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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

REBUILDING TRUST IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Seher Awan

July, 2017

Andrew Harvey, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Seher Awan

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my parents, Mohammed Athar Awan and Fakhriya Awan. Thank you for making me who I am today, pushing me to be the best I could be, nurturing my rebellious spirit, and giving me the courage to stand strong against this world.

This project is also dedicated to my brother, Azam, for being my best friend. Thank you for always having my back and standing by my side, always having faith in me when no one else could see me, showing me the definition of true bravery, and being my partner in crime.

Finally, this project is dedicated to my husband Omar. Thank you for your unconditional love and support, always allowing me to shine, and supporting me in every crazy idea I have, being my partner in this life, and supporting me when I thought I wouldn't see this to the end.

I hope I can continue to make you all proud. I love you all more than words could ever express. You are all pieces of my heart and the reason I can stand tall.



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In my life and in my career, I would not be where I am today without the mentorship I have been blessed to receive over the years. From being 19 years old and having big dreams to being the vice president of a college today, thank you to all my mentors and friends for your patience, guidance, and continued faith and support. A special thank you to:

Dr. Pamela Brogdon-Wynne

Diane Fahr, MBA

Greg Nelson, MBA

Dr. Byron Clift Breland

Dr. Anthony Beebe

Your continued friendship and mentorship have made me the leader I am today and given me the courage to keep reaching for the stars. Thank you so much!

## VITA

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## ABSTRACT

The California Community College (CCC) system is the largest system of higher education in the United States, with 72 districts and 113 colleges. The CCC system exhibits statistics demonstrating success; however, as with any organization, trust, communication, and leadership play an essential role in creating stable and productive organizations. Institutions that struggle with trust within the system are often plagued with rotating administration, a breakdown in communication, and accreditation issues. Unique to CCCs is the required participation of its staff in the decision-making process, which is known as shared or participatory governance. Along with participatory governance, the stringent accreditation standards and retiring work force create a delicate situation where trust and leadership are in a state of consistent transition. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the critical components of rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken. Specifically, this study focused on the practices a CCC administrator can engage in to rebuild trust within his/her institution after trust is broken.

Based on in-depth interviews with eight CCC presidents, findings revealed that a president's personal character, ethics, and morals are determining factors in developing and reestablishing trust within a CCC. The importance of relationship building, using multiple communication styles, and catering communication channels to target audiences played a critical role in these presidents' ability to develop trust. Most importantly, strategic, authentic, and consistent leadership were some one of the most significant factors related to rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken. It is recommended that CCC presidents and administrators become familiar with the complex layers of CCCs, specifically with building and rebuilding trust within an institution. Additional research on the CCC presidential leadership

style; the relationship among adult learning, emotional healing, and storytelling; as well as supplemental quantitative research to strengthen the external validity of this study are needed.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Nelson Mandela (as cited in Durando, 2013), “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” (p. 1). The mission of California Community Colleges (CCCs) is to offer academic and vocational instruction for students of all ages. These community colleges provide an accessible and cost effective option for students to receive a college education. “The California Community College system is the largest provider of workforce training in the state and nation” (California Community Colleges [CCCs] Chancellor’s Office, n.d., p. 2). Community colleges within California educate 70% of the state’s nurses and 80% of the state firefighters and law enforcement personnel (CCCs Chancellor’s Office, n.d.).

In addition to the power of the CCCs system, these colleges provide a high return on college education. “For every \$1 California invests in students who graduate from college, it will receive a net return of \$4.50” (CCCs Chancellor’s Office, n.d., p. 2). Californians with college degrees earn \$400,000 more in their lifetime than their peers with only a high school diploma (CCCs Chancellor’s Office, n.d.). The CCC system exhibits statistics demonstrating success; however, as with any organization, trust, communication, and leadership play an essential role creating stable and productive organizations. Those institutions that struggle with trust within the system are often plagued with rotating administration, a breakdown in communication, and accreditation issues.

Robbins and Judge (2010) defined trust as a psychological state that exists when an individual agrees to make himself or herself vulnerable to another because he/she has positive expectations about his/her current and future experiences. Trust is the underlying foundation in any relationship, and the breaking of trust has serious adverse consequences. This study

examined the rebuilding of trust from the perspective of experienced CCC presidents. This dissertation reviews the accounts of CCC presidents exploring and identifying characteristics of leadership and steps for rebuilding trust within an organization.

## **Background**

The CCC system is the largest system of higher education in the United States (CCC's Chancellor's Office, n.d.). With 72 districts and 113 colleges, this system empowers over 2.1 million students every year to achieve their dreams. CCCs serve a diverse student population; over 55% of students come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and 53% of the total population is female. This system provides opportunities for some of the lowest-income students in the state, with full-time students having an annual median income of \$16,223 and one-fourth of these students having an income of less than \$5,544 per year. Almost 42% of California veterans receiving the GI Bill education benefits attend a CCC and more than half of CCC students are over the age of 25 and already working adults (Foundation for California Community Colleges [CCCs], n.d.).

Community colleges provide the educational foundation for millions of students within California. These campuses are composed of educators, staff, and administrators tasked to create a student-centered learning environment where all populations excel. Unique to CCCs, is the required participation of its staff in the decision-making process. California Education Code 70902(b)(7) requires that faculty, staff, and students participate effectively in district and college governance (Community College League of California, 2014). This code emphasizes the need for the College Board and leadership to consult collegially and allow for faculty, classified staff, and students to effectively participate in decisions that affect them. Participatory governance

plays a major role within CCCs, establishing trust among the constituency groups and college administrators.

Throughout CCCs, the Academic/Faculty Senate, California School Employees Association (CSEA) or Classified Senate, and Associated Student Government (ASG) participate through standing committees in order to actively engage in decision-making processes. This transparent and participatory process is intended to create trust and a healthy working environment within institutions. Although the president and administrators are not legally obligated to accept the recommendations of these constituency groups, their role and participation is critical within governance matters and building trust within the institutions. The ideal situation occurs when the chief executive officer (CEO) and constituency groups are in agreement on recommendations for the college and to the board of trustees. However, if there is disagreement, the president is still obligated to make decisions in a timely manner, and engaging in participatory governance can clarify the points of agreement and disagreement (Community College League of California, 2014).

The participatory model of governance is fairly new compared to the authoritarian and bureaucratic models used in the past. Participatory governance is vital to the trust and internal wellness of community colleges. Presidents and administrators who do not engage actively in this participatory governance model can destroy trust and the ability to communicate with constituency groups on campus, creating long-term detrimental results. Most concerning is the amount of conflict, emotional turmoil, and resentment that can occur if participatory governance is not recognized and employed. Many traumas experienced by community colleges have been due to the dissolution of communication with constituencies on campus (Sullivan, Reichard, & Shumate, 2005).

Participatory governance, transparent processes, and administrator trust are also key factors in the accreditation process that all 113 CCCs must undergo (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges [ACCJC], 2015). Schools that are unable to maintain their accreditation and receive a warning or probationary status are subjected to negative media attention, loss of faith from stakeholders, and severe mistrust from both internal and external constituencies (Martindale, 2014). After negative accreditation experiences, administrative turnover is common. Old regimes exit institutions, making way for new administrators hired to problem-solve and bring the colleges into compliance. Retirement can also be used to encourage old administrators to exit quickly, allowing new administrative teams to enter and begin addressing issues (Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

Administrator turnover and the need to establish new relationships with constituency groups can further impact trust within a community college environment. Many community colleges around the country have experienced administrative turnover due to the retiring workforce, fiscal mismanagement or administrator scandals. In the aftermath of these scandals, the faculty, staff, and remaining administrators are left to rebuild their institutions. Many institutions around the country, including top institutions such as Harvard, have felt beleaguered due to administrator misconduct and broken trust (Gardner, 2013). A common recourse is that these administrators exit the institution quickly, leaving behind an array of emotions and crumbled infrastructures that then need to be rebuilt.

When new administrators enter a college, adult learning is required within the college setting to educate the staff on new processes, expectations, and culture. To begin rebuilding trust, college personnel must learn how to adapt to the new administrators and create new relationships, operating within shared governance effectively. Johnson and Taylor (2006)



identified four pillars of learning: gathering, reflecting, creating, and testing. The authors note that associations occur with memories and comprehension depends on the association of past and present events; these events can lead to positive or negative results. If negative, these events can create powerful emotional barriers to learning. Johnson and Taylor discuss the term *reframing*, framing experiences through a different lens or perspective, which can help find new meaning from past experiences. The emotional climate of a community college can be one of the most powerful barriers to rebuilding trust within the institution.

### **Statement of the Problem**

When trust is broken in relationships through a breakdown in communication, victims often feel an “overwhelming array of emotions such as fear, hurt, anger, numbness, or disbelief. As a result, the interactions are often chaotic, intensely negative, and likely to lead to frustration and anger rather than a sense of resolution” (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2005, p. 1,395). The mistrust of administrator intentions creates observed consequences within a community college, including emotional volatility, confusion of roles within the institution, political power struggles, lack of communication and transparency, and loss of faith in the shared governance process (Sullivan et al., 2005). Numerous studies have been performed examining leadership within community colleges, participatory governance and its role, as well as climates for change within these institutions. However, no studies have been completed documenting the rebuilding of trust within a community college after mistrust is experienced on an institutional level.

