get further and further behind organizations that are making those moves and the gap is going to increase. (Patricia, Team D)

Referencing the urgency for change, Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, and Maxwell (2009) reflect Patricia's comments and declare that now "more than ever, strong leaders question and disrupt the status quo in order to remain relevant and meet the needs of learners into the future" (p. 34). While they are largely skeptical of the way colleges and universities tend to approach strategic planning, Eckel and Trower (2019) recognize the opportunity presented by the strategic planning process.

> Certainly, strategic plans are important to academic institutions. A concentration on strategy might help institutions operate more efficiently, make smarter choices among competing priorities and set the course for a sustainable future.... A focus on strategy is intended to help institutions experiment and take initiative, to ask questions and create synergies, and to move institutions ahead in often unknown and unknowable environments. (para. 22)

Despite the potential for the strategic planning process to define and structure the long-term success of the institution, some call into question the ways higher education institutions approach the strategic planning opportunity. Eckel and Trower (2019) assert that modern-day strategic plans are more often a "a management tool for the present" rather than a "blueprint for the future." Sorenson et al. (2009) are skeptical of the impact of the typical linear and incremental approach to strategic plan implementation taken by many institutions. Dooris (2002) articulates the need for institutions to shift to flexible strategic plan development and implementation to maximize institutional success. As participants identified, senior leadership teams in higher education will continue to play a key role in the strategic planning process. Observations about the potential for strategic planning to fall short encourage institutions to take care in their approach. If the strategic

plan produces lofty rhetoric that defaults to a myopic focus on executing a series of prescriptive tasks, the institution's strategic plan becomes a missed strategic opportunity.

Looking to the future, participants anticipated shifts in the senior leadership structure and expectations for engagement. In addition, collaboration emerged for a third of participants as both a current role for senior leadership teams and a future trend. Taken together, these findings lead the researcher to consider the durability of the 20th century senior leadership structure to meet higher education's 21st century needs. The vertical functional structures that dominated in 20th century organizations may start to give way to horizontal and cross-functional senior level roles that have gained traction to induce a different form of collaboration and information exchange.

The structural frame in Bolman and Deal's (2017) four-frame organizational model explores the benefits and drawbacks of vertical and horizontal (or lateral) structures.

> Vertical coordination is generally superior if an environment is stable, tasks are well understood and predictable, and uniformity is essential. Lateral communications work best for complex tasks performed in a turbulent environment. Every organization must find a design that works for its circumstances, and inherent structural tradeoffs rarely yield easy answers or perfect solutions. (p. 61)

While higher education commonly relies on horizontal (lateral) structures, including task forces, committees, councils, and advisory boards, the codification of horizontal (lateral) senior-level roles has gradually increased (CUPA-HR, 2019). Reflecting on the forces of change influencing colleges and universities, the environment may be ripe for consideration of horizontal (lateral) structures at the senior level. Teams A and D were in different stages of this type of shift. In both teams, the presidents introduced senior leaders to the senior leadership team with horizontal, cross-functional roles, i.e., general counsel, diversity and inclusion officer, institutional research, communications, and government relations. Team A gradually made this shift four years before the study's data collection, but core functional members of the team were still troubled by the inclusion of these roles and maintained a separate meeting structure for core functional role leaders of

vertical functions. Team D's shift was made a year before data collection, and similar patterns of concern emerged. In both cases, the presidents of Team A and Team D had significantly lower service tenure than their team and their team members had long tenures (averaging over 15 years for both teams). Both presidents were clear about their belief that the inclusion of new senior-level staff was critical to institutional success and well-informed discussions and decision making. However, Peter, Team A's president, was facing a standing VP meeting that predated his presidency. While he did not prefer this strategy, his assessment led to a tolerant approach of the long-standing meeting, despite his expansion of the senior team. After Patricia, Team D's president, introduced the horizontally oriented staff to the regular senior leadership team meetings, Team D's core functional leaders in vertical functions began to express the need to host a separate meeting. While Patricia was open to this idea and recognized the need for the core functional leaders to coordinate efforts, she articulated an expectation that team members maintain openness about their work with the full senior leadership team.

Reflected in the pooled team learning mode results for Team A, parallel meeting structures may facilitate efficiency, but also create communication clusters that can compete with the full group's communication. As part of the ongoing cadence of communication and information exchange, the meetings allow a small group of senior leadership team members to explore issues, discuss options, and strategize in advance of conversations with the full senior leadership team. In addition, the meeting provides space for sensemaking and sensegiving cycles within a subset of senior leaders. With loose agendas and open flow of communication, the pre-meeting allows individual VPs to discuss their priority issues and projects and interpret each other's activities. While these discussions provide sensemaking benefits for the VPs, the meetings effectively distribute sensemaking along two channels—one channel of sensemaking and information processing with the VPs and another channel for the full senior leadership team. While this may shorten and streamline discussion during meetings of the full senior

leadership team, it dampens the opportunity for collective insights and minimizes boundary crossing. These meetings allow this "shadow leadership team" to come into the full team meeting with an agreed upon point of view that may not be explicitly clear to those outside the "shadow team." In the case of Team A, while the non-VP members of the senior leadership team were aware of the VP meeting held before the weekly senior leadership team meeting, they had no insight into the meeting topics or outcomes. As expected of a team reporting a pooled learning mode, Team A's parallel meeting structure may enable some members of the team to cross boundaries and reframe knowledge, but excludes the full team from a similar experience.

Much of the discussion regarding the relationship between horizontal and vertical leaders centered on the regular meetings of the senior leadership team. With the exception of Team C, which operated a different meeting structure, the other institutions operated weekly senior leadership team meetings. These meetings served as the primary setting for senior leadership teamwork. Given that participants largely describe senior leadership team meetings as opportunities to coordinate efforts and manage the institution, the perspectives of horizontally oriented leaders can be viewed as disruptive to defined flows of work. The managerial work often described by participants as the substance of their teamwork focused on information sharing, determining ownership and key decision making, problem solving, and issue resolution. These activities lend themselves to definition of functional roles to navigate project or issue management. The exception in the study, Team C, described more of a focus on decision making and planning during their team interactions and operates with a distinct meeting structure. Team C operates three meeting structures—a monthly "trio" meeting of the president, academic affairs officer, and finance officer; a bi-weekly VP and deans meeting managed by the academic affairs officer; and a bi-weekly President's Council meeting with a wide range of senior leaders. This mix of structures concentrates executive decision making among three core leaders and normalizes the inclusion of a broad range of perspectives

during discussions. This particular network of meetings and a tendency to focus on decision making and planning may have influenced Team C's reported pooled team learning mode.

In contrast to Team A, which also reported a pooled learning mode, Team C's structure accepts some repetition of communications and efficiencies to promote a flow of communication across multiple audiences. Rather than the "shadow team" effect of Team A, Team C's structure reflects more of a "nested team" approach. In the nested approach, the finance and academic affairs officer meet with the president, then they participate in the VP and deans meeting, and finally all of the participants in the VP and deans meeting participate in the President's Council meeting. In Team C, there is collective awareness of the network of meetings. While the specifics of the "trio" meeting of the president, finance officer, and academic affairs are not openly shared, the senior leadership team and the academic deans are aware of the meeting's occurrence. Both the "shadow" and "nested" team meeting structures yielded a reported pooled learning mode. However, the nested approach aligned with decision making and planning interactions, whereas the shadow approach aligned with less complex information-sharing interactions. The nested approach also positioned team members to challenge divergent perspectives and build collective insights.

An institution's strategic plan can be viewed as a strategic symbol of a shared mental model. The plan seeks to codify a set of broad ideas and goals and defines tactical steps. While the institution's strategic plan was most consistently mentioned by members of Team A and Team C, members of each team referenced their current plan or the efforts to establish the next plan. References to the plan offer a touchstone for senior leaders to represent a shared mental model, described as ''team members' overlapping mental representation of key elements of the team's task environment" (Van den Bossche et al., 2010, p. 286). In similar ways, the strategic plan is a sensemaking tool for the institution. Regardless of the gap between its espoused virtue and the institutional

theories in use (Argyris, 1991), the strategic plan establishes clarity, enables action, and creates a mechanism to produce structured meaning in ambiguous situations.

Insight 2

Perspectives on functional expertise (fixed or flexible) reflect the team's approach to interdependence and sensegiving.

Through their descriptions of their role and interaction with other members of the senior leadership team, functional expertise emerged consistently. With particular focus on the core functional roles—president, academic affairs, finance, student affairs, and advancement, the conceptualization of expertise played a key role in their view of their identity as a senior leader. The sensemaking literature referenced in this study and considered in the conceptual framework provides insight into identity formation in organizational contexts. The performance of identity often reflects the way in which an individual has made sense of the organizational and peer expectations, norms, and feedback. While the length of service tenure did not correlate to reports of fixed or flexible views of functional expertise in this study, by the time an individual has reached a senior level in higher education, particularly in academic affairs, finance, student affairs, and advancement, they have been immersed in the identity of their function. In most cases, they have invested in progressive education in their field and participate in professional organizations designed to strengthen their expertise and knowledge. These functional identities have taken shape over an extended period of time. After reviewing the influence of tenure and reported team learning score, the researcher concluded that the primary influence on fixed or flexible views of functional expertise is the integration of an individual's identity as a senior leader with their functional domain. Senior leaders who tend to see themselves as functional leaders first and orient themselves with their functional team tend to adopt a fixed view of functional expertise. Senior leaders who

tend to see themselves as institutional leaders first and orient themselves with their peer group of senior leaders tend to adopt a flexible view of functional expertise.

In each of the teams participating in this study, the senior leaders of the core functional areas also managed teams of varying size, which have similarly invested in deepening their knowledge and expertise of the function. Senior leaders of the core functional areas are deeply engaged with the identity of their function. External pressures for accountability and performance encourage a functional focus. As such, the role as the senior leader of the function may be more a dominant part of the senior leader's identity than their role as a member of the senior leadership team.

When viewed in the context of their role as a senior leader in collaboration with other functions, participants expressed different orientations and meaning making of how to perform that identity. In some cases, the performance of identity reflected a more fixed view of their expertise intended to protect, advocate, and defend that expertise. In other cases, the performance of identity reflected a more flexible view of their expertise intended to educate, inform, and infuse their expertise across other functions. In this study, the tendency toward fixed views was most pronounced with student affairs officers.

Weber and Glynn (2006) describe the performance of identity as an ongoing process of meaning making that can be situational. Therefore, in certain situations, an individual may be primed to perform a certain identity. They also suggest that certain situational contexts will trigger an individual's sensemaking to inform who they need to be in a specific moment. While consistent patterns of identity may be difficult to adjust, Weber and Glynn do suggest that situational relevance can shift how identity is performed. Differing views of functional expertise align with differing capacities to cross boundaries and integrate perspectives. An example of how this difference was expressed by participants is the description of functional language. Those with fixed views of expertise were more monolingual in their description of functional language. While

senior leaders may have basic fluency in other functional language, monolingual communication signifies a preference to use the language of one's function. Paul, the president of Team B, the only president to express a fixed view of expertise, described the manifestation of monolingual communication in senior leadership team meetings. Unlike other presidents, Paul was more comfortable with the team maintaining monolingual communication, positioning him in the role of translator and decision maker. The monolingual communication within a fixed view of expertise enables the cognitive process of framing (Kasl et al., 1997) wherein senior leaders provide an initial understanding of situations and issues.

> In our weekly meetings, everyone looks at issues through their lens. That is fine with me. It allows me to sort out the perspectives. I really want to them to bring their expertise to the table. This is the forum for them to dig deep and focus on what they know best. I would rather them use our meetings for that. (Paul, Team B)

Those with flexible views of expertise were more multilingual in their description of functional language. This form of communication is rooted in a belief that senior leaders can develop facility with each other's language and adopt an integrated form of communication that transcends individual function. Student success initiatives and outcomes were often cited by those with flexible views of expertise as an integrated issue where the specifics of individual functions can be deemphasized. Flexible views of expertise can enable the creation of shared mental models among team members. Rather than defending expertise, flexible views are oriented toward integrating expertise into a new perspective on issues. As Van den Bossche et al. (2010) describe, simply acknowledging each other without engaging in dialogue does not lead to a shared mental model and does not allow for integration of perspectives. When reflecting on interdependence described in the shared leadership and team learning literature, two forms of interdependence are defined—task and outcome (Pearce & Sims, 2000; Van den Bossche et al., 2010). When participants acknowledge *task interdependence*, they are

recognizing that the ability to perform a task is connected to the work of others. When participants acknowledge *outcome interdependence,* they are recognizing that overall success or failure in reaching a goal depends on the success or failure of others. In their shared leadership conceptual framework, Pearce and Sims (2000) identify task interdependence as an antecedent condition of shared leadership.

The fixed view of functional expertise allows for a recognition of task interdependence, but stops short of recognizing outcome interdependence. While those with fixed views of functional expertise were cognizant and invested in the relationship between functional units to manage the institution, there was a tendency to view ownership of issues and projects along clear functional lines. The fixed view promotes the notion that task completion may involve multiple functions, but ownership and decision making is connected to one primary functional area. For example, Adam and Alex described their fixed views prioritizing the sorting out of accountability during team interactions. These views reflect linear views of coordinating effort and efficiency in decision making.

> I think it is important to know who is taking the lead and who will be accountable for leading. When we don't get that right, things get confusing and we end up stepping on each other toes. When we walk out of that room, we need to be on the same page about whose issue this is. Others might have a perspective and our teams might work together, but nine times out of ten, whatever we are discussing falls in one person's lane. (Adam, Team A)

> I need to know if I am the decision maker. That is critical. If something isn't in my lane, I know that I can weigh in, but I am not the lead. What I own sets up what I am accountable for and what I work with my team to get done. (Alex, Team B)

The flexible view of functional expertise is congruent with task and outcome interdependence. Driven by a recognition of task interdependence, those with flexible views of functional expertise demonstrate comfort with ambiguous lines of ownership driven by a view that all work is interrelated in some form. Operating from a flexible view, ownership and decision making is viewed as an integrated process wherein

multiple senior leaders share leadership (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). Frances offered an example of the flexible view of functional expertise in her description of academic program review.

> The review of academic programs can be very challenging. We could make the decision on purely academic terms or student terms or financial terms. We don't make the best decisions when we pick one of those terms. We might make fast decisions, but not the best ones. Asher and I have to come together. We connect with student affairs, residence life, research, and external stakeholders. It is an all hands process. (Frances, Team C)

This view reflects a recognition of the need to cross boundaries, a core team learning activity. Those with flexible views described dyads and triads coming together to address issues, while those with fixed views tended to describe working directly with their teams to address issues. For example, while they were the exception to the majority of the team, Alice and Carl on Team A referenced facing opposition when seeking to create dyads and triads to address issues. Table 32 follows with a summary of these concepts.

> It seems like I am definitely rocking the boat here. I want to be able to team together more. Sometimes two of us can just get a couple of our folks together to deal with something. But, the preference definitely seems like – you tell your people and I tell my people and let them sort it out. Wouldn't be easier for us to bring them all together? (Alice, Team A)

> I have actually had people say no, when suggesting that a couple of us get together to nail something down. I end up running back and forth – on the same floor sometimes—to sort it out. (Carl, Team A)

Reflecting on team proximity, Team A's core functional senior leaders were located in the same building and tended to report fixed views of functional expertise. The teams with the most frequent descriptions of flexible views of functional expertise, Teams C and D, were also in closest proximity to each other. Team B, the team with the most decentralized proximity of senior leaders, reported the highest level of fixed views of functional expertise. While not consistently found across all of the core functional roles, student affairs officers, who are most frequently located near their teams, were also most likely to describe fixed views of functional expertise. Their proximity to their direct

Table 33. Overview of Functional Expertise Views

Functional Expertise View	Orientations	Communication Style	Interdependence
Fixed	Team: functional domain Behavioral: protect, advocate, and defend	*Monolingual* Preference to use the language of one's function	*Task Interdependence* • Task completion involves multiple functions • Ownership and decision making is connected to one primary functional area
Flexible	Team: peer senior leader group Behavioral: educate, inform, and infuse	*Multilingual* Adopt an integrated form of communication that transcends individual function	*Task & Outcome Interdependence* • Task completion involves multiple functions • Ownership and decision making is viewed as an integrated process wherein multiple senior leaders share leadership

reports and daily reinforcement of their functional work may encourage a focus on their functional priorities. Proximity enables spontaneous conversations and creates space for information sharing and shared meaning making processes that drive team learning. The proximity of team members also creates opportunities for the team to engage in the utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive functions described by Bensimon and Neumann (1993). While physical proximity does not guarantee interaction, it increases the likelihood that information exchange, coordination, colleagueship, and unplanned conversations can take place.

Length of tenure appeared to have some impact on views of functional expertise. As summarized in Table 33, of those with fixed views of functional expertise, 61% had tenure *higher than the median tenure* for participants in the study, and 45% had tenure *below the median tenure*. Regarding flexible views, 39% had tenure *higher than the median tenure*, and 61% had tenure *below the median tenure*. Overall, those with flexible views of functional expertise tended to have slightly shorter tenures.

Table 34. Fixed vs Flexible Views of Functional Expertise, by Tenure

Functional Expertise Perspective	Overall	Above Median Tenure (above 12 years)	Below Median Tenure (below 12 years)
Fixed	53%	55%	45%
Flexible	47%	39%	61%

Given the tendency for presidents in the study to describe flexible views of functional expertise, they may have significant influence on how members of their senior leadership teams make sense of their identity. Extending from the sensemaking/ sensegiving literature, the president, as the formal positional leader, has a unique role in reinforcing fixed or flexible views and setting contexts for either perspective. Kezar and Eckel (2002) underscore the relevance of sensegiving as part of the interchange between organizational members. Daft and Weick (1984) and Maitlis (2005) emphasize the role of the hierarchical leader as an agent of sensegiving and caution that an overreliance on the hierarchical leader can inhibit strategic thinking and decisions by top management. Focusing on Maitlis's four sensemaking approaches, presidents have an opportunity to shift their sensegiving approaches based on situational context. For example, Team B's president's sensegiving approach aligns with the low control preferring to offer a weekly space for team meetings with minimal direction to the team. In this context, the team retains a largely fixed view of their functional roles, which inhibits the evolution of team learning beyond individualistic, task-oriented processes.

Insight 3

Length of tenure influences perspectives on trust building.

When called to testify before Congress about the lessons from the Iran-Contra scandal that threatened the future of the Reagan administration, Secretary of State George Schultz famously asserted that, when it comes to credible and effective leadership, "trust is the coin of the realm" (Kramer & Elsbach, 2014, p. 127). Higher education senior leadership teams are no exception. As research on teams, particularly senior leadership

teams, indicates, trust is a critical element of team cohesion and performance (Dean, 2008; Edmondson, 2012; Gaval, 2009). The participants in this study referenced trust as a factor influencing their interactions with other team members. While there is a growing consensus that trust influences how teams operate, definitions of trust can vary. Elements of reciprocity, expectations for honesty, and safety are often featured in definitions (Louis, Meyrowetz, Smiley, & Murphy, 2009). Trust is generally considered to be a dynamic phenomenon, which accrues a variety of benefits, including facilitating communication, cooperation, and collective action (Dee et al., 2002; Lee, Gillespie, Mann, & Wearing, 2010). The absence of trust can inhibit these same benefits. Time spent together is a recognized driver in the trust building process. Prior observation and experience with another person's behavior provides an opportunity to assess dependability (Dee, 2002). Over time, team members are able to engage in repeated observations of each other, allowing for an evaluation of people's behavior in different circumstances (Lorenz, 1988). This information ultimately influenced predictions for future behavior.

Following the data that emerged through semi-structured interviews, participants tended to rely on two pathways to build trust—time spent together through shared history and a recognized shared commitment to mission. As summarized in Table 34, of those who relied on shared history, 63% had tenure *higher than the median tenure* for participants in the study, and 37% had tenure *below the median tenure*. Of those with a reliance on shared commitment to mission, 32% had tenure *higher than the median tenure*, and 68% had tenure *below the median tenure*. Overall, those who relied on shared history to build trust tended to have longer tenures. On its face, this finding may be unsurprising.

Table 35. Trust Building Paths, by Tenure

Trust building path	Overall	Above Median Tenure (above 12 years)	Below Median Tenure (below 12 years)
Shared history	50%	63%	37%
Shared commitment to mission	50%	32%	68%

Given what we know about the role of time spent together as an antecedent of the trust building process, the tendency of participants with longer tenure to rely on shared history as their means of building trust aligns with the literature. This finding may indicate that they more immediately identify with shared history because over the course of their lengthy service tenure, they are acquainted with its role of history in the process of building trust. However, an over-reliance on shared history can generate an over-reliance on tacit knowledge to guide communication and decision making (Edmondson et al., 2007). As evidenced by the experiences of teams with shorter tenures, Team B and Team E, tacit knowledge creates barriers to communication about the ability to integrate perspectives. While shared history can create powerful bonds that facilitate trust, it also has the potential to create patterns of inclusion and exclusion. This was evidenced most explicitly in Team A, where the newly academic affairs officer, Alice, began attending the pre-meeting with VPs with little understanding of the purpose of the meeting. In this study, the costs described by an emphasis on shared history served as relevant obstacles to team learning across members of senior leadership teams in higher education.

As the age of senior leaders continues to climb (Gagliardi et al., 2017) and higher education begins welcoming a new generation of leaders, lengthy shared history may become an outdated reality. Mobility in senior roles in higher education is a consideration when there is an over-reliance on shared history to build trust. Looking at presidents, student affairs officers, finance officers, and advancement officers, average length of service in senior roles ranged from 6 to 8 years (Kiley, 2013; Wesaw & Sponsler, 2014). This level of turnover in senior roles can create starts and stops in trust building if shared

history is the dominant strategy for trust building. Team C's "dream team" represents a means of leveraging shared history to the benefit of the institution and the team as a whole. The lengthy service tenure of the president allowed him to cycle through multiple transitions of senior leaders on his team and learn from prior hiring decisions. The accumulated experience of the senior leaders at the institution is regarded by the team as an element of the "dream team" status. This shared history has allowed them to directly observe prior members of the senior team. They were able to witness the changes and adjustments made by the president, giving them particular insight into the evolution of the team over time.