### **Purpose and Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the critical components of rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken. This study examined the rebuilding of trust from the perspective of experienced members of CCC administration, specifically college presidents. As

stated previously, many studies have been conducted documenting the process of trust building and the importance of shared governance. This study presents a new perspective on the process of rebuilding trust within an institution, documenting steps, addressing emotional recovery and its relationship to adult learning, and providing tools from experts in the field. This exploratory study employed qualitative research using interviews to establish behavioral patterns and best practices to rebuild trust within a CCC setting.

### **Research Question**

To explore the perceptions of CCC presidents, the following question were explored through this study:

- What practices can CCC administrators engage in to rebuild trust within their institution after trust is broken?

### **Significance of Study**

CCCs impact millions of lives every year (CCCs Chancellor's Office, n.d.). Participatory governance and trust are the foundation of healthy colleges (Community College League of California, 2014). High-functioning institutions that are accomplishing their missions and achieving student success can change lives. However, those institutions that are unable to establish trust and engage in collegial participatory governance are hindered by internal strife, taking focus from students to bureaucratic processes. New and current administrators engage in shared governance; however, few are ever trained to navigate the complicated committee structures that require trust and transparency. Further, many new administrators underestimate the impact of negative emotions associated with previous administrations on the ability to create new relationships with constituency groups.

All CCCs are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Although the ACCJC has been criticized in recent years for being overly punitive, this entity has consistently accredited schools throughout California, holding all colleges to a stringent set of standards (Warth, 2015). Accreditation is vital to CCC students, guaranteeing their education and degree validity. However, “In the past 10 years, all but 37 of CCCs were placed on some level of sanction, two-thirds of the total colleges in the system” (Warth, 2015, p. 11). These public sanctions have exacerbated the lack of trust in CCCs. Many components compromise the need for the ACCJC to place sanctions on a college. The strict standards that the ACCJC evaluates are embedded throughout college operations and leadership. Most commonly, lack of transparency, lack of integrated processes, poor communication, administrator distrust, and lack of participatory governance can lead to a warning or probationary status (Warth, 2015). All of these areas are directly tied to broken trust and failing systems within a college. As new and existing administrators are forced to change, it is essential that clear steps be documented to assist with the trust rebuilding process.

New administrators within the community college system will benefit from understanding their role and how to establish and maintain trust within the system, learning to navigate the emotional climate and complicated shared governance structure. Existing administrators will benefit from the prescribed steps regarding how to rebuild trust after experiencing a loss of trust. Shared governance groups can benefit by understanding the relationship between trust and the administrators that participate within the shared governance model. Most CCCs have experienced administrator mistrust on some level. The outcomes of this study provide a prescribed method for administrators to implement to rebuild trust within a college. With the increasing changes in funding, education code, and the Student Success Act,

high functioning colleges with an environment built on trust are necessary to continue to impact social equity and empower disadvantaged student populations to achieve their educational and professional goals. This study will contribute to the existing literature by providing expert testimonials and instructions on how to create an environment built on trust.

### **Definition of Terms**

- *Behaviors*: Observed action, activity, or mannerisms by individuals; actions in response to a system or environment, human actions influenced by culture, attitude, emotions, values, ethics, and authority (Triandis, 1994).
- *California Community College*: A 2-year, publicly funded, post-secondary institution providing higher education, certificates, associate degrees, and limited baccalaureate degrees (CCC's Chancellor's Office, n.d.).
- *Character*: The "exercise of virtuous behavior in the face of constant turmoil, permanent change, frequent provocation, and demanding conditions" (Kilburg, 2012, p. 44). Character encompasses a leader's emotional intelligence, education, and self-esteem. It demonstrates the moral and ethical foundation of a political leader and his/her ability to practice servant leadership.
- *Community College Administrators*: College employees hired by contract to fulfill the day-to-day campus functions, providing financial guidance, management, and leadership for the institution (CCC's Chancellor's Office, n.d.).
- *Emotional Climate*: Environment where intense feelings are directed at someone or something; a set of responses that may include verbal, physiological, and behavioral mechanisms within an established environment; feelings, moods, and affects that impact an organization (Fox, 2008).

- *Influence*: The ability of a leader “to create meaningful relationships with others through which the work of an enterprise is accomplished” (Kilburg, 2012, p. 49). Influence, along with assertiveness and networking, can determine how instrumental and persuasive a leader can be. Influence relates directly to a leader’s effectiveness and his/her ability to accomplish goals and tasks aligned with his/her mission. The most successful leaders are able to persuade rather than force cooperation.
- *Leadership Craft*: Based on the writings of Hill and Lynn (2008), craft is defined as a manager’s personal tools of the trade, such as how to use personal efforts to influence performance through goal setting, exemplary actions, and leadership. In this study, a leader’s leadership skills will be referred to as his/her craft.
- *Participatory Governance*: A more appropriate term for shared governance, as shared governance also implies shared responsibility, which is not the case, as administrators are held responsible for decision-making and subsequent consequences (Community College League of California, 2014).
- *Shared Governance*: California Education Code 70902(b)(7) requires that faculty, staff, and students participate effectively in district and college governance (Community College League of California, 2014). Also known as a social system of self government wherein decision-making responsibility is shared among those affected by the decisions. “At the community college level, shared governance means that responsibility for institutional decisions is shared among governing boards, district administrators, and faculty, with joint recognition and respect for the participation of staff and students” (Lau, 1996, p. 2).

- *Strategy*: Creating and implementing a direction for the organization. By crafting a clear vision and implementing attainable goals aligned with the defined strategy, a leader can create unity throughout the organization. The vision of a leader will exemplify what is most important to that leader and his/her priorities and agenda (Kilburg, 2012).
- *Trust*: The underlying foundation in any relationship; a psychological state that exists when an individual agrees to make himself/herself vulnerable to another because he/she has positive expectations about the current and future experiences (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

### **Delimitations**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspective of CCC presidents to determine how to rebuild trust within a community college after trust has been broken. The interviews were conducted within a 2-month period of time. The interviews were conducted by telephone at the request of the participants due to the participants' availability and accessibility. Participants were from within the state of California. Additionally, the sample criteria required that the participants be *both*:

1. A CCC administrator for at least 1 year;
2. A current CCC president;

### **Assumptions**

The underlying assumption of this study is that there is mistrust within the CCC system. With over two-thirds of the total colleges in the system being placed on some level of sanction since 2005, the issue of broken trust is present (Warth, 2015). Nevarez and Wood (2010) stated that the community college system would experience unprecedented turnover in leadership

within the next decade, especially among its senior ranks primarily due to an aging workforce. Studies show that administrator turnover is directly tied to mistrust within community colleges (Kearney, 2013). “In contrast to other sectors, higher education has few internal mechanisms to train new and aspiring administrators for successive levels of leadership” (Nevarez & Wood, 2010, p. 253). The media attention surrounding the ongoing accreditation issues within the system as well as the rotating administrations airs these concerns publicly. This public attention has created underlying levels of mistrust within both the internal and external stakeholders for each CCC. This study is based on the premise that mistrust exists and that CCCs must rebuild trust to maintain healthy operations and support student success.

Within the study, participants engaged in a 60-minute interview. The interview questions were deemed valid and reliable. It is assumed that participants answered honestly and performed as agreeable contributors to this study. To mitigate the possible risks, protect participants, and maintain the integrity of the study, the interviewees’ identities will be kept confidential. The assumption is made that the assurance of confidentiality encouraged participants to answer honestly and protect them from employer retaliation. The refinement of the interview questions is assumed to ensure the validity of this study. The interview questions and coding of the findings were deemed reliable and correct based on the pilot testing. The questions were adapted to suit the nature of this study.

Regarding the role of the researcher, the researcher conducting this study is a seasoned CCC administrator. With over 10 years in the CCC sector, it was assumed that the researcher brought both experiences and assumptions that would impact the interviews. The researcher has personal experiences in regard to rebuilding trust in community colleges that may be reflected in the interpretation of data and identification of themes. Although structured and consistent

protocols were followed, the researcher is aware of personal assumptions that may impact the interview process.

### **Organization of Study**

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 includes background on the topic, the research question, the significance of the study, and the limitations. Chapter 2 presents a literature review, which details the current research in regard to trust, shared governance, and how adult learning theory relates to participatory governance. Chapter 3 describes the research design and details regarding the interview process, sample size, and participants. Chapter 4 presents the study's findings including answers to the established research question. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the entire study, a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and areas for further research.



## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the rebuilding of trust within community colleges, including: demographics and statistics about the CCC system; the history of CCCs; the current CCC environment; the role of participatory governance within the Community college environment; the emotional recovery process to broken trust within the college setting; ethics, decision-making, and accountability; the role of administrators and their leadership within an institution; honesty and communication among college administrators; why transformation efforts fail; and adult learning and its ties to changing culture within an institution. Gaps within the literature will also be highlighted to support the significance of this study.