Two of the teams in this study, Teams C and E, reflected a tendency toward a reliance on a shared commitment to mission as the pathway to building trust. In these teams, a strong commitment to the institutional mission translated as proxy for dependability and honesty. The long service of Team C's president had a great influence over team members. His focus on mission permeated the team, and over time the commitment to mission represented a strong bond. Team C continued to stand out from the other institutions in this study. Despite having a long average service tenure, participants' discussion of trust focused primarily on commitment to mission. Team C's president's sensegiving approach emerged as an important component of how team members viewed trust building. Carefully cultivated over a lengthy period of service, Team C's president reinforced the role of mission alignment consistently with his senior team and with others. In fact, the President's Council, one of Team C's routine meeting structures including a large community of senior leaders, was described by several team members as a reinforcement of mission. This bi-weekly meeting served as a regular reminder of the institution's strategic goals and impact. While the meeting is largely an exercise in information sharing, it provides a broad group of senior leaders an opportunity to make sense of the organization as a larger whole within the context of mission. Recalling Gioia and Chittipeddi's (1991) sensegiving and sensemaking cycle, Team C's

president leverages this meeting as a regular drumbeat of signaling and energizing. As Gioia and Chittipeddi describe, each meeting triggers senior leaders to return to their teams and engage in the complementary cycles of envisioning and re-visioning.

Team E has the shortest tenure of any team in the study and did not experience similar levels of sensegiving offered by Team C's president. In the context of this team, the participants have not yet had the opportunity to develop extended experience with each other. This may have influenced their tendency to focus on shared commitment to mission as a path to building trust. Their overall experience at the institution as senior leaders shapes their context for trust building. Thus far, they have looked at their peers' alignment with the institution's strategy to assess dependability and predict behavior. This may also be fueled by their focus on the commitment to mission and vision as leaders of a minority-serving institution. Their reported fragmented team learning mode also reflects that the team has not yet developed beyond individual approaches to team engagement.

Insight 4

Senior leadership teams primarily engage in problem solving oriented management activities with limited time invested in relationship building.

> The senior leadership team has a bird's-eye view of the university and their units in ways that people on the ground everyday don't get to see. I think the most important thing that we can do is to help to manage the institution well by solving problems and deploying resources downstream to individual units. (Carl, Team A)

As described by Carl, the senior leadership team members in this study largely described spending a significant portion of their time together in managing the institution and working together to solve problems. Similar to Mintzberg's (2013) analysis of managerial work, participants described the management of information, people, and action as cornerstones of their interactions. Regardless of their view of functional

expertise, senior leaders described working together to assess the scope of issues and deploying resources to achieve results and resolve problems.

> Problems in professional workplaces today are so complex that they exceed the cognitive capacity of any individual and therefore require a team of members who possess different but complementary expertise in order to solve the problem. The challenges inherent in complex problems require the problem solving team to be adaptive cognitively and collectively in order to cope with any unforeseen obstacles. (Hung, 2013, p. 366)

Senior leadership team members and presidents enumerated a range of problems needing their collective intelligence to solve, including advising strategies, community relationship issues, student policy issues, and investment decisions (see Table 32). Some of these problems were presented as clearly structured, and others required more definition. While this study did not include an in-depth analysis of problem-solving strategies and tactics, participants consistently described activities linked to problem solving and decision management. Referencing framing and reframing processes in Kasl et al.'s (1997) team learning model, participants identified cognitive processes wherein they provided each other with an understanding of situations and engaged in dialogue to transform initial understandings. These reframing discussions often led to a definition or clarification of ownership and decision makers. The situation presented in Chapter IV by Fred (Team A) is dissected below as an example of framing, reframing, and defining ownership.

Framing

> We needed to make a decision about paving a green space on campus for parking. It all made perfect sense to me. Athletics wanted me to pave it and needed additional space for parking. We looked at the design and knew we could afford it. I went to the president and gave all the reasons why we should do this and the president approved it.

Reframing

> I took it to the vice presidents and said here's what I'm up against here's what's driving this and gave them all the same reasons that I gave the president. And I was 99% sure they would have said well we don't like it, but you've made the case. But I had to backtrack because it's caused some friction among our donors and people that tailgate there. We ought to pave

> that lot. I think it is the right thing for the University. We have 700 more registrations and we did last year and we are 2,000 spaces short compared to the people registering their cars. When it rains on that field, the people that give you the most money for athletics have to move and they're never happy. We are getting ready to double the size of the College of Business on that campus and they will need parking. So all of those reasons would lead you to think that we ought to do this. But they brought up things I didn't consider.

Defining Ownership

> Now, it ends up back on my plate to sort out. Adam [advancement officer] and Ellen [enrollment] could be involved, but I really need to take the lead and will keep them informed.

These activities can be linked to learning. While teams do not only learn explicitly through knowledge transfer or evaluation, they can learn by collaborating to solve problems (Decuyper et al., 2010). Within the context of the conceptual framework of this study, these problem solving-oriented management activities are firmly aligned with cognitive learning processes. When viewing team interactions within a social context, which involves the integration of perspectives, the researcher turns to participant descriptions of relationship building. As described by Bensimon and Neumann (1993), the expressive function of the team establishes the social structure to enable colleagueship and mutual support. Reflecting on the tendency for participants to describe fixed views of functional expertise, an obstacle to shared cognition and integrating perspectives, relationship building can mitigate fixed views. While Team A and Team C reported time spent building personal rapport through relationship building, much of that activity was connected to the accumulated social interactions experienced over lengthy service tenures. Team D, which reported no relationship-building experiences, identified the complexities of schedules, demands of home life, commute time, and geographical distance between their multiple campuses as an obstacle for social interactions. Team B and Team E generally described relationship building as a residual activity that spontaneously occurred into connection to other institutional events. While there was peripheral recognition of the value of social engagement and building personal rapport, the researcher concluded that in most cases the incentives to build relationships were not

sufficiently compelling to overcome the obstacles. In two cases, on Team D and E, senior leaders referenced social interactions as "fluff activities." A continued emphasis on the cognitive activities of senior leadership creates an imbalance in the ability of the team to learn and operate.

Conclusion

> The role of presidents and senior leaders is to create an environment that encourages people, in fact, empowers people to ask the hard questions and struggle with the problems in such a way that the environment is conducive to people learning and seeking the truth (Patrick, Team C)

This section revisits the core research question: *How do presidents and SLT members work and learn together*? Based on the teams in this study, the researcher posits the following broad insight about senior leadership teams in higher education: *They operate as a group of functional leaders committed to collaborative problem solving and engaged in informal learning*. Amidst a range of espoused beliefs reinforcing the role of strategy and long-term thinking, the researcher believes the study's findings indicate that the theories in use (Argyris, 1991) align more closely with senior leaders spending the majority of their time together as a group engaged in collaborative problem solving. Based on this approach to work and the duality of their role as senior leaders of complex functional units and members of a senior leadership team, informal learning may be a more apt description of the type of learning practiced by these teams. The following four findings played a significant role in the researcher's assessment to reach this conclusion: (1) reflection on three constructs in the study's conceptual framework; (2) team learning survey results; (3) reflection on Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) functional domains; and a (4) reflection on informal learning.

Derived from the sensemaking, shared leadership, and team learning literature, the study's conceptual framework included three core constructs—interpretation, integration,

and interdependence. The cognitive activity of interpretation was found primarily in service to problem-solving activities and management of the institution. The social processes connected to integration were limited due to the demands of leading the functional domains, reluctance to blur lines between functional domains, and limited intentional relationship building. Interdependence focused primarily on task interdependence, while outcome interdependence was described less consistently. Looking at team learning survey results holistically, the teams in this study reported fragmented and pooled learning, indicating inconsistent experiences as a team of leaders engaged in learning together. The functional domains defined by Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) research on senior leadership teams identified three functions—utilitarian, expressive, and cognitive. Looking at the utilitarian function, focused on information exchange, coordinating and planning, and decision making, the study revealed that these teams engaged primarily in information exchange, coordinating, and planning. With the exception of Team C, decision making was reported with less frequency by most participants and described as an activity engaged in by smaller groups within the senior leadership team. Looking at the expressive function, focused on colleagueship and mutual support, teams were not as engaged with this function. Finally, the cognitive function focused on the sensemaking work of the team by "viewing problems from multiple perspectives, questioning, challenging, and arguing, and acting as a monitor and feedback system" (p. 41).

Considering the size and complexity of these enterprises and the demands, accountability, and specialized knowledge connected to the functional domains, the researcher believes informal learning is a more appropriate descriptor of the type of learning happening in senior leadership teams in higher education. This form of learning may better capitalize and position these leaders to learn strategically and influence the strategic direction of the institution. With the influence of sociocultural theory and the evolving understanding of complex adaptive systems, Watkins, Marsick, Wofford, and

Ellinger (2018) evolved the Marsick and Watkins (1990) informal and incidental learning model in ways that stood out to the researcher as aligned with the problem-solving orientation of the senior leadership teams in this study. Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2009) describe the informal and incidental learning process as one that "includes an element of collective learning as work groups struggle together to solve a problem or sail forward to creatively address a new challenge" (p. 591). Within the institutional context, this learning can become intrinsically embedded with action, leaving it unseen, but present and influencing ongoing action. While team learning offers important insights into the dynamics of learning in senior leadership teams, informal and incidental learning provides a framework for skill building well suited to the ways in which these teams interact with each other and engage with their president. As stated by Marsick and Yates (2012) below, informal and incidental learning could help create space for these teams to "examine mistakes, forestall unintended consequences, unearth assumptions, or transform views" (Watkins et al., 2018, p. 32).

> Informal learning is enhanced when people are, and encouraged to be, creative in their thinking and approaches to challenges they face; when they proactively pursue interests and solutions to problems; and when they are able to step back and look at "why" things are as they are and how they can be differently understood. (Marsick & Yates, 2012, p. 173)

Ultimately, the researcher speculates that core functional leaders operate with a dual identity—one identity in the foreground and the other in the background. In most cases, their foreground identity is their role as the senior leader of their functional domain. Their background identity, their role as an institutional senior leader, they largely access during a weekly cadence of formalized interactions and in service to the leadership of their functional domain. While this imagery is presented in binary, either/or terms, there is more fluidity at play. For example, the leaders that reported flexible views of functional expertise articulated a more fluid engagement with their identity. However, the capacity of an individual leader to fuse these identities or swap background and foreground

identities is enabled by the resilience of their commitment to their functional domain, the expectations and structures established by their president, and the feedback from their peers. Given the need to deliver results, manage risks, and protect the institution, senior functional leaders, especially finance and student affairs officers, must meet each other in the middle, consistently. Their collective negotiation of priorities may allow them to enact less protective stances. In light of these tensions, the researcher sees two different contexts for understanding how senior leadership teams in higher education learn. Different models of team learning reflect differing contexts for learning. The researcher posits that team learning is an apt model to understand learning within and across functional domains (academic affairs, student affairs, finance, etc.), while informal learning provides a valuable frame for understanding learning between senior leaders. Given this assessment by the researcher, recommendations presented in the next section will consider what we know about informal learning as a means of helping leaders better guide the institution with a learning mindset.

Recommendations for Practice

This section includes a series of recommendations derived from the study findings, analysis, interpretations and conclusions for presidents, core functional role officers, and higher education professional development providers.

Presidents

This study is rooted in the important role teams play in leading higher education institutions. While recognizing the role of the president as the institution's hierarchical leader, the notion of the "hero" has become impractical as institutional complexity has increased and as our understanding of leadership has evolved. Nevertheless, the president's positional power and responsibility for the operational health of the institution

endow him or her with significant influence over the management of the institution. The pressing external demands on the president notwithstanding, reliance on the senior leadership team has increased the amount of time presidents are spending managing their teams (Gagliardi et al., 2017). These teams are invested in the management activities of the institution, problem solving, and issue resolution. However, mixed views on their functional expertise can inhibit team members from functioning interdependently and engaging in continuous learning. Based on this study's findings, there is an opportunity to better align their learning approach with the demands of their roles and strategic value to the institution. To supplement the management practices of the senior leadership team and enable strategically oriented learning, the researcher offers a set of structural recommendations to presidents.

- *Capitalize on dyads and triads*: Teams tended to heavily rely on weekly meetings of the entire senior leadership team. Consider the benefits of alternating dyad and triad meetings of senior leadership team members (Ellis et al, 2003) to promote deeper discussion, facilitate insight into interdependence, and encourage strategic and long-term thinking. Dyad and triad meetings could be arranged to complement or as a periodic alternative to the weekly meeting of the full senior leadership team.
- *Create consistent opportunities for social interactions, especially during the early stages of team development*: While social interaction can fall by the wayside, the social fabric of the team can offer a critical foundation for trust building, psychological safety, and conflict resolution. Particularly in teams with fragmented tenure histories—some team members having lengthy tenures and others with short tenures—a reliable architecture of social interactions can buttress the team's work. Long institutional tenure accrues significant benefits to an institution. In addition to the practical benefits of retention and reduced recruiting costs, the cumulative tacit and explicit knowledge, coupled with

insight into the institutional contexts and decision making, allows an institution to maximize resources. However, presidents must be cognizant of the barriers created for new team members to navigate tacit knowledge exchange between experienced team members. This can easily manifest as a casual form of exclusion that undermines strategy and institutional management.

- *Consider the role of proximity on the experience of members*: Often housed near student centers or in places with heavy student traffic, student affairs officers are particularly vulnerable to missing the spontaneous information exchange amongst senior team members in close proximity to each other. Presidents may consider opening dialogue about the impact of the physical distance with student affairs officers and host meetings and discussions closer to the heart of student affairs operations. To accommodate the travel schedules of advancement officers, leveraging digital access to meetings and conversations can help close the gap for these senior leaders. In an effort to both support relationship building and mediate physical proximity gaps, identify one institutional event each semester for all senior leaders to attend together and encourage your administrative team or chief of staff to look to tag on a 30-minute pre-gathering for the senior team before the event.
- *Shape expectations for inclusion with the full team when bringing new members on board*: While two presidents in this study had the opportunity to appoint or hire each member of their team, every president in the study had hired at least one member of their team at the time of data collection. When a new senior member joins the team, there is a tendency to focus on them. In addition to their transition, attention must be paid and expectations must be set for the rest of the team. The integration of new team members is an adjustment for standing senior leaders, especially those with significant tenure. Take the time to set expectations for inclusion with all members of the senior team and

intentionally structure relationship-building opportunities. For new student affairs and finance officers, in particular, encourage them to get to know each other and the other members of the team.

- *Explicit emphasis on cross-functional initiatives and strategies*: A focus on functional expertise emerged as a key component in the capacity for senior leaders to engage in learning processes and adapt to the perspectives of others. To help senior leaders cultivate an integrated identity that invites boundary crossing, presidents have the opportunity to intentionally define cross-functional ownership and accountability. By prioritizing cross-functional initiatives during team meetings and formal interactions, the president can begin to normalize and make sense of both task and outcome interdependence for senior leaders. To maximize outcome efficacy for cross-functional work, presidents have critical on-going sensegiving roles. While the team's sensemaking enables action, without effective sensegiving by the president, teams invest precious time clarifying direction.
- *Leverage informal learning practices*: The researcher posits that informal and incidental learning practices support the dynamic operation of senior leadership teams in higher education. Marsick and Yates (2012), Marsick (2006), and Laiken, Edge, Friedman, and West (2008) suggest a range of informal learning practices to create more intention in the learning process. The researcher has selected two as recommendations for presidents.
    - After action reviews: facilitated targeted inquiry designed to productively examine work and decision making
    - Create positive space for reflection: Craft opportunities for teams to reflect on mistakes or problems as an opportunity for learning and application of insights.

- *Explore new organizational structures and roles*: The sites reporting the highest team learning scores in this study adopted variations to the meeting structures or introduced new horizontally focused leaders into the senior leadership structure. As colleges and universities have adapted teaching and learning modalities, similar adaptation may be needed in the organizational structures for senior leadership teams. The 20th century models for organizational structure that emphasize leadership of vertical functional domains may not adequately serve 21st century needs. For example, the development of or reflection on the chief operating officer role, sometimes represented as a chief administrative officer, could benefit higher education institutions. This role and the team supporting this function can offer critical support to the president and the senior leadership team in the design of processes and practices to facilitate organizational learning. Organizational structure adaptation through the introduction of more horizontal and cross-functional senior level roles and/or meeting structures may expand capacity for collaboration and information exchange.

Core Functional Roles

Given the study's analysis of patterns within and across senior roles, the following recommendations are geared to specific roles. However, the importance of viewing the team as a whole encourages the researcher to share recommendations for the senior functional leaders as a group.

Senior functional leaders. Negotiating the significant demands of leading functional domains is a complex endeavor. With a focus on elevating a culture of learning and interdependence, the researcher offers the following recommendations to all senior functional leaders.

- *Develop norms for integrating new senior leaders*: The flow of tacit information between senior leaders can be daunting for a new member to understand. As a team, establish a set of norms and practices for welcoming new members. Even if the new member was previously employed by the institution and was promoted into the role, the senior leadership team places them in a new leadership context. These norms will help define the shared purpose of the team and help them form a dual identity as both a functional leader and an institutional senior leader.
- *Maximize opportunities for cross-functional working groups or teams*: While this study focused on senior leaders, the network of direct reports across functional domains creates opportunity for collective knowledge sharing, boundary crossing, and the development of shared purpose. Senior leaders can systematically review the range of working groups and teams and identify opportunities to boost cross-functional participation.

Academic affairs. The context of academic leadership varied within this study—with some institutions carrying large networks of deans and others having only a few. Regardless of the size of the academic enterprise, the academic mission of institutions is the uncompromising focus of higher education. This strategic and mission status endows academic affairs leaders and faculty with marked influence in the management of the institution. This status can create barriers to understanding the tacit knowledge existing within academic divisions and between academic constituencies. Given these factors, the researcher recommends that academic affairs officers explore specific sensemaking and sensegiving strategies with their fellow senior leaders. Team C's structure is an ideal setting for this type of sensemaking and sensegiving. The VP and Deans meeting normalizes the exchange of information, problem solving, and issue resolution between the academic leadership and the leaders of the core functions of the institution. Other

institutions could explore similar meeting structures to regularly engage academic deans with other senior leaders.

Finance. The finance officers in this study were stymied by the role of protector and challenged to find strategies to counteract the limitations of the "no" officer narrative. These officers faced a measure of isolation to protect them from the interpersonal challenge of being a protector of resources. To provide a deeper context for their experience, the researcher recommends that finance officers share their story and practice storytelling. The power of the financial officer's story and the positive drivers connected to the protector narrative can be quite powerful. Finance officers shared the intensity of their personal conflict with decisions during the study's interviews, but rarely felt safe sharing these conflicts with others. While a context for psychological safety must exist, and that is a high bar for certain environments, particularly those without an investment in relationship building, the finance officer needs the space and permission to express their emotional experience and the origin of their values. The fragmented learning experience reported by several finance officers in this study could be remedied by developing a stronger focus on outcome interdependence to facilitate boundary crossing. For finance officers, a specific alignment of outcome interdependence with the fiscal health of the institution could provide insight into ways to better leverage financial resources for the diversified benefits.

Student affairs. The student affairs officers reflected a strong commitment to their function and the student affairs leaders on their teams. The strong culture of student advocacy and awareness of the minimization of student affairs contributions to the academic mission can contribute to a defensiveness. Similar to finance officers, the fragmented learning experience reported by many student affairs officers could be remedied by investing in cross-functional views of outcome interdependence. The researcher cautions student affairs officers to moderate protective attitudes and explore

avenues for outcome interdependence with particular focus on academic affairs and finance.

Finance and student affairs officers. Given the similarities in the study's findings between finance and student affairs officers, the researcher recommends that they work together to intentionally build pathways of learning with their teams. For example, the finance and student affairs officers come together to host cross-functional brown bags and learning clinics for their teams. This approach may allow teams to develop a shared language, rather than defaulting to "finance language" and "student affairs language." Staff in the student affairs operation that have financial management responsibilities are prime candidates to serve as "cultural brokers" and facilitate boundary crossing with finance staff.

Advancement. The frequency of travel schedules for advancement officers creates additional obstacles for relationship building. The researcher recommends that advancement officers seek opportunities to build relationships with senior leaders and encourage cross-functional relationship building among their teams.

Higher Education Professional Development Providers

In 1966, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) developed a joint statement on the governance of colleges and universities. The statement began with a declaration of the inescapable interdependence among governing boards, administration, faculty, and students to perform a variety and complexity of institutional tasks. The statement continued to describe the need for joint planning among these stakeholders (AAUP, 1966). Fifty years later, the need for seamless interdependence across key stakeholders in the higher education environment has only increased. As (Stokes et al., 2019) reveal, the need to evolve the higher education business model requires leaders that can move from reactive decision making

and a problem-solving orientation to a shared leadership with a strategic change mindset. The pipeline of leaders making their way into leadership roles in higher education need professional development services that understand their context. The ability of presidents and senior leadership teams to learn through iteration and experimentation will support an institution's capacity to pivot during changing times (Soliday & Lombardi, 2019). This study's findings suggest that senior leadership teams in higher education are engaged in iterative informal learning loops animated by cycles of sensegiving and sensemaking triggered by strategic and emergent issues. As such, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- *Informal learning*: Seek methods to catalyze informal learning to produce strategic results and promote collective engagement in broad organizational change.
- *Targeted focus on finance and student affairs officers*: While there are some models for bringing academic affairs and finance officers together, student affairs and finance officers could benefit from similar pairing. These leaders would benefit from strategies to help them engage in collective strategic thinking that boosts shared conceptualization of interdependence and positive relationship building within the context of the stewardship demands of their roles. As this pair of officers establish a shared purpose and integrated view of the future, they can begin to shift from fixed to flexible views of expertise.
- *Collective problem solving*: Problem solving and issue resolution can encourage myopic focus on the immediate and discourage shared approaches to leadership. Explore opportunities to bring the four core functional senior leaders together—academic affairs, finance, student affairs, and advancement—together to infuse reflective learning activities into collective problem-solving processes.