### **Demographics and Statistics**

The CCC system supports student success throughout California. Approximately one in every five community college students in the nation attends a CCC. Three out of every 10 Californians ages 18-24 are currently enrolled in a community college, demonstrating the vast reach of these institutions on education within the state. The CCC system is also one of the most diverse student populations in the nation, comprising 38.9% Hispanic, 7.3% African-American, and 10.8% Asian students. Based on 2012-2013 student demographics, 24.7% of the student population is under 19 years of age. The majority of students, 33.3%, fall within the 20-24 year age range, with 53.6% of the total population being female and 45.3% of the student population being male (CCC's Chancellor's Office, n.d.). These demographics present a diverse student population, with many disadvantaged student populations being represented.

### **The History of Community Colleges**

The current CCC system is the largest system of higher education in the United States, with 72 districts and a total of 113 colleges located throughout the state (Foundation for CCCs,

n.d.). Although the community college system is considered a higher education system, Knoell (1997) stated, “The California constitution currently views community colleges as part of the “common-school” system, which includes kindergarten through Grade 14” (p. 122). However, in 1960, community colleges were recognized for playing an integral role in public higher education, as stated in California’s Master Plan for Higher Education. Once recognized, CCCs were tasked with the primary responsibility of providing initial college access to high school seniors, emphasizing the key role that community colleges play with diverse and underrepresented student populations.

The update to the 1960 California Master Plan was a turning point for community colleges within the state. This update not only integrated the community college system within higher education along with the University of California and California State University systems, but also affected the funding formula and sources of funding available to support the institutions. A majority of the funding for community colleges is accessed through local property tax revenue, with the State General Fund used as a secondary source. Construction of new facilities also relies heavily on local funding. Unlike community college systems in other states, the CCC system is empowered to provide numerous modes of education. For-credit courses that meet degree and certificate requirements are primary educational activities accepted by baccalaureate institutions in satisfaction of degree requirements. Community colleges also focus heavily on basic skills, vocational training, career technical education, and apprenticeship education and training. Grants from state and federal agencies are often pursued to supplement the minimal state funding for community colleges, in addition to partnerships with outside business partners and educational institutions to maximize community impact while minimizing costs (Knoell, 1997). All CCCs are accredited through the ACCJC, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges’ (WASC)

accrediting body. “Accreditation is a voluntary system of self-regulation developed to evaluate overall educational quality and institutional effectiveness” (ACCJC, 2015, p. 2). Trust, college stability, mission, vision, and strategic goals are all assessed during the accreditation process, along with the institution’s ability to perform successfully while ensuring integrated planning through shared governance.

### **The Current CCC Environment**

Currently, each of the CCC districts operates with a locally elected board of trustees, individuals that are responsive and integrated members of their community. Trustees oversee the operations and budgets of their local colleges within their districts. The district board of trustees is also responsible for the hiring of the District Chancellor, who is then tasked to oversee the operational activities of the college(s) and district, including hiring, human resources, administrative services, instruction, student services, and all auxiliary functions within the college environment. Although the colleges continue to have locally elected board members, the CCC system has been under the jurisdiction of a state-level board of governors, appointed by the governor of California, that employs a State Chancellor and staff (Knoell, 1997). According to Knoell (1997), “The legislature enacts laws into the education code that apply to the community colleges, and the board of governors adopts regulations into the administrative code that implement the education code” (p. 124). Both California education code and the Board of Governors require CCCs to partake in participatory governance, emphasizing the critical role that faculty, classified staff, and students play within the governance and decision-making process within community colleges. Faculty are particularly active within participatory governance, through both local and statewide academic senates; they also have two seats reserved for faculty on the board of governors.

The CCC Board of Governors sets policy and provides guidance for the districts and colleges that constitute the system. The appointed Board of Governors interacts formally with state and federal officials and selects a chancellor for the system. The chancellor then brings formal recommendations to the board to represent the CCCs' interests. A process of shared governance guides the current CCC system. The board maintains a consultation process to ensure that all constituency groups are consulted in state policy decisions. The system chancellor considers all discussions prior to making any final recommendations to the Board of Governors. The process has become more formalized over the years to form a Consultation Council, composed of 18 representatives from differing constituency groups including: administrators, students, faculty, classified staff, instructional officers, business officers, student services officers, executive officers, and trustees (California Community Colleges [CCC] Chancellor's Office, n.d., p. 2).

Since 2010, the CCC system has begun to emphasize student success and equity within its colleges. Specifically, the development of the Student Success Task Force engaged the entire state of California in a vigorous analysis of student success factors and examining the low completion rates of disadvantaged student populations (CCC's Chancellor's Office, n.d.). The Student Success Task Force recommended 22 specific policy changes to improve educational achieving within the CCC system. The passing of Senate Bill 1456, known as the Student Success Act of 2012, strove to enforce the 22 policy changes into attainable goals required of all CCCs by 2018 (CCC's Chancellor's Office, 2012). Of these 22 policy changes, each institution is being evaluated via a number of indicators using the new Student Success Scorecard, including: equity, retention, persistence, counseling, assessment, orientation, and student-centered instruction.

This recent shift focusing on student success and services in addition to instruction has continued to change the culture of community colleges within California. With this act has also come additional funding to support this initiative; however, complications occur as this funding and its required 2:1 cash match conflict directly with the 50% law. The disparity with student success and instruction as well as the competition for limited resources have aggravated the culture within community colleges.

### **The Role of Participatory Governance**

As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, CCCs are unique, as they require participation of staff in the decision-making process per California Education Code 70902(b) (7). Often called shared governance, participatory governance is a more appropriate term, as shared governance also implies shared responsibility, which is not the case, as administrators are held responsible for decision-making and subsequent consequences (Community College League of California, 2014). Sullivan et al. (2005) highlighted that community colleges are under constant pressure to increase participatory governance on campus, not only for the sake of morale, but also for accountability and accreditation purposes. In order to maintain a collaborative leadership style and open avenues of communication, leaders today must “use a more participatory approach that respects governance principles and capitalizes on the energy of teams” (p. 428). Today’s colleges respond better to a participatory, collaborative model characterized by open communication, broad staff involvement, and shared decision-making. Today’s colleges are also more reflective and accountable, using various means to gather empirical data measuring progress and positive change. However, the path to achieving a trusting and effective shared/participatory governance environment can be challenging. According to Piland and Randall (1998):

There must be open communication and a large degree of mutual trust in a shared governance environment. The process of shared governance is lengthy, tedious, and difficult in terms of the need for increased interpersonal skills. The difficulty is finding the means of assessing appropriate and lasting responsibility for decisions and actions in a milieu of constant personnel change, in order that suitable roles for faculty, administrators, and staff are defined and accepted by all parties. The resulting empowerment of participants and the development of a new collegial relationship between formerly separate groups can lead to the emergence of an improved college environment, improved communication between all levels of college employees and students, and a greater understanding of the issues facing the college. (p. 101)

Lack of trust can be a serious impediment to many American schools. New forms of governance have been taking shape, with greater expectations of shared interests and goals, a higher level of effectiveness, and a greater flexibility in regard to changing demands and environmental pressures. As depicted in the media, there has been a growing perception that American society has become increasingly distrustful of its educational institutions and leaders. Distrust can provoke feelings of anxiety and insecurity, and causes individual to feel uncomfortable about expending energy on monitoring the behavior and possible motives of others (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). As leaders within educational institutions address mistrust, they must identify those key individuals who have become mistrustful of administrators and the organization. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), "Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. Any discussion of leadership must attend to the dynamics of this relationship" (p. 2). As trust begins to redevelop between staff and administration, shared governance can serve as a path to recovery and to rebuilding a

highly functioning college. One of the most important factors of shared governance is defining roles and expectations for all parties. Research supports faculty and staff members' clear desire to be included within the decision-making process. However, defined roles and expectations must be made clear and communicated with candor throughout the process of building trust. Responsibilities such as faculty hiring, evaluation, and curriculum decisions are primarily faculty-focused, whereas responsibilities such as goal setting, managing finances, and budgeting fall to the administration. Mutual and respectful participation should be encouraged throughout the college, engaging all constituency groups (Piland & Randal, 1998). By clearly defining roles and embracing participatory governance, administrators can build trust and work toward a mutually respectful and engaging environment. Specifically, presidents and college administrators can focus on four areas to help lead this relationship building process: (a) envision a participative organization and what the college environment should be; (b) preserve healthy interactions, ethics, and personal relationships; (c) embrace the transformative nature of participatory governance and reaffirm the college's mission and vision; and (d) re-envision the college and its participatory governance models, ensuring that the structure encourage efficiency and inclusiveness (Grasmick, Davies, & Harbour, 2012).