- *Focus specific attention on flexible views of expertise and trust building*: Integrate perspectives and cross-functional insights into professional development for functional leaders.
- *Develop team approaches to preparing new senior leaders*: While programs that seek to improve the efficacy of new senior leaders have value, new senior leaders impact the larger network of senior leaders at the institution. In addition to the development of the new leader, the president and their peer senior leaders need to be equipped with tools and practices to adapt to a new member of the team. Programs designed to support the "new" officer or president could expand to include "new team" support to provide guidance for those that will work with the new leader. Search committees might also develop a first 90-day jumpstart plan that engages the team and the president.

Researcher Assumptions Revisited

I was surprised to find that "member clusters" or dyads and triads of senior leaders did not regularly convene. Instead, clustering behavior emerged in connection to service tenure and shared relationship history. Physical distance and proximity to the president and between senior leaders were discussed by participants, but proximity differences could not be reliably correlated with other themes. In addition, institutional type diversity played a limited role in the study's findings. The multiple campus environment did impede relationship building for Team C leading a two-year associate's level institution. The dominating reports of a shared commitment to mission and vision in Team D, a minority-serving institution, may have been influenced by the deeply embedded historical legacy of minority-serving institutions.

This study began with the idea that the "president as hero" was a myth and a concept that, if advanced, could stymie higher education's ability to engage in strategic

transformation. The *hero leader* has their place in certain situations. When focused toward a positive end, the *hero leader* can channel emotional dedication, but it can also strip others of their agency, neglect critical knowledge, and undercut sustained change. Team C's president comes close to a *positive* manifestation of the *hero leader* role. As the exemplar of this study and the only president to report synergistic learning, he and his team emerge as unique. The fusion of his identity with the institutional mission is magnetic to those who work for him and many who know him. However, to counteract the costs of the *hero leader*, he intentionally separates himself from specific interactions of the team, allows the academic affairs officer to take the lead, and pays specific attention to building and rebuilding a senior team. This leaves me with the following reflection—to successfully navigate the daunting changes ahead, deliver on the promise of higher education, and serve an increasingly diverse and complex student population, higher education may need *heroic leaders*, not hero leaders. As opposed to the hero leader, who commands followers from above, the researcher offers a semantic shift imagining that the *heroic leader* courageously charts a path forward powered by an informed vision and an amplification of the leaders in their organization. When the eyes of others are on the hero leader, the *heroic leader* compels us to look within ourselves, look out for others, and look forward for the institution. Put another way, the *heroic leader* embraces shared leadership strategies and inspires bold action in service to diverse student populations.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on the perspectives of presidents and senior leadership teams on their roles and work. A range of additional directions for research and research methods is identified by the researcher.

Research Topics and Questions

- This study focused on the role of senior leaders as members of the senior leadership team. In light of their role as senior leaders of a functional area, an opportunity exists to compare and contrast their approaches to leading their functional domain. The focus of their leadership of their functional domain creates an opportunity to explore their approach to enabling a learning culture. Given the importance of functional domain expertise reported by participants in this study, an exploration of the cultural norms and contexts for leadership within each functional domain can provide deeper insight into alignment and conflict between senior level functional leaders of each domain.
- The leaders of higher education institutions are ripe for engaging in robust learning processes to drive successful institutional transformation. Given the range of learning models and approaches to facilitating learning, understanding efficacious means of learning among senior leadership teams is imperative. This study speculates that examining learning within senior leadership teams in higher education through the lens of informal and incidental learning theory could provide important insights.
- Problem-solving strategies emerged as a core activity of the senior leadership team. Examining specific problem-solving strategies, specifically the distinctions between first- and second-order problem solving described by Tucker and Edmondson (2002) analogous to Argyris and Schön's (1978) notion of single and double loop learning would contribute insight into senior leader management approaches.
- This study included institutions of different sizes, which influenced the number of direct reports for each senior leader. Future research could explore the question of institutional size and seek to understand the impact of institutional size on team learning at the senior level.

- While trust emerged as a factor in learning, this study did not explore the degree of trust between team members. Given its importance to team cohesion, interdependence, shared cognition, and ultimately to learning, future research could explore the question: Do senior leaders in higher education trust each other?
- Student affairs and finance officers emerged as having a distinct experience in this study. Future research could more closely examine the dynamics between these two functional areas. Specifically, the existence, form, and approach to learning could be explored—beyond the senior level and throughout the staff operations in both functions.
- While this study focused on senior leadership teams in higher education, the ecosystem of faculty and board governance communities also influences the capacity for strategic institutional change. Future research could seek to conceptualize learning within and among these communities.
- The increased demand for comprehensive diversification in higher education at faculty, student, and staff levels has relevance for the examination of learning among senior leaders in higher education. For example, critical race theories and feminist theories intersected with informal learning theories could yield relevant insights on the role of race and gender in learning among senior higher education leaders.
- The sensemaking and sensegiving processes emerged as relevant components of the senior leadership team experience. In particular, the fixed functional views of the finance and student affairs officers in this study indicate a role for sensemaking and sensegiving processes to facilitate boundary crossing. Future research could explicitly explore sensemaking and sensegiving cycles as a negotiated process between team members to aid and catalyze learning.

Research Methods

- Direct observation of team meetings and review of meeting agendas and minutes would also serve as a means of analyzing team activities and triangulating data reported by senior leaders.
- This research relied on senior leaders' perceptions of the frequency and type of their interactions with other senior leaders. Calendar audits, email metadata, and social network analysis would provide a more detailed review of the specific networks and flows of communications and interactions between senior leaders.
- While none of the presidents in the study identified academic deans as members of their senior leadership teams, deans, especially of large, complex institutions, have an influence on institutional senior leadership. An opportunity to engage academic deans may provide additional context for how learning processes function between senior leaders.
- An exploration of the views of the direct reports to senior leadership team members and other key stakeholders, including faculty and students, will provide deeper context into the responsibilities and expectations of their leaders to institutional health.
- Critical incident methodologies would contribute a deeper understanding of specific issues managed by senior leaders in higher education and mechanisms utilized to navigate challenges and engage in learning processes.
- The sampling approach used by this study emphasized institutional type variation. However, future studies on learning among senior institutional leaders could focus on institutional metrics or institutions assessed for innovative practice. The selection of "innovative" institutions would yield findings and prescriptive recommendations to guide institutional practice.

- The study of organizational lifecycles provides insight into contextual and developmental contexts for organizational performance and priorities. The exploration of organizational life cycles in higher education institutions is nascent. If higher education institutions are regarded as loosely coupled systems, they may operate with a dominant cycle and multiple sub-cycles across the organization. If these cycles exist, they could have direct influence on the learning context and the negotiation of learning among senior leadership team members. Future research on the presence and influence of organizational life cycles on learning among presidents and senior leaders could provide important insight as institutions confront challenges along their developmental paths.
- Grounded theory and action learning research designs could offer an expanded understanding of senior leadership teams in higher education. Given the modest research on senior leadership teams in higher education and the need for deeper analysis, a grounded theory design would offer a conceptualization of learning between presidents and senior leadership team members to extend on Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) landmark study. An action learning design focused on a targeted intervention with a president and their senior leadership team would explicate specific contexts and offer specific insights for team development and learning practices.

Researcher Reflections

I considered it a great privilege to spend time with these leaders. Several of the presidents in this study are celebrated leaders awarded for their excellence, and the conversations with them will serve as a highlight of my professional life. The opportunity to spend time with them and their teams was an honor. Without exception, the leaders

and their administrative staffs were welcoming when I arrived in their offices and flexible in the scheduling process. Given that each president both participated in and endorsed participation in the study, I believe this played a small role in the cooperation I received. In addition, my prior experience in higher education and employment with the largest higher education association may have also influenced cooperation. This research began with a strong belief that reliance on the president as the institutional savior was problematic. The emphasis on the presidential role neglects the critical contributions of the senior leaders guiding significant elements of higher education institutions. These leaders have great influence to change the course of an institution's service to its community and students. In some ways, the continued emphasis on presidents as the primary voice of institutional leadership places an unrealistic set of expectations on this office and reduces the attractiveness of the role at the exact time when higher education needs to diversify senior leadership and prepare for the retirement of an aging population of presidents. After completing the research, I further recognize the import of senior leaders' functional leadership. I was initially concerned to find that senior leaders tended to focus more on the leadership of their functional domains and their role as a member of the senior team may not provide rich learning experiences. Upon further reflection, I speculate that the senior leadership team setting can provide an opportunity for structured, facilitated learning, and the leadership of functional domains provides an ideal setting for a continuous learning culture. As I look ahead, I hope this research will help me advocate for shifts in professional learning offerings for teams of higher education leaders. Specifically, the professional organizations representing the core functional domains, in particular, finance and student affairs, have an opportunity to collaborate on the infusion of a learning culture in their profession that elevates collective learning as critical to career success.

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Appendix A

Invitation Letters and Research Description

Presidential Invitation Email

SENT BY THE SYSTEM CHANCELLOR

TO: Institutional Presidents
CC: nwoods@acenet.edu
SUBJECT: INVITATION – Senior Leadership Research Study

Dear Dr. _____:

The work of leading institutions is a collective effort and your senior executive team is one of your most important partners. With this in mind, I invite you to participate in a doctoral research study designed to explore how you and your senior executive team work together. Each president will have an opportunity to participate in some element of the study. This is not an official request and your participation is completely voluntary. Please review the research description to familiarize yourself with the study.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

Survey: A nineteen question survey designed to understand the interactions between you and the senior executive members of your team. The survey will be delivered via email to you and your senior team. *(Time Commitment: 10 minutes)*

- *Participants* – **All** institutional presidents and the senior executive staff *reporting directly* to the president that lead a division, help define the institutional strategic direction, and/or provide direct support and advice to the president. Based on this definition, the researcher will verify the members of your senior executive staff prior to distributing the survey.

Interview: Face-to-face interviews conducted in your office. *(Time Commitment: 60 minutes)*

- *Participants* – Since working relationships are the focus of the study, presidents and senior executive staff that have worked together *for at least one year* are invited to participate in a deeper exploration through interviews. The researcher will verify the members of your senior executive staff and the duration of their service prior to scheduling interviews.

Results: Each participating president and their senior executive team will receive an executive summary of the findings and recommendations. The study findings will be used for a Teachers College, Columbia University doctoral dissertation and may be incorporated in presentations at conferences or published articles for educational purposes. Your privacy and that of your senior team will be strictly guarded. The system and individual identities will *not* be disclosed in the resulting dissertation, reports, or publications.

The researcher will follow up on this invitation to discuss your participation interest. If you have any questions, please contact her directly - Nicole Woods, at nmw2115@tc.columbia.edu or via phone, 312.285.4728 (IRB Protocol Number:17-354).

Sincerely,

XXX XXX
Chancellor
University System of XXX

President Acceptance Email

SENT BY THE RESEARCHER to the PRESIDENT

Dear Dr. _____:

Thank you for accepting the invitation to voluntarily participate in this doctoral research study designed to explore how you and your senior executive team work together. The next steps for participation are outlined below.

1. **Senior Executive Staff Verification**
   [INSERT NAME OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF MEMBER] will be contacted to request the most recent senior leadership organizational chart and identify the members of your senior executive staff based on this definition - individuals *reporting directly* to you that lead a division, help define the institutional strategic direction, and/or provide direct support and advice.

   Contact information and duration of service for each of these individuals will also be confirmed. *If you and your senior executive team have worked together for at least one year, individual interviews with you and your team will be also be part of the study.*

2. **Communication to the Senior Executive Team**
   Attached is a proposed communication to be sent to your team about the study and inviting them to participate. Since participation is voluntary, their participation decision will determine which individuals receive the following communications.

   - **Survey Distribution**
     In addition to you, the participating members of your senior executive staff will receive a link to complete the online survey.

   - **Interview Scheduling**
     If you and your senior executive staff have worked together for at least one year, I will contact the relevant staff to schedule interviews with you and the participating members of your senior executive staff. The Informed Consent Form attached to this email will be sent to participating members of your senior executive staff for their review and signature prior to the interview.

Once again, I appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nicole M. Woods
Fairfax, Virginia
312.285.4728
nmw2115@tc.columbia.edu
(IRB Protocol Number:17-354)

Email Communication for Senior Executive Staff

SENT BY THE INSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT

TO: Senior Executive Staff
CC: nwoods@acenet.edu
SUBJECT: INVITATION – Senior Leadership Research Study

The work of leading institutions is a collective effort and, with this in mind, I invite you to participate in a doctoral research study designed to explore how we work together as a senior leadership team. Each president in the system has an opportunity to participate in some element of the study. This is not an official request and your participation is *completely voluntary*. Please review the research description and the attached informed consent form to familiarize yourself with the study.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

Survey: A nineteen question survey designed to understand the interactions between you and other members of the senior executive team. The survey will be delivered via email.
(Time Commitment: 10 minutes)

- *Participants* – System presidents and the senior executive staff

Interview: Face-to-face interviews conducted in your office.
(Time Commitment: 60 minutes)

- *Participants* – System presidents and the senior executive staff that have worked together *for at least one year*

Results: Each participating president and their senior executive team member will receive an executive summary of the findings and recommendations. The study findings will be used for a Teachers College, Columbia University doctoral dissertation and may be incorporated in presentations at conferences or published articles for educational purposes. Your privacy will be strictly guarded. The system and individual identities will *not* be disclosed in the resulting dissertation, reports, or publications.

The researcher, cced on this email, will follow up on this invitation to discuss your participation interest. If you have any questions, please contact her directly - Nicole Woods, at nmw2115@tc.columbia.edu or via phone, 312.285.4728 (IRB Protocol Number:17-354).

Sincerely,

XXX XXX
President
[INSERT INSTITUTION NAME]

Appendix B

Informed Consent and Participant Rights Form

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York NY 10027
212 678 3000

INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: Understanding Team Learning within Senior Leadership Teams of a Middle Atlantic State Public University System

Principal Investigator: Nicole Woods, Teachers College Doctoral Candidate, nmw2115@tc.columbia.eduu, 312-285-4728

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called *Understanding Team Learning within Senior Leadership Teams of a Middle Atlantic State Public University System*. You may qualify to take part in this research study because of your current role as the president of a higher education institution or as a member of the senior executive staff for a higher education institution.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to better understand the working relationships between presidents and senior leadership teams of higher education institutions. The research is designed to provide information on the ways that higher education senior leadership teams learn to work together.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey ***and/or*** be interviewed by the principal investigator. Both survey and the interview will include questions about the working relationships within the senior executive leadership team of your institution.

Survey Participants: A link to the online survey will be sent directly to you and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey will ask you about your interactions with senior leadership team members. Approximately 75 people will participate in the survey portion of this study.

Interview Participants: Face-to-face interviews will be scheduled in your work office and will take approximately 60 minutes. *Participation in the interview portion of the study is restricted to presidents and senior executive staff that have worked together for at least one year*. The interview will include questions about your interactions with senior leadership team members. Approximately 40 people will participate in the interview portion of this study. These participants will be asked to complete the survey before interviews are conducted.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter during typical meetings or workshops with other professionals. Risks may include the discomfort that can occur when you recall a past negative experience with a co-worker. Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants may discontinue their involvement at any time throughout the research process or decline to answer any question. **Your decision to participate, discontinue involvement, and/or decline to answer any question will not be communicated by the researcher to other institutional staff.**

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

While there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, your participation may benefit leadership development program providers through the study's recommendations for strengthening the working relationships between presidents and higher education senior leadership team members. You will receive an executive summary of the study's findings and recommendations at the conclusion of the study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate and there are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed the survey ***and/or*** the interview. However, you can end the interview at any time.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity. Participant's real names will not be included in any official documents and presentations of the data. Participants will be assigned a code based on their functional role. Any records matching participant real names with the functional role codes will be kept separate from participant's real names and any information shared by the participant. If consent for audio recording is not given, the functional role code will be used in all written notes.

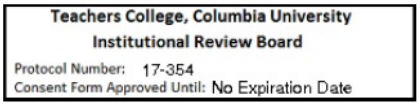
All electronic or digital information, including audio recordings, will be kept in a password protected external hard drive at the investigator's home for the duration of the study. All written information will be kept in a locked drawer in the investigator's home for the duration of the study.

Within three years following the conclusion of the study, all electronic and written materials will be permanently deleted through a file wipe or cross cut shredding.

A non-disclosure agreement will be used with the audio transcription services contractor to ensure consistency with the study's confidentiality standards, including complete and immediate data destruction.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.



CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will still be able to participate in this study.

_____I give my consent to be recorded	_____I **do not** consent to be recorded
_____	_____
Signature	Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

_____ I consent to allow written and/or audio taped materials to be viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College	_____ I **do not** consent to allow written and/or audio taped materials to be viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College
_____	_____
Signature	Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT

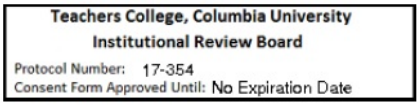
The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes.	I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study.
INITIAL – Yes _____	INITIAL – Yes _____
INITIAL – No _____	INITIAL – No _____

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Nicole Woods, at 312-285-4728 or at nmw2115@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Jeanne Bitterman at 212-678-3701.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.



PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion based on the study's qualification criteria.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: _____ **Date**: _____

Signature:

_____

Teachers College, Columbia University
Institutional Review Board
Protocol Number: 17-354
Consent Form Approved Until: No Expiration Date

Appendix C

Informed Consent for Online Survey

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York NY 10027
212 678 3000

INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: Understanding Team Learning within Senior Leadership Teams of a Middle Atlantic State Public University System

Principal Investigator: Nicole Woods, Teachers College Doctoral Candidate, nmw2115@tc.columbia.eduu, 312-285-4728

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called *Understanding Team Learning within Senior Leadership Teams of a Middle Atlantic State Public University System*.
You may qualify to take part in this research study because of your current role as the president of a higher education institution or as a member of the senior executive staff for a higher education institution.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

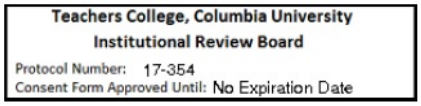
This study is being done to better understand the working relationships between presidents and senior leadership teams of higher education institutions. The research is designed to provide information on the ways that higher education senior leadership teams learn to work together.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an link to the online survey will be sent directly to you and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey will ask you about your interactions with senior leadership team members. Approximately 75 people will participate in the survey portion of this study.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter during typical meetings or workshops with other professionals. Risks may include the discomfort that can occur when you recall a past negative experience with a co-worker. Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants may discontinue their involvement at any time throughout the research process or decline to answer any question. **Your decision to participate, discontinue involvement, and/or decline to answer any question will not be communicated by the researcher to other institutional staff.**



WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

While there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, your participation may benefit leadership development program providers through the study's recommendations for strengthening the working relationships between presidents and higher education senior leadership team members. You will receive an executive summary of the study's findings and recommendations at the conclusion of the study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate and there are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed the survey. However, you can exit the survey at any time even if you haven't finished.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity. All electronic or digital information, including audio recordings, will be kept in a password protected external hard drive at the investigator's home for the duration of the study. All written information will be kept in a locked drawer in the investigator's home for the duration of the study.

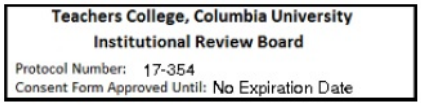
Participant's real names will not be included in any official documents and presentations of the data. Participants will be assigned a code based on their functional role for data analysis. Any records matching participant real names with the functional role codes will be kept separate from participant's real names and any information shared by the participant. Within three years following the conclusion of the study, all electronic and written materials will be permanently deleted through a file wipe or cross cut shredding.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Nicole Woods, at 312-285-4728 or at nmw2115@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Jeanne Bitterman at 212-678-3701. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research.



Appendix D

Non-disclosure Agreement-Transcription Services

Non-Disclosure Agreement for Transcription Services

I hereby agree that any audio recorded information obtained for the study listed below will be kept confidential on a permanent basis.

Protocol Title: Understanding Team Learning within Senior Leadership Teams of a Middle Atlantic State Public University System

Principal Investigator: Nicole Woods, Teachers College Doctoral Candidate, nmw2115@tc.columbia.edu, 312-285-4728

I am not to inform anyone else about any of the content of the interviews. I also refrain from making any copies of the recordings of the interviews. Access to the recorded interviews will be password protected and deleted immediately upon the completion of the transcription.

None of the content will be forwarded to any third party under any circumstances.

---------- ----------

Date Signature

Appendix E

Team Learning Survey Questions

This survey asks you to provide information about your interactions with senior leadership team members. Please read each statement carefully.

In order to accomplish the goals of the research your complete and honest participation is needed. The results of the survey will be aggregated across the system by role and by institution. Upon completion of this dissertation research project findings will be shared with all participants in this process to further the learning.

In the presidential senior leadership team...

FA = Firmly Agree **MA** = Moderately Agree **SA** = Slightly Agree	**N** = Neither Agree nor Disagree	**SD** = Slightly Disagree **MD** = Moderately Disagree **FD** = Firmly Disagree

1. We share personal insights or learning with one another.
2. We often learn through trying out new behaviors.
3. We learned to drop our departmental perspectives and think from an organization-wide perspective.
4. We change our perspectives about ourselves and others.
5. We often revise our viewpoints based on input or new information from others outside the team.
6. We try out new approaches to our jobs as a result of the team's work.
7. The act of working collaboratively results in greater learning for each of us than if we had worked alone
8. We generally incorporate the perspectives of most members in analyzing problems and making decisions.
9. We often find that our views of the problem change as a result of our team discussion.
10. We invite people from outside the team to present information or have discussion with us.
11. We listen to the perspectives of every member in the team.
12. We generally revise our viewpoints based on input or new information from others outside our team.
13. We change our behavior as a result of seeing other team members change.
14. We share what we learn from our team with others outside the team.
15. We challenge our basic beliefs or assumptions about the issues under discussion.
16. We increase our knowledge base by going outside of our team for information.