The CCC mission and vision are powerful tools of engagement with the participatory governance groups. Kotter (2012) discussed the need for an institution to "shape a vision to help steer the change effort and develop strategic initiatives to achieve that vision" (p. 64). Blanchard (2006) noted that without a clear vision, an organization can become a self-serving bureaucracy, and with high administrative turnover and lack of clear vision, this outcome is a strong possibility. Blanchard (2006) further elaborates that world-class institutions are driven by three critical factors: (a) clear vision and direction championed by top management, (b) a trained and

equipped workforce focused on the implementation of the agreed-upon vision, and (c) established recognition and a positive consequence system that sustains the behavior and performance the vision requires. Both vision and direction are essential for greatness, and recognition is a universal need within a college setting (Blanchard, 2006). According to Blanchard (2006), vision helps individuals make smarter choices because they make decisions with the end result in mind. Vision also allows for a long-term proactive stance, creating what the college wants, rather than a short-term reactive stance of ridding the college of what it does not want. Once a vision is clarified and shared, the leader is then free to focus on serving and being responsive to the needs of the institution and staff.

### **Mistrust within the CCC system Due to Accreditation**

“Accreditation is a comprehensive, external review of an educational institution to ensure quality and continuous improvement” (Martindale, 2014, p. 6). In California, the ACCJC reviews community colleges every 6 years against set standards and all colleges must maintain their accreditation to receive government funding and student financial aid revenues (Perez, 2010). “There are four phases to the accreditation process involving internal evaluation, external evaluation by professional peers, Commission evaluation, and institutional self-improvement to meet evolving regional and federal standards” (“Twelve Common Questions,” 2015 p. 3). Phase one involves the college writing an internal self-study, developing a plan for improvement where needed, and submitting the written report to the ACCJC for review. Phase two involves a trained team of “education professional peers from member institutions” (p. 4) visiting the college and conducting an external institutional evaluation. This team then completes an evaluative report with recommendations for both meeting the accreditation standards and improving internal practices. Phase three occurs when members of the accrediting commission evaluate all of the



information and make a decision on the institution's accredited status. The ACCJC may also provide recommendations for institutional improvement in areas where standards are not met or improvement is needed. The ACCJC Commission reviews colleges at meetings in January and June of each year. The fourth and final phase is about self-improvement.

Each institution uses the recommendations of the external evaluation team and the Commission to guide changes that enhance their educational quality and institutional effectiveness. Colleges also use their internal quality improvement processes in this phase. Member institutions work to improve institutional performance between comprehensive reviews. (p. 4)

The colleges are now also required to write a Self-Improvement Plan (SIP) that they present to the ACCJC during the evaluation process, documenting the steps to accomplish all areas of self-improvement.

Institutions that are out of compliance and/or remain out of compliance with ACCJC accreditation standards may be required to provide follow-up reports, receive an additional team visit, or be sanctioned by the commission. "A sanction signals the institution and the public that there are institutional issues that need to be addressed if quality is to be maintained. While on sanction, institutional accreditation continues and the institution works to resolve any such issues" ("Twelve Common Questions," 2015, p. 4). "The commission issues three levels of sanctions before revoking accreditation: warnings, probation and 'show cause,' meaning a school must show why they should not lose their accreditation" (Warth, 2015, p. 11). As described in Chapter 1, over two-thirds of colleges within the CCC system have been placed on some level of sanction since 2005 (Warth, 2015). With the current, unprecedented turnover in leadership, rotating administrators are perpetuating the mistrust within colleges (Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

The media attention surrounding these ongoing issues has perpetuated the mistrust within the system publicly. In recent years, many community colleges have been sanctioned by the ACCJC and received public scrutiny. The ACCJC placed 37% of CCCs on sanctions from 2003 to 2008. By contrast, other accrediting bodies sanctioned between zero and six percent of their community colleges. The large number of institutions being sanctioned by the ACCJC has caused alarm for many California residents in regard to the education quality and operations within these institutions (Perez, 2010).

In 2006, Compton Community College became the first CCC to completely lose its accreditation with the ACCJC (Perez, 2010). In 2008, Orange Coast College was put on an accreditation warning, and the warning was removed the following year (Martindale, 2014). In 2010, 18 CCCs faced sanctions from the ACCJC (Perez, 2010; see Table 1). Over the past 5 years, the ACCJC has become more aggressive in their sanctions and warnings. In 2011, Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College received warnings, as well as Cypress and Fullerton Colleges. Although the warnings were removed at later dates and the colleges remain fully accredited, the publicity and backlash from these warnings created a pattern of mistrust with internal and external constituencies. In 2013, all three Coast Community College district campuses were given 8 months to take corrective action after they received accreditation warnings for deficiencies related to learning standards, management structure and planning, and faculty and student accountability. In 2013, Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Valley College, and Imperial Valley College east of San Diego were also issued warnings. City College of San Francisco also became embattled with the ACCJC in 2013, when the agency began proceedings to strip City College of San Francisco of its accreditation, beginning a very public and emotional battle between the college and the ACCJC (Martindale, 2014). City College of

San Francisco had been on *show cause*, but was placed on a special *restoration* status and has been given until fall 2016 to meet accrediting standards (Warth, 2015). Loss of accreditation is the culmination of a years-long process that includes warnings and probation over consecutive 2-year periods (“Twelve Common Questions,” 2015).

Table 1

*Eighteen CCCs Facing ACCJC Sanctions in 2010*

College Name	Sanction	Sanction Date	Issues Cited
College of Alameda	On “warning”	June 2009	The annual budget and the budget process continue to be unclear due to the changing processes and problems with information flow and prompt communications. The installation and complexity of new financial software have magnified the problems
Copper Mountain College	On “warning”	June 2008	The school’s strategic plan must be integrated with program reviews, college planning and resource allocation.
Crafton Hills College	Probation	January 2009	There continue to be systematic problems in the reliability of provided data ... It is imperative that Crafton Hills College move expeditiously to provide the necessary human and technology resources to provide reliable data and information to college planners and decision-makers.
Cuesta College	Probation	January 2010	The commission is concerned that Cuesta College has not yet completed a planning process to which program review, planning, funding processes, technology planning or financial planning can be linked.
Diablo Valley College	Probation	January 2010	The commission upgraded the college’s status from “show cause” to probation this year. The college still has work to do to clarify the decision-making roles of constituent groups. It has yet to fully implement, test and evaluate the new governance structure and the quality of decision-making that results
Feather River College	On “warning”	June 2009	The college struggled with the data management system needed for research and planning. Plus, the research capacity at Feather River College has diminished, potentially hampering the analysis of data and information for planning purposes.
Imperial Valley College	On “warning”	January 2008	Information important to students needs to be more readily available, including the policy for accepting transfer credit, description of availability of financial aid and sexual harassment policy.
Los Angeles City College	Probation	June 2009	There was insufficient evidence that the college conducted better assessment measures to improve student learning.
East Los Angeles College	Probation	January 2010	The college must accelerate its measurement of student learning outcomes and use assessment results to improve instruction and student services.

(continued)

College Name	Sanction	Sanction Date	Issues Cited
Los Angeles Trade Tech College	Probation	June 2009	There is little evidence that the college is making data-informed decisions as part of its program review and planning processes.
Merritt College	On “warning”	June 2009	The quantitative and qualitative data relied on for plans do not appear to be used in a way that addresses quality assurance. Also, there are concerns about the accessibility of data the college receives from the district.
Los Angeles Mission College	On “warning”	June 2008	The district had not provided enough analysis on how it can meet its unfunded retiree health benefit liability without negatively impacting the future financial health of the district.
Palomar College	On “warning”	June 2009	The college needs a board policy that prohibits members of the faculty senate from discussing the performance of specific employees with the college’s board of trustees unless due process is given to those employees.
Pasadena City College	On “warning”	June 2009	There is little evidence that program review data is integrated into the planning processes and resource allocation.
College of the Redwoods	On “warning”	June 2009	The college has to continue to clarify roles and responsibilities within its governance system.
Solano College	Probation	June 2009	The commission changed the college’s status from “show cause” to probation in 2009. The college still needs to work on improving communication and dialogue without allowing operational- or collective-bargaining issues to distract it.
Riverside City College	On “warning”	January 2010	The college does not have a true strategic plan and has no agreed-upon long-term institutional goals.
Southwestern College	Probation	January 2010	Of the ten recommendations the commission gave the college in 2003, only two have been completely resolved. The college has not adequately addressed the college’s longstanding negative climate, including a “culture of fear and intimidation” and “lack of trust.”

In 2014 a state audit report that found that between 2009 and 2013, the commission issued 143 sanctions out of the 269 accreditation actions it took. The sanction rate was about 53%, compared to about 12% within other regions. San Diego Community College District Chancellor Constance Carroll served on the ACCJC from 1990 to 1999 and was its chair from 1996 to 1998. She stated that although the commission is just following federal mandates regarding sanctions, other regions have handled them more delicately. She commented that when she was on the commission, some warnings were issued privately: a practice that is still followed in some regions (Warth, 2015). Carroll said that “Whenever there’s a public sanction, the college is affected negatively” (p. 6), citing San Francisco City College as an example.