Excerpted from Team Learning Survey (Dechant & Marsick, 1993)

Appendix F

Teamwork Survey Questions

How often do you interact with the following members of the senior leadership team?
Interactions include meetings and communication by email and phone. Select one response that most accurately reflects the frequency of your interactions.

	Nearly daily	**Primarily bi-weekly/weekly**	**Primarily monthly**	**Not applicable**
Name of Member 1				
Name of Member 2				
Name of Member 3				
etc…				

Which of the following *best* describes the purpose of your interactions?
Interactions include meetings and communication by email and phone. Select one response that most accurately reflects the frequency of your interactions.

	Share Information	**Consult Each Other**	**Provide Status Updates**	**Request Advice**	**Decision Making**	**Planning**
Name of Member 1						
Name of Member 2						
Name of Member 3						
etc…						

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

A. Introductory Remarks

(**NOTE**: Participant survey results will be collected prior to the face-to-face interviews.)

Thank you for taking time today to meet with me and agreeing to participate in this research study. As described in the materials you received, I am conducting a study to better understand your experiences as a member of the senior leadership team [or team name used by the participant's institution, i.e. cabinet, executive committee, etc] and explore your thoughts about how higher education senior leadership teams work and learn together. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral research at Teachers College, Columbia University.

I want to assure you that your identity and your responses will remain confidential throughout this study. You have received an Informed Consent Form and a Participant's Rights Form further detailing the research purpose, procedures, and assurance of methods to be taken to ensure your confidentiality. Do you have any questions or concerns at this point?

While I will take occasional notes during our conversation, an audio recording this interview is a requirement of the interview protocol. Two devices are being used – one as a primary and another as a back-up. The recording will be transcribed and I may need to include portions of the transcripts in my writing and presentations. You will also receive an executive summary of the interview for a confidential accuracy review. Do you consent to have this interview recorded?

To help guide our discussion, I have prepared a series of questions that I'd like to discuss with you. With your permission, I'd like to begin.

[Turn on audio recorder.]

I have just turned on the audio recorder and I would like to ask for your informed consent to conduct this interview. Are you, [insert participant's name], willing to participate in this study?

Have you already signed the Informed Consent Form and Participant's Rights Form, stating your willingness to participate in this study, and stating that you have satisfactory clarity on the purpose and conduct of this research?

Thank you. Our conversation will be divided into four sections beginning with a discussion of your role and connection to other team members. Let's begin.

1. When did you begin your service as [job title] at [institution name]?

B. Purpose of the SLT

2. What do you think the purpose of a senior leadership team should be?

3. As you imagine the future of higher education, are there changes you think will occur within senior leadership teams?

C. SLT Operation and Communication

4. How would you describe your role?

5. What is the senior leadership team at this institution? Who are the senior leaders?

6. Will you please describe the formal meeting structure for the team?

7. How often does the full team meet?

8. How often do you have regularly scheduled meetings with the president? Any member of the team?

9. How are agendas developed for the meetings?

10. How do you decide what agenda items to propose?

11. How would describe the purpose of those meetings, i.e. information exchange, decision making, planning, etc.?
12. How does proximity play in how you engage with vice presidents or how the vice presidents engage with each other?
13. What role does proximity play in relationship building and team interactions?
14. Under what circumstances, do you think it makes the most sense for senior leaders to "stay in their lane" or "move into someone else's lane"?
15. Which member(s) of the senior leadership team, including the president, did you rely upon the most? The least?

D. Closing
16. What didn't I ask that you expected me to ask?
17. Reflecting back on our conversation, do any final thoughts come to mind about the role or operation of the senior leadership team?

President ONLY
- Please describe how you built your current team?
- What have you learned about building a senior team?

This concludes our interview. Thank you for your participation in this study. [Turn off recorder.]

Appendix H

Sample Interview Transcript Coding

Team D_Sabrina -STUD AFFAIRS

Interviewer: First, broadly, what do you think the purpose of the senior leadership team in higher education should be?

Participant: I think senior teams represent the mission, the heart of the university. We set the tone. I think that's part and parcel of a senior leadership team. We have to be the people that care the core ideals of the institution forward. In the community. With the faculty. For the students. A big part of that is reminding people who we are. With that, I think we work with our teams and bring all of that to the table. Because there are times when—and I mean this across higher education having come up in Student Affairs. Student Affairs, in some institutions, sit on the periphery of what's happening when in fact, the work that we do in student affairs is critical to the success of students. The work that you see in academic affairs and student affairs, which naturally go hand in hand. Likewise, the work of our facilities, and the work of course that takes place in the classroom and the work of our foundations and development officers, it's all critical. Because at the end, if done well, it works together to support student success. So I think we have to have more systems-thinking approach to our work.

Interviewer: So if you think ahead and imagine the future of higher education, what do think will occur within senior leadership teams? Are there changes you see coming?

Participant: I'll say this from my experience in higher education, that idea of kind of being in your lane and staying in your lane was how we approached the work. If we are truly going to close the gaps and address the student needs—I mean, we are seeing students with more complex issues. And just in terms of our work in the community, it's holistic work. You know, Student Affairs, we've always kind of seen the holistic needs, but this work is holistic work. And we have to be on the same page and then lock step to do it well.

Now, there may be different ways of getting there so we'll have to come to some agreement on how we do it immediately and then long term and prioritize that. We say students, and we know this work is about students, but that's very

Team D_Sabrina – STUD AFFAIRS

different from student success. I think that has to be the focus. Student affairs has really been the champion and others have come along as we have been pushing this idea. I think we should always be making decisions in the best interest of the students. So whatever the decision, if we look at it from the impact on students or how we want to position students for success if we're always looking and making decisions through the lens of student success, then that has to be the response.

IF2 FIXED RELATIONAL VIEW

The thing we are missing that is starting to change is how we connect. I see the barriers starting to come down. At least I hope they do. When we talk about student success we are talking about bringing every part of the university together. When I look ahead I see us starting to work in that way – as collaborators. Focused on issues that connect us. Sometimes I feel like I have to hold the ground for student affairs, but I see or I hope all of us will start owning a piece of everyone's work.

FT2 FUTURE PURPOSE: INCREASED COLLABORATION

Interviewer: Thank you. So thinking about your role as chief student affairs officer here. How would you describe your role here?

ROLE

Participant: Sure. I've been in higher education for 30 years. I've always been on a college campus. I started here in a staff position. I was at a very ambiguous role, the title was Campus and Community Coordinator. I worked directly with the Dean of Students. And it was a brand new position and so I had the ability to shape it based on I what I saw as the needs of the students and a way to fill the gap in supporting the dean. After 10 months of serving in the role, the Dean of Students announced her retirement. At which point, I was asked to assume the acting role when she left four months later. I served in that role for a while. Two years later, the Dean of Students left, and I assumed—and I'm giving you the abridged version of all of this—I assumed the role of Interim Dean of Students. I served in that capacity going from interim to permanent dean for about seven years. Then I was appointed to the Senior Vice President's position.

LINEAR CAREER PROGRESSION IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Team D_Sabrina STUD AFFAIRS

Interviewer: So, as a senior vice president, who are the people you identify as part of the senior leadership team here?

Participant: What's interesting is we're SALT, and we're the Senior Administrative Leadership Team. And just until about a year ago, we existed as the president, the Chief of Staff, and the Senior Vice Presidents, and just this year added additional members to the team. So with that old iteration, I would have said it is the senior vice presidents with the president and the chief of staff, but no longer. So you have SALT, the Senior Administrative Leadership Team, and then you have your senior vice presidents. Honestly, I am still getting used to the expanded group. Having the others in the room has been an adjustment. They are my colleagues and I want to hear their perspective, but when we are, talking, or working through something, it slow us down and makes it hard to figure out who takes the lead.

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE TO TEAM

IF2 FIXED FUNCTIONAL VIEW

Interviewer: Are there other senior leaders here? People that might not be on the senior team?

Participant: Sure. When I think about my team, we definitely have senior leaders. They may not be on SALT, but they are senior leaders all the same. I consider my direct reports senior leaders and I think they are seen that way.

Interviewer: Thinking about SALT, how would describe the meeting?

Participant: Well, we meet weekly. I know you asked about SALT, but I also bring my team together weekly and try and align it right after SALT, so I can bring them up to speed on anything that comes out of SALT. Let me think. Ok, the agenda. We send items to Chris [chief of staff]. I focus on things my team is working on, issues that SALT should know about or where I need their input to resolve something or work through it. Occasionally I will reach out to someone, like Aiden [academic affairs] before hand to give him a heads up.

IF2 FIXED FUNCTIONAL VIEW

ISSUE RESOLUTION/ PROBLEM SOLVING

MI3

Appendix I

Coding Schemes

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
1. How do presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?	a. Vision and direction b. Culture setting c. Strategic planning	**Current Purpose** a. Strategic planning b. Mission and vision **Future Purpose** c. Creating new roles d. Structural changes	**Senior Leadership Team Purpose** a. Strategic planning and long term thinking b. Collaboration and boundary crossing c. Vision, mission, and identity d. Leadership development **Future Trends in Senior Leadership Teams** a. Structural changes to respond to increased complexity b. Increased collaboration to promote innovation
2. How do presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?	a. Information sharing/major project updates b. Crisis management and issue escalation c. Advice seeking and consultation	**Formal Meetings** a. Decision making b. Strategic planning c. Operational planning and collaboration **Informal Interactions** a. Advice seeking and consultation	**Meeting Purpose** a. Strategic decision making b. Identifying opportunities and setting expectations for collaboration c. Operational alignment **Relationship Building** a. Building trust b. Developing personal rapport and connection **Problem Solving** a. Strategizing based on expertise b. Determining ownership c. Supporting cross-functional projects

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
3. What facilitates or impedes learning within the SLT and between presidents and SLT members?	**Facilitating Factors** a. Building Trust b. Working across silos c. Clear roles and goals **Impeding Factors** a. Protecting turf/distrust b. Hierarchical leadership c. Confused roles and goals	**Facilitating Factors** a. Building Trust b. Clear roles and goals Regular interaction outside formal meetings **Impeding Factors** a. Protecting turf/distrust b. Confused roles and goals c. Lack of regular interaction outside formal meetings	**Learning Facilitating Factors** a. Shared focus on mission b. Shared history and mutual personal support c. Close physical proximity d. Facilitating communication across direct reports **Learning Impeding Factors** a. Prioritization of functional expertise b. Distrust driven by protection of turf c. Conflicting leadership approaches