According to media reports in San Francisco, enrollment at the City College of San Francisco dropped by 25,000 in recent years during the accreditation battle, indicating public mistrust observed by the severe decline of enrollment (Warth, 2015). “Carroll stated that the commission could issue a private warning to a college that has a dip in its budget without issuing an alarming public sanction, which could result in an unwarranted and lingering damage to a school’s reputation” (p. 6). The resulting damage to enrollment, reputation, and student success demonstrates mistrust tied to the public sanctions of the ACCJC. Although college officials have long been aware of the stringent accreditation standards, officials said years of budget-cutting have made it increasingly difficult to stay focused on the standards while juggling competing interests. “The most frequently cited deficiencies were a lack of program review, inadequate use of assessment results to drive planning, financial management issues, internal governance strife and problems with the roles that governing boards play” (p. 7). These deficiencies are associated directly with flawed leadership, mistrust in participatory processes, and suspicious decision-making, questioning administrators’ ethics. The impact of these public sanctions creates an environment of mistrust, impacting internal stakeholders such as staff and students, as well as the surrounding communities and educational partnerships as they witness the negative media associated with sanctioned schools (Warth, 2015).

### **How Trust is Broken in the Workplace**

According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000), “Trust is recognized as a vital element in well-functioning organizations. Trust is necessary for effective cooperation and communication, the foundations for cohesive and productive relationships in organizations” (p. 549). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy asserted “That to be effective and productive, schools, like other organizations, must be cooperative, cohesive, efficient, and well managed” (p. 550).

Numerous studies discuss building trust within a workplace; however, rebuilding trust can be a different process than initially building trust. The breaking of trust within an organization can stem from many issues. Betrayal in the workplace involves a behavior (an actual action) that is voluntary, in that the trustees either lack the motivation to conform to expectations of the trust or become motivated to violate these expectations (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Bowman (2015) described the five fastest methods for betraying trust or breeding animosity within the workplace. Acting and speaking inconsistently can impact coworkers, peers, and supervisors to mistrust an individual's actions and statements. Individuals seeking personal gain rather than shared gain can alienate themselves in a team environment, quickly losing the respect and trust of others. Withholding information, starting rumors, lying, and spreading misinformation can break trust and create a lasting impact within an organization. As a supervisor, being closed minded and unwilling to consider other points of view can create an atmosphere where others refuse to communicate or believe their opinions are not respected or heard. Many of these actions are applicable to the community college system, which is a team atmosphere composed of numerous groups with competing values and interests. A community college can breed mistrust if the aforementioned actions are adopted by faculty, staff, and especially administrators. According to Hitch (2012), "Trust is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work" (p. 3). However, nine out of every 10 employees have reported some breach in trust in the workplace on a regular basis (Reina & Reina, 2007). The impacts of distrust within an organization include lower morale, lower productivity, and higher employee turnover (Hitch, 2012).

Trust is pivotal in efforts to improve education. However, trust seems more difficult to achieve and maintain within educational institutions. Attention from media has produced

negative perceptions of schools and led to increasing distrust of schools and their mission (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) described three factors important to building trust relations within an educational environment that vary by degrees of measurement: (a) *willingness to risk vulnerability* – a necessary condition of trust interdependence that is a matter of importance and value; (b) *confidence* – when a person engages in an action that increases vulnerability to another, this demonstrates confidence in the relationship and expected outcomes of a relationship; and (c) *benevolence* – confidence that one’s well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted party. These three facets must exist in a trusting work environment within an educational institution, and the degree to which they exist indicates the levels of trust present between faculty and administration.

Institution-based trust refers to the belief that necessary interpersonal structures are in place to enable an individual to act in anticipation of a successful outcome within the institution (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). “Trust is related to a positive school environment, to productive communication, to participative decision processes, and to organizational participants’ willingness to go beyond the minimum requirements of their job descriptions” (p. 584). It can be difficult to measure trust within an educational institution due to the nature of vulnerability and the changes over the course of a relationship between the individual and the institution. However, some basic trust is necessary within schools. “Trust makes a difference in student achievement, teachers’ collective sense of efficacy, and overall school effectiveness. If schools are to function well, they need trust” (p. 584).

### **The Emotional Recovery process to Broken Trust within the College Setting**

According to Murray (1998), organizations are not purely rational entities, but rather complex social systems operating in an increasingly complex social world. Lazarus (1991)

defined emotions as complex reactions to how people see themselves in relation to their lifelong efforts to survive and flourish. “Emotions are triggered at junctures in plans, when goals are attained, or when environmental conditions change and plans are frustrated” (Murray, 1998, p. 2). A review of the literature related to emotional recovery when trust is broken reveals similarities between the emotional responses and recovery in relationships to those observed in CCCs. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) indicated that, “Moods and emotions can be a powerful foundation for trust judgments because they provide signals concerning trust-relevant information in ongoing relationships and situations” (p. 559). Faculty and staff experience emotional responses to trust relationships with their institution because they are, by definition, in a position of vulnerability. “Many clinicians have noted the similarities between responses to the discovery of infidelity and responses to trauma in general” (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 1,394), including the emotional response and recovery process. Traumas such as broken trust, fiscal mismanagement, and abuse of power are some examples of trauma incurred by community colleges. Tenured faculty and long-term staff of community colleges often feel married to their institution, finding emotional connections to the successes and failures of the institution.

Gordon et al. (2005) discussed the recovery process from infidelity and trauma in three phases: (a) impact phase, (b) applying meaning phase, and (c) moving forward phase. Often, new administrators enter a community college and attempt to make changes and rebuild trust, thereby moving straight to phase three or the moving forward phase. These administrators are met with backlash, anger, and isolation from the institution’s faculty and staff. New administrators entering into a college atmosphere where recovery is necessary must adhere to all three stages of the recovery process. Once the three steps are processed, then trust can begin to be rebuilt and change can occur.



During phase one, the impact phase, the victims—in this case faculty, staff, and remaining administrators—must be allowed time to absorb and process their experiences from the interpersonal trauma they have experienced. During this time, individuals are trying to comprehend what has transpired and often the injured parties retreat and establish barriers to protect themselves. This withdrawal can often serve as an attempt to rebuild power and create demands on the partner, or other party involved, to compensate for what has occurred (Gordon et al., 2005). Within community colleges these withdrawals can be observed with staff refraining from engaging actively in participatory governance due to broken trust and disappointment. Also, staff can create new and unrealistic goals that are projected onto the remaining administrators as a coping mechanism for previous betrayals within the institution. “If individuals feel helpless and victimized and believe they don’t matter, they may become dependent on the leader for hope and support, surrendering themselves to this” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 196).

During phase two, the applying meaning phase, more in-depth explanations are pursued to create context and explain why the traumatic events occurred. This understanding is not intended to create blame, but instead to allow parties to take responsibility for roles they played within the relationship (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 1395). Kouzes and Posner (2011) suggested that instead of “Pushing your ideas or values (which is the typical instinct), you should start from where the other party is in order to guide them toward an eventual agreement” (p. 107). This means actively involving other people in devising the solution so that it becomes their idea, not just the leader’s idea. Doing so requires discovering and then satisfying the constituency’s unmet needs and helping them save face. Individuals all have a constituency or audience whose opinion they value outside of the immediate situation. A leader’s role is to make the process of reconciliation and agreement as easy as possible. When values collide, a leader must confront

and help people to resolve these dilemmas (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Gordon et al.'s phase two can be compared to community colleges that experience jaded/cynical faculty and staff. These staff members have concluded that they played a role that was either unappreciated or involved and then disregarded in the participatory governance model.

Within organizations, emotional responses are routinely characterized as “resistance” (Murray, 1998, p. 3). Murray (1998) stated that change can excite a wide range of emotions such as fear, anger, and denial. “One response to change, particularly change that involves the disruption of long term relationships, is nostalgia” (p. 2). Nostalgia draws on the notion that sudden change, intense transition, or marketed discontinuity of life experience can explain this emotional phenomenon. Allowing for phase two can enable individuals to mourn what they no longer have within their relationship. In the case of the community colleges, many staff members mourn for what the institution once was but no longer is, coping with the strong emotional responses and nostalgia associated with change. Administrators who do not take the time to allow employees to experience phase two can experience staff members clinging to the past and an institution, idea, or relationship that no longer exists. Developing a shared view of what has occurred can create a sense of safety needed to “move on” and can “contribute to the development of new expectancies or predictions for the future; without understanding why an event occurred, it is difficult to predict whether it will recur in the future” (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 1,395).

Phase three, the moving forward phase, empowers the victims to move on with their lives within the context of a new set of relationship beliefs. More direct discussions of forgiveness can occur that were not possible in phases one and two due to the hurt and anger experienced by victims (Gordon et al., 2005). Phase three is important for administrators to note, as attempting

to engage in discussions of forgiveness before phases one and two are complete can be met with resistance. Forgiveness does not begin on the first day of a new administrator's tenure; rather, it begins once the administrator has created rapport with all individuals and constituency groups, engaging in the process with all staff members through phases one and two. Gordon et al. (2005) stated that forgiveness does not require reconciliation or that anger disappear completely; instead, forgiveness only requires that a victim release the anger and hurt and make a conscious choice to move forward.

At the end of phase three, the injured partner or victim must have achieved three goals in order to begin to move forward within the relationship either together or individually: "(a) develop a realistic and balanced view of the relationship, (b) experience a release from being controlled by negative affect toward the offending partner, and (c) relinquish voluntarily his or her right to punish the participating partner" (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 1396). For faculty and staff who are expected to remain and rebuild a community college, the focus is to begin moving to forgiveness. "Timetables must be set, decisions must be made, and people must get on with it. There comes a time when the group must agree to live by certain values, at least for the foreseeable future" (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 177). All remaining employees should be allowed the opportunity to mourn what the institution was, move through the phases, and provide the new executive team a chance to walk through the process with staff. Also, the executive team should be allowed the opportunity to prove themselves without demonizing them based on past actions. Most importantly, the focus should remain on building a future rather than holding onto the past and refusing to move forward. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), leaders and their constituencies must acknowledge that what once worked for the organization may no longer work. The organization must enter into a zone of uncertainty that is frightening, but from which

they can emerge reenergized and renewed. The steps to mending broken trust begin with the three phases to reach a point where forgiveness is possible, acknowledging past experiences to begin the healing process.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Many community colleges around the country have experienced unethical practices (Gardner, 2013). The true victims of these actions are the students, faculty, staff, and remaining administrators who are left to pick up the pieces and rebuild their institutions amidst feelings of hurt, mistrust, and embarrassment. The usual recourse is that administrators exit the institution quickly, leaving behind an array of emotions and crumbled infrastructures that must then be rebuilt. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000), “Trust violations that result in damaged identity include public criticism, incorrect or unfair accusations, blaming of employees for personal mistakes, and insults. Students as well as teachers will feel betrayed when they are victims of unfair or public criticism” (p. 576). Incidents of betrayal can also have effects on organizational functioning specifically, the deterioration of employees’ performance (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). A defined ethical decision-making model is necessary to regain trust within a college setting where trust has been broken. Many CCCs have endured a number of public unethical incidents, tarnishing reputations and placing doubt on all administrators within those institutions.

Adopting and imbedding ethical standards can facilitate the rebuilding of trust and create faith in administrator intentions. Andre et al. (2010) defined ethics in two parts: (a) well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do specifically applying to rights, virtues, and standards; and (b) the study and development of one’s ethical standards, moral beliefs, and moral conduct, ensuring individuals are well-rounded, reasonable, and solidly-

based. Using this definition of ethics, colleges can begin to assess how to prevent the compromising of ethics in the future.

### **Decision-Making Framework**

CCCs are in need of identifying a set of ethical standards on which to base their decision-making. Although at least five ethical frameworks exist, the most appropriate framework for these educational institutions is the Virtue Approach. This approach requires ethical actions to be consistent with “Certain ideal virtues that provide for the full development of our humanity” (Andre et al., 2009, p. 13). Virtue ethics ask of any action, “What kind of person will I become if I do this?” or “Is this action consistent with my acting at my best” (p. 13)? If administrators and staff ask these types of questions, decisions will be weighed with consideration and evaluated by the impact to the college. If practiced regularly and instilled within the institution, this framework can become automatic (Andre et al., 2009). In adopting the virtue ethical framework, educational administrators can begin to use their behaviors and ethical framework to alter the “Human side of the equation: specifically people’s behaviors, beliefs, social interactions, and the nature of their decision making” (Charan, 2006, p. 3).

### **Accountability**

In applying the Virtue Approach ethical framework, the institution can create individual accountability. This is appropriate, as shared/participatory governance groups have individuals serve on these committees representing their constituency group while making decisions that will best influence the college. By creating an individual ethical framework, the Virtue Approach can be adopted on a personal level. At the heart of the virtue approach to ethics is the idea of *community* (Andre et al., 2009). “The virtue approach urges us to pay attention to the contours of our communities and the habits of character they encourage and instill” (p. 14). Steen (2014)

described creating an ethical culture as a Chief Financial Officer, one of the most scrutinized positions within the CCC system. She wrote that the pressures from internal and external stakeholders are real, but institutional goals can only be attained by creating and executing a solid plan. According to Steen, “You’ve got to set the tone at the top” (p. 3).

However, personal responsibility can exist only if people have free will and exercise it. Personal responsibility cannot exist independent of choice. In choosing to act personally, individuals are saying explicitly or implicitly, “I will accept the consequences of my actions” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 179). The credibility strengthening process hinges upon the belief that human beings are personally accountable for their own actions. People are held accountable against the standard of shared values upon which there has been agreement. Ignoring this precept, as many leaders have done in failing to accept the consequences of their own actions, contributes to increasing levels of cynicism, followed by apathy (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). The Virtue Approach can embed a sense of personal accountability within community college administrators to perform within an ethical framework that encourages a participatory governance environment.

### **The Role of Administrators and their Leadership within an Institution**

As described previously, broken trust within a community college can lead to an array of emotions, especially during the entrance of a new president and shifts in organizational leadership and culture. New leaders entering into a community college in recovery can expect staff to react with “a host of concerns...about the security of their jobs, the degree of structural changes they will experience, and the capacity of the institution to absorb the changes and move forward successfully” (Kearney, 2013, p. 901). Reay, Golden-Biddle, and Germann (2006) stated that institutional change requires a precipitating jolt that destabilizes established practices of the

institution, forcing change; this assertion aligns with the Kearney (2013) study of a community college experiencing a shift in leadership. The researcher observed and polled employees from the time that their current president announced retirement to when a new president entered into the organization. Kearney (2013) identified a “hot zone” described as “an intense and high volume of negative emotions that began shortly after the announcement of the former president’s resignation and ended when the new president’s name (or the finalists) was announced” (p. 907). Kearney found that several respondents attributed “much of their anxiety, apprehension, or other negative emotional reactions to the commitment they felt to the college and their feelings that the institution was vulnerable to the uncertainties or to the whims of a new administration” (p. 908). It is clear from this research that in addition to the emotional recovery process from the experienced trauma of broken trust, community college staff also feel emotional turmoil when new leaders enter the organization, further exacerbating the trust rebuilding process. The feelings of “loss of influence or control” (p. 909) further contributed to the intensely emotional environment of a community college in transition. Kearney stated that, “Based on the number of grief-related emotions reported during this time period, it appeared that people were perhaps grieving their loss of control and understanding of their environment, rather than of the presidential change itself” (p. 909). Essentially this hot zone ended once a new president was announced and individuals could move forward “with making sense of what their new environment would bring” (p. 909).

Following the hot zone, another theme was identified associated with the actions of the new leader. “The actions reported as having the greatest impact emerged in two major themes: (a) visibility and accessibility actions and (b) immediate problem resolution actions” (Kearney, 2013, p. 910). During this time, sensemaking began to occur among constituencies within the

organization. Eddy (2013) found that the actions of a new president influenced how the employees would make sense of change. The researcher identified that:

During periods of uncertainty, sensemaking occurs after an event rather than during the time of change. Thus, the creation of reality retroactively affords the college president additional time to consider how to frame change. Acting as “sensegivers”, leaders shape the ultimate interpretation of change by campus members. (p. 456)

In approaching their new tenure with sensemaking in mind, presidents and administrators can facilitate positive change within their community college. Kearney (2013) discussed open forums hosted by the new president, supporting visibility and accessibility. At these forums, the president asked three questions to engage with employees, “(a) What is working well at the College? (b) What is not working at the college? and (c) What are your thoughts and dreams for the future” (p. 910)? By engaging the staff and opening communication channels the new president was able to be visible, accessible, and begin the trust building process. The president also addressed people’s immediate and pressing concerns, helping to rebuild some trust within the institution and differentiate the new president from the past administration. Further, asking for feedback about the dreams and future of the college redirected current negative energy toward the possibility of a better tomorrow for the institution as a whole; this redirection of energy laid the foundation for staff to begin letting go of the past and imagining the possibilities for the future.

Within these scenarios of broken trust, the new president and administrators take on the role of therapist within the broken relationship, making sense of the experiences and guiding all parties to forgiveness and moving forward. Scheinkman (2005) discussed working with infidelity requiring the therapist to approach the situation with an *open mind* and *flexible stance*. The



therapist can give a broad framework from which to explore the meaning of the incident while dealing with ambiguity and recognizing all the different perspectives that must be fully recognized and understood. By leading with empathy, the therapist can have a powerful impact on the relationship. In creating a constructive and safe process for reflection and decision-making, the therapist can promote negotiations and mutual accommodations to encourage both parties to rebuild trust. Administrators must be aware of the role they play within an organization in recovery. By adopting the role of therapist or sensemaker, the administrator can create a safe environment where communication can be reestablished and trust can be rebuilt.