Appendix J

Final Coding Scheme

RESEARCH QUESTION	CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
1. How do presidents and SLT members describe the purpose of senior leadership teams?	**1A. Senior Leadership Team Purpose (SLTP)**	
	SLTP 1: Strategic planning and long-term thinking	Establish institutional strategy and define goals and priorities; defining institutional direction; funnel resources to achieve goals; making adjustments to strategy and goals
	SLTP 2: Collaboration and boundary crossing	Breaking siloed thinking; inclusion of multiple perspectives and viewpoints
	SLTP 3: Enactment of vision and mission	Set direction, tone, and culture of the institution; uphold and reinforce the values of the institution; make decisions that support the institution's mission and identity
	1B. Future Trends in Senior Leadership Teams (FT)	
	FT 1: Development of new senior leadership team roles	Creation of new types of senior roles to respond to emerging needs or redesign/restructuring of current roles
	FT 2: Increased demand for collaboration and cross-functional work	Breaking down silos and traditional barriers based on organizational structure
2. How do presidents and SLT members describe their work with each other?	**2A. Managing the Institution (MI)**	
	MI 1: Information sharing	Reporting progress on projects, providing status and issue updates
	MI 2: Determining ownership and key decision makers	Defining the scope of an issue, clarifying roles and who needs to own and be accountable for key decision making
	MI 3: Problem solving and issue resolution	Strategizing on responding to emergent or pressing issues, problems, and conflicts
	2B. Relationship Building (RB)	
	RB: Developing personal rapport	Sharing personal challenges, seeking advice and counsel, connecting socially

3. What facilitates or impedes learning within the SLT and between presidents and SLT members?	**3A. Facilitating factors (FF)**	
	FF 1: Member articulation of presidential expectation for collaboration	SLT members expressing the presidential expectation for collaboration
	FF 2: Building trust through shared commitment to mission	Focus on or belief in building trust with each other through a shared commitment to the institutional mission and success
	FF 3: Flexible view of functional expertise	Operate from a view that functions are inherently linked and outcomes impact multiple functions; invested in sharing expertise
	3B. Impeding factors (IF)	
	IF 1: Building trust through shared history	Focus on or belief in leveraging relationship history as a primary path to building trust
	IF 2: Fixed view of functional expertise	Operate from a view that functional expertise needs to be guarded or protected from other; focus on advocating for function

Appendix K

Team Learning Survey Results

Table K.1. Team Learning Processes Scores, By Team

Team Learning Survey			
	Average Results	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
Team A	77.3	15.2	Pooled
Team B	65.0	1.6	Fragmented
Team C	79.5	9.9	Pooled
Team D	71.3	9.9	Pooled
Team E	67.0	5.8	Fragmented

Table K.2. Team Learning Processes Scores, By Functional Role

	TEAM LEARNING SURVEY		
	Average Results	**Standard Deviation**	**Interpretation**
President	73.6	10.7	Pooled
Academic Affairs	73.4	7.5	Pooled
Finance	65.0	3.9	Fragmented
Student Affairs	65.2	3.8	Fragmented
Advancement	72.8	5.3	Pooled

Table K.3. Team Learning Processes Scoring Key

Synergistic	**Pooled**	**Fragmented**
112-81	80-69	68-16

Appendix L

Teamwork Survey Results

Table L.1. Interaction Frequency Results, Between Core Functional Roles

	INTERACTION FREQUENCY	
	Average Frequency [1]	**Level of Team Agreement [2]**
Team A	2.4	40%
Team B	2.4	60%
Team C	1.9	90%
Team D	2.0	80%
Team E	2.5	50%

1 - Average of participant responses, based on a 0-3 scale - nearly daily – 3; primarily bi-weekly/weekly – 2; primarily monthly – 1; not sure – 0

2 - Comparison of member agreement with each other's report of interaction frequency

Table L.2. Interaction Frequency Results, By Core Functional Roles

	Average Frequency
President	2.5
Academic Affairs	2.2
Finance	2.2
Student Affairs	1.7
Advancement	1.7

Table L.3. Teamwork Survey, Meeting Purpose Results, by Team

Team A	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	42%	**33%**	**25%**
Team B	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	43%	**30%**	**27%**
Team C	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	30%	**31%**	**40%**
Team D	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	39%	**26%**	**35%**
Team E	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	48%	**30%**	**22%**

Table L.4. Teamwork Survey, Interaction Purpose Results, By Functional Role

President	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	41%	**25%**	**34%**
Academic Affairs	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	38%	**31%**	**31%**
Finance	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	39%	**28%**	**32%**
Student Affairs	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	40%	**29%**	**31%**
Advancement	**Share information & Provide status updates**	**Consult with each other & Request advice**	**Decision making & Planning**
	40%	**32%**	**28%**

Appendix M

Coding Frequency Charts

		Senior Leadership Team Purpose			Future Trends	
		71%	32%	66%	71%	37%
		SLTP 1	SLTP 2	SLTP 3	FT 1	FT 2
		Strategic planning/ long term thinking	Collaboration and boundary crossing	Enactment of vision and mission	New senior leadership roles	Increased collaboration and cross-functional work
A1	**President**	x	x	X		x
A2	Academic Affairs			X		x
A3	Finance	x		X	x	
A4	Student Affairs			X	x	
A5	Advancement	x		X	x	
A6	Chief of Staff	x		X	x	
A7	Enrollment			X	x	
A8	Access and Inclusion		x	x	x	
A9	General Counsel	x			x	
A10	Strategic Planning	x		x		x
	TOTAL	**60%**	**20%**	**90%**	**70%**	**30%**
B1	**President**	x	x		x	
B2	Academic Affairs	x			x	
B3	Finance	x			x	
B4	Student Affairs	x	x			x
B5	Advancement	x			x	
	TOTAL	**100%**	**40%**	**0%**	**80%**	**20%**
C1	**President**	x	x	x	x	x
C2	Academic Affairs	x	x	x	x	x
C3	Finance	x			x	
C4	Student Affairs	x	x	x	x	
C5	Advancement	x		x		x
C6	Chief of Staff	x		x		x
C7	Enrollment Management			x	x	
C8	Information Technology	x	x		x	
C9	Research			x	x	
C10	General Counsel	x			x	
	TOTAL	**70%**	**30%**	**70%**	**80%**	**40%**
D1	**President**	x	x	x		x
D2	Academic Affairs	x		x	x	
D3	Finance	x		x	x	x
D4	Student Affairs			x		x
D5	Advancement		x	x		x
D6	Chief of Staff	x	x			x
	TOTAL	**67%**	**50%**	**83%**	**33%**	**83%**

		Senior Leadership Team Purpose			Future Trends	
		SLTP 1	**SLTP 2**	**SLTP 3**	**FT 1**	**FT 2**
		Strategic planning/ long term thinking	Collaboration and boundary crossing	Enactment of vision and mission	New senior leadership roles	Increased collaboration and cross-functional work
E1	**President**	x	x		x	
E2	Academic Affairs			x	x	
E3	Finance			x	x	
E4	Student Affairs			x	x	
E5	Administration	x		x	x	
E6	General Counsel	x			x	
E7	Research	x				x
	TOTAL	**43%**	**14%**	**57%**	**86%**	**14%**

		Managing the Institution			Relationship Building
		92%	55%	63%	50%
		MI 1	MI 2	MI 3	RB
		Information sharing	Determining ownership and key decision makers	Problem solving and issue resolution	Developing personal rapport
A1	**President**	**x**	**x**		
A2	Academic Affairs	x		x	x
A3	Finance	x		x	x
A4	Student Affairs	x	x	x	x
A5	Advancement	x		x	x
A6	Chief of Staff	x	x	x	x
A7	Enrollment	x	x		x
A8	Access and Inclusion	x	x		x
A9	General Counsel			x	x
A10	Strategic Planning	x	x		x
	% of total team	**90%**	**60%**	**60%**	**90%**
B1	**President**	**x**	**x**	**x**	
B2	Academic Affairs	x	x		
B3	Finance	x		x	
B4	Student Affairs	x		x	x
B5	Advancement	x		x	x
	% of total team	**100%**	**40%**	**80%**	**40%**
C1	**President**	**x**	**x**		**x**
C2	Academic Affairs	x	x		x
C3	Finance	x	x	x	x
C4	Student Affairs	x	x	x	x
C5	Advancement	x		x	x
C6	Chief of Staff	x	x	x	x
C7	Enrollment Management			x	
C8	Information Technology				
C9	Research	x	x		
C10	General Counsel	x	x		
	% of total team	**80%**	**70%**	**50%**	**60%**
D1	**President**	**x**	**x**		
D2	Academic Affairs	x			
D3	Finance	x	x	x	
D4	Student Affairs	x		x	
D5	Advancement	x	x		
D6	Chief of Staff	x	x	x	
	% of total team	**100%**	**67%**	**50%**	**0%**

		Managing the Institution			Relationship Building
		MI 1	**MI 2**	**MI 3**	**RB**
		Information sharing	Determining ownership and key decision makers	Problem solving and issue resolution	Developing personal rapport
E1	**President**	**x**		**x**	**x**
E2	Academic Affairs	x		x	
E3	Finance	x	x	x	
E4	Student Affairs	x		x	x
E5	Administration	x		x	
E6	General Counsel	x	x		
E7	Research	x		x	
	% of total team	**100%**	**29%**	**86%**	**29%**

		Facilitating Factors		Impeding Factors		
		55%	**50%**	**47%**	**50%**	**53%**
		FF1	**FF2**	**FF3**	**IF 1**	**IF 2**
		Member articulation of presidential expectation for collaboration	Building trust through shared commitment to mission	Flexible view of functional expertise	Building trust through shared history	Fixed view of functional expertise
A1	**President**	N/A	**x**	**x**		
A2	Academic Affairs	x	x	x		
A3	Finance	x			x	x
A4	Student Affairs				x	x
A5	Advancement				x	x
A6	Chief of Staff	x	x	x		
A7	Enrollment				x	x
A8	Access and Inclusion	x			x	x
A9	General Counsel	x			x	x
A10	Strategic Planning	x		x	x	
	% of total team	**67%**	**30%**	**40%**	**70%**	**60%**
B1	**President**	N/A			**x**	**x**
B2	Academic Affairs				x	x
B3	Finance				x	x
B4	Student Affairs				x	x
B5	Advancement				x	x
	% of total team	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**100%**	**100%**
C1	**President**	N/A	**x**	**x**		
C2	Academic Affairs	x	x	x		
C3	Finance	x	x	x		
C4	Student Affairs	x			x	x
C5	Advancement	x	x	x		
C6	Chief of Staff	x	x	x		
C7	Enrollment Management	x	x	x		
C8	Information Technology	x	x			x
C9	Research	x	x	x		
C10	General Counsel	x			x	x
	% of total team	**100%**	**80%**	**70%**	**20%**	**30%**

		Facilitating Factors		Impeding Factors		
		55%	50%	47%	47%	53%
		FF1	FF2	FF3	IF 1	IF 2
		Member articulation of presidential expectation for collaboration	Building trust through shared commitment to mission	Flexible view of functional expertise	Building trust through shared history	Fixed view of functional expertise
D1	**President**	N/A	**x**	**x**		
D2	Academic Affairs				x	x
D3	Finance				x	x
D4	Student Affairs			x	x	
D5	Advancement	x	x	x		
D6	Chief of Staff	x	x	x		
	% of total team	**40%**	**50%**	**67%**	**50%**	**33%**
E1	**President**	N/A	**x**	**x**		
E2	Academic Affairs		x			x
E3	Finance	x		x	x	
E4	Student Affairs				x	x
E5	Administration		x	x		
E6	General Counsel		x			x
E7	Research		x			x
	% of total team	**17%**	**71%**	**43%**	**29%**	**57%**