Reina and Reina (2010) discuss that rebuilding trust within the workplace requires leaders to “observe and acknowledge what has happened” (p. 12), recognizing the loss of what was and what could have been. Providing safe forums for focus groups, team meetings and one-on-one conversations can ensure that employees are allowed to grieve and express their feelings. It is the leader’s responsibility to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to express their opinions and receive a fair hearing. Community college leaders should provide the forum for discussion, debate, and reconciliation. “Values discussions should be intense. If there isn’t energy and passion in the discussion, then you should be skeptical about what is being said” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 177). Charan (2006) asserted that if individuals never have time to grieve the organization or company, the company cannot be prepared for change. The management can do a sufficient job expressing to people the *what* of change, but excluding the *why* can impact the grieving and healing process. Coghlan and McAuliffe (2003) stated that the single biggest reason organizational changes fail is that no one thought about endings or planned to manage their impact on people. Naturally concerned about the future, planners and implementers usually forget that people have to let go of the present first in order to move into the future. They forget

that while the first task of change management is to understand the destination and how to get there, the first task of transition management is to “convince people to leave home” (p. 118). By providing support and receiving support, administrators can lead the charge to rebuilding trust. In alignment with the therapist role an administrator must adopt, reframing the experience and placing it into a larger context can encourage staff to see the bigger picture with the opportunities available to them. Most importantly, community college leaders must help their constituencies to let go and move on. There is a difference between remembering versus clinging to the past; employees may not forget what happened, but they can choose to look forward rather than dwell on the past (Reina & Reina, 2010). If administrators are able to adopt this sensemaker role and demonstrate characteristics such as excellence, the ability to navigate ambiguity, collaborative decision-making, a strong ethical code, respect for others, and patience, they can begin to rebuild trust within their organizations (Wheelan, 2012). Creating this new vision and working towards a united goal—student success—will allow a college president or administrator to succeed in the role of therapist.

### **Honesty and Communication Among CCC administrators**

Trust is a powerful component of all relationships. “A leader’s access to knowledge and cooperation is based on trust, with followers having faith that their leader will not abuse their rights or interests” (Robbins & Judge, 2010, p. 396). In differentiating from past administration, the new president and administrators can begin to build a rapport and gain the trust of their constituency groups through honesty and open communication. Kouzes and Posner (2011) stated that, “A failure of honesty poisons the team, damages the trust between people, and breaks down team cohesion. Nobody wants to follow a leader who is not honest” (p. 9). Kotter (2012) recommends bringing together a coalition, team, or influential people whose powers come from

a variety of sources including job, title, status, expertise, and political importance. According to Robbins and Judge (2010), honesty is absolutely essential to leadership and voluntary employee contribution is based on trust they have in their leader. If employees are allowed to experience the grieving process and are now at a place where forgiveness is a possibility, administration can take steps to begin rebuilding the foundation of trust through sensemaking. Many authors provide step-by-step guides to rebuilding trust. Caudron (2002) references a 12-step process to rebuild trust through communication after a “high-profile executive wrongdoing” (p. 10). This 12-step process is geared toward leaders regaining credibility through an in-depth communication process; these steps include ensuring that leaders are visible, sharing all the news (both good and bad), engaging in communication with constituency groups, communicating more, and defining the roles that individuals play within the institution.

Caudron’s (2002) 12 steps are applicable to the community college setting; specifically, a number of steps can help community college leaders reestablish trust. Caudron’s model encourages organizations to “get [their] leaders in front of people” (p. 11), creating accessibility, visibility, and candor; demonstrating the leader’s concern; and encouraging mutual respect and interaction. Kouzes and Posner (2011) stated:

The lesson for all leaders is this: earning credibility is a retail activity, a factory floor activity, a person-to-person activity. Credibility is gained in small quantities through physical presence. Leaders have to be physically present, they have to be visible, and they have to get close to their constituents to earn their respect and trust. Leaders who are inaccessible cannot possibly expect to be trusted just because they have a title. Credibility is earned via the physical acts of shaking a hand, leaning forward, stopping to listen, and

being responsive. By sharing personal experiences, telling their own stories, and joining in dialogue, leaders become people and not just positions. (p .31)

Encouraging leaders to “tell all the news you have-even the bad news,” (Caudron, 2002, p. 12) sharing all the information in a factual and analytical manner to prevent employees from jumping to conclusions, can support the process. Sharing information is essential to developing people’s capacity, as well as to building and sustaining credibility. When there is a high degree of transparency, and when information is easily available and accessible, individuals come to trust their leaders, their team members, and their organizations. When information is hard to get, kept on a *need to know* basis, and hidden from view, people can more easily become suspicious and cynical (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). One of the most applicable steps to community college leaders is connecting with all stakeholders, especially communicating with involved constituency groups. According to Coghlan and McAuliffe (2003), managers need to accept that people in a system see things differently; people’s perceptions cannot be ruled out. Therefore, a prerequisite to implementing change is the ability to respond creatively to differences and to work toward mutual trust and understanding. This trust relates directly to connecting with stakeholders and having open and honest conversations.

*Reaching beyond the media*, being present and accessible and communicating in person through group and individual meetings, is vital to creating rapport. This step also emphasizes not sending impersonal memos, letters, or emails, and instead allowing in-person opportunities and modes of communication so that employees hear relevant information directly from their leaders. Leaders within the institution must also *offer the opportunity for dialogue*, again emphasizing the need for physical communication, dialogue, and demonstration so that accurate interpretations of communication can be made (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011):

Credible leaders model the constructive controversy process with their multiple constituencies. They explain their present position and ideas, presenting facts, information, and concepts that support their views and providing a logical structure linking these premises to their conclusions. Credible leaders invite others to elaborate their own perspectives, which are often quite different and incompatible with those of the leader. These opposing ideas and positions challenge and provoke people's thinking. Appreciating constituents allows constructive controversy to stimulate innovative thinking and encourages actively searching for new information. Curiosity is aroused. Original positions are reclarified and reformulated. (p. 77)

Reina and Reina (2010) touched on stakeholder buy-in as a key factor in organizational change and rebuilding trust within the workplace. The researchers stated that, "A leader's goals are irrelevant if employees aren't willing to embrace change; if they're not confident, committed, and engaged; and if they don't trust their leaders" (p. 12). *Listening to your people*, asking how they are doing, what questions they may have, and making the effort to communicate positively are necessary to establish a relationship and create an open dialogue. Communication is a two-way avenue. Besides sharing communications to change opinions, leaders must be willing to listen, reflect, and address employee concerns to create meaningful relationships (Goodman & Truss, 2004). Kouzes and Posner (2011) stated that listening strengthens credibility. "When you ask other people questions about their hopes, their fears, their beliefs, their triumphs, their setbacks, their family, their childhood, their career aspirations, and then you listen intently to their answers, you are building a bond with them" (p. 72). Caudron (2012) noted that the aforementioned steps do not have to be formal, and that authentic and sincere communication are invaluable during this time. One of the most valuable steps is to "help people see their roles" (p.

10), communicating the goals of the organization and ensuring that all constituency groups understand their roles and the process being followed in the dynamic community college setting. Finally, leaders must “ask people to move on” (p. 10), limiting permission to whine, focusing on the previous crises, and beginning to refocus on the new institutional goals and shareholder/community values. “Values cannot be just personal; they have to be affirmed by all members of the team. The structures and systems must be in place to reinforce the team’s sense that what we say we value, we do” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 99).

Stakeholders can show resistance to the process and being asked to move on. In these situations, an administrator must use persuasion. Persuasion is used to change opinion through sharing important content to end-users at crucial times within an organization. Persuasion can occur and buy-in can be created if employees are communicated with before, during, and after change initiatives occur (Goodman & Truss, 2004). Goodman and Truss (2004) asserted that communicating with employees after change has occurred rather than before or during change can cause staff to feel excluded and conclude that the management is out of touch with employee concerns. Active communication and sharing information about an issue or change plan can “Reduce resistance, minimize uncertainty, and gain involvement and commitment as change occurs” (p. 218). Morale and retention rates can also be improved if strong communication outlets can be used during persuasion tactics and information sharing. Overall, Goodman and Truss stated that persuasion can be used to change opinions, change programs, minimize resistance, reduce employee anxiety, and share and create a unified vision collaboratively; however, management must be committed to information sharing and giving as well as receiving information. Strategy and timing are crucial to successful communication. By engaging in these steps, including all constituency groups, creating a shared vision with individual buy in, and

using persuasion when necessary, leaders within a community college can begin to reestablish trust.

### **Credibility and Community College Leadership**

According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), credibility is the foundation of leadership, and that credibility is how leaders earn the trust and confidence of their constituents. CCC administrators face the daily dilemma of earning and maintaining their constituents' trust and confidence, especially in an environment where participatory governance is being implemented. Turbulent times of change require an energized constituency that participates enthusiastically in the process of change. Kouzes and Posner asserted that a credible leader "Continuously develop[s] the capacity of [his/her] constituents to put shared values into practice" (p. 112). When individuals, teams, departments, and organizations grow more able to perform their jobs and keep their promises, not only are their reputations enhanced, but also the leader's credibility grows. This concept can be applied to the CCC system, where participatory governance requires participation to create a college's mission and vision. Professional development is also emphasized at state and local levels, further supporting Kouzes and Posner's statements on credibility and leadership.

The credibility of a CCC executive team can incite loyalty, shared values, and trust. However, lack of credibility can be observed when administrators do not demonstrate the requirements to establish credibility. A lack of credibility can directly impact the emotional and psychological state of an organization's constituency group. Kouzes and Posner (2011) delineated three values that leaders must embody to establish credibility: (a) integrity - is truthful, is trustworthy, has character, has convictions; (b) competence - is capable, is productive, is efficient; and (c) leadership - is inspiring, is decisive, provides direction. Without

demonstrating these three key qualities, a leader can struggle to establish credibility with his/her constituency. Individuals who have leaders they admire and respect feel better about themselves. “Credible leaders raise self-esteem. They set people’s spirits free and enable them to become more than they might have thought possible. Credible leaders make people feel that they too can make a difference in others’ lives” (p. 28).

Credibility is about more than just demonstrating integrity, competence, and leadership; it also requires consistency between words and deeds. Within any organization, individuals listen to words and then observe the deeds of their leaders. Then, they measure the congruence between the two. Listening is a reciprocal process; encouraging the building of trust begins by building a personal relationship through listening. As a leader, listening to the organization’s constituency is the foundation of credibility. Managers must be considerate of others’ points of view. Resorting to the use of power and position to command compliance and to accomplish tasks, is not leading; it is dictating (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Building credibility can then provide a platform for leaders to enhance diversity within their institution.

The open access model of CCCs embraces diversity. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), “Diversity, individual and organizational, is enriching” (p. 68). Organizations and individuals with a strong appreciation for diversity are apt to be creative and innovative. Diversity fosters adaptability and resiliency. An organization that values diversity thereby enhances its capacity to adapt and renew itself in a swiftly changing world. Encouraging healthy debate and discussion is essential for a high-functioning institution. Consensus on norms and values can make individuals subject to groupthink. The strong desire to maintain harmony and cohesion among group members, and an understandable need to maintain their own self-esteem, inclines people to avoid creating discord. Individuals choose not to bring up contrary points of



view, and they censor themselves from raising doubts about a policy decision. The results can be disastrous. For this reason, embracing diversity can create a foundation for maintaining credibility and honest dialogue between constituencies and administrators. An ongoing dialogue can provide shared values that offer an organization a common reference for making decisions and taking action. Credible leaders take actions and create conditions that strengthen everyone's self-esteem and internal sense of effectiveness. As formidable change agents, credible CCC administrators can impact their organizations by providing a powerful way to improve decision making and performance. Communicating to their constituents that they believe the organization will be successful can support the faculty and staff's perseverance in the face of difficult challenges.

In a learning environment, like a community college, learners are encouraged to expand their minds, take risks, and learn new skill sets. "Credible leaders are great learners, and they regard mistakes as learning opportunities, not the end of the world" (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 17). Credible leaders appreciate mistakes as an essential part of the learning process; these leaders develop capacity by helping others break out of old patterns of thinking. Credible leaders find common ground, build a sense of community, and resolve dilemmas on the basis of principles and not hierarchical positions. Shared values are an attribute of a strong organizational culture, and strong cultures can produce strong performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Strong leaders in any organization develop people's capacity to deliver on their shared values. They give people choices and latitude; they educate and build confidence.

Kouzes and Posner (2011) added that credible leaders are servant leaders who put the purposes and principles of the organization ahead of everything else. To remain credible as servants, leaders must stay in touch with their constituencies. They must lead by example, going

first and not asking anyone to do anything they are unwilling to do. Leaders ask questions, keep promises, hold themselves accountable, and atone for their mistakes. College administrators must continuously act in ways that increase people's belief that they are honest, competent, inspiring, and forward-looking. Balance and boundary setting are vital to establishing credible leaders. Too much listening and too much polling of people's opinions can turn to inconsistency; it can become merely trying to please, not trying to lead.

Renewing credibility is a continuous human struggle and the ultimate leadership struggle. Constituents do not owe leaders allegiance. Leaders earn it. The gift of another's trust and confidence is well worth the struggle and essential to meeting the challenges of leading people. (p. 199)

### **Adult Learning and its Ties to Changing Culture within an Institution**

The leadership that administrators provide can calm the emotional turmoil within an institution. The strong emotions within an environment can directly impact adult learning and the changing of an institutional culture. Researchers have found that "Organizations with adaptive, performance-enhancing cultures outperform non-adaptive, unhealthy ones precisely because of their emphasis on attending to all of their constituencies— that is, their customers, stockholders, and employees" (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 64). Community colleges are educational settings where learning occurs. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Johnson and Taylor (2006) noted that associations occur with memories and comprehension depends on the association of past and present events; these events can lead to positive or negative results. If negative associations are formed, these events can create powerful emotional barriers to learning. The authors also discuss reframing to find new meaning from past experiences. As discussed with respect to the emotional recovery process, that faculty and staff must reframe a number of emotions in order to find

closure and move to embrace the new culture. Also, the president and administrators of the college must act as sensemakers guiding the staff through this reframing process.

Adult learning is required within CCCs to educate the staff on new processes, expectations, and culture. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012) defined andragogy as encompassing the core principles of adult learning that enable those designing and conducting adult learning to build more effective processes. The authors noted that adult learning is a transactional model that must be applied to all adult learning situations, and that andragogy works best in practice when adapted to fit the uniqueness of the learners and the learning situation. Within a college setting, staff must learn new processes and procedures, as well as an entirely new culture. To ensure that this learning is successful within the institution, the six principles of andragogy must be respected. These principles, which describe adult learners' orientation and how they approach this learning, are: (a) the learner's need to know, (b) the learner's self-concept, (c) the learner's prior experience, (d) the learner's readiness to learn; (e) the learner's orientation to learning, and (f) and the learner's motivation to learn. Administrators must take these principles and use them as tools to guide the communication and reeducation of campus staff.

It is also important to acknowledge individual and situational differences in adult learning. Learning must be adapted to the situation at CCCs, specifically utilizing the participatory governance model as a tool for employee learning on campus. Also, learning can be defined in multiple ways, including changes in behavior and acquisition of habits, knowledge, and attitudes. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) defined attitudes as, "The knowledge structures containing the thoughts and feelings people have about other people, groups, or organizations and the means through which they define and structure their interactions with others" (p. 560).

Attitudes are evaluative and values are a key means faculty and staff members use to evaluate their peers and the organization as whole (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Colleges where trust needs to be rebuilt are in dire need of adult learning to change behaviors and learned habits. Knowles et al. (2012) stated, “Teaching is vastly facilitated by the medium of language, which ends by being not only the medium for exchange, but the instrument that the learner can use himself in brining order into the environment” (p. 212). By teaching through communication with one another, learning can occur while beginning to address the need for civility within the organization’s culture. Technological advances such as websites and open forums can assist in communicating more effectively on an institutional level. Learning is also considered a process of mental inquiry, not a passive reception of transmitted content (Knowles et al., 2012). This statement reinforces the participatory governance model; requiring faculty and staff to participate in the shared governance committees to actively engage and contribute to the on-campus processes.

Lindeman (1989) noted that adult learners are motivated to learn, as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy. He continues that adults’ orientation to learning is life-centered, with experience being the richest source of adult learning. Within institutions where trust is broken, many staff members realize the dire consequences if learning and change does not occur and observe the consequences of a deteriorating culture. For this reason, individuals can encourage one another to learn and embrace methods to create positive change within their institution. Many staff members propel change by self-directing these learning experiences through participatory governance groups. The most powerful characteristic aiding the need for learning and change is the concept of self-motivation within andragogy. Although adults are somewhat responsive to external motivators, they are primarily driven to learn by

internal pressures such as job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life. There are often a number of social, political, and intercultural reasons why employees are dissatisfied within an institution where trust has diminished. By sharing the possibilities for improved job satisfaction and self-esteem as well as job security, staff can be encouraged to learn and positively impact the institutional culture.

In preparing for adult learners to become involved in the learning process, the administrative team is serving as facilitators to create institutional adult learning. Knowles et al. (2012) discussed the steps in detail. The first step is to prepare the learner and prevent culture shock for the learner who is now expected to participate in the learning process. Staff must begin engaging in the process to create change. They are expected to perform their duties using an ethical framework and align with the organizational vision of student success. Step two includes establishing a climate that is conducive to learning. Institutions attempting to rebuild trust and change the culture within the organization must establish a new culture and continuously communicate this culture. This process aligns with establishing a climate conducive to learning, including adding structure, policies, and conveying clear expectations of staff. Step three describes creating a mechanism for mutual planning. As described earlier, participatory governance is the mechanism for planning and communication. Through this structure, employees are able to define and commit to the role they play within the institution. Step four focuses on diagnosing the needs for learning, encompassing the learner's perceptions, the organization's desired performance, and creating one model of desired competencies. The guiding coalition, which is the administrative team, determines the ideal vision and culture for the institution. This coalition is then able to share this information and imbed it within the shared processes. The authors described step five as formulating program objectives to satisfy needs.

The objectives within the institution are to rebuild trust, calm the emotionally volatile environment, and shift the college culture to create a positive learning environment. The objectives satisfy the needs of the staff and allow them to focus on their assigned job duties, improving college performance. Step six is described as designing a pattern of learning experience, which includes allowing learners to support one another through the process and identifying areas for improvement and feedback. Step seven entails conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials. Strategy and planning the dissemination of information are key to creating learning and change within the environment.

The final step is to evaluate the learning outcomes and reassess learning needs. There are different levels of evaluation, but the most applicable level in this scenario is the behavioral and result evaluations. These evaluations are validated by observing actual changes in participants' behavior and analyzing data from the organization to evaluate improvement. Improvements within the CCC can be measured by analyzing administrative turnover rates, full-time equivalent students FTES levels, and productivity. In measuring organizational learning as changes in behavior, two types of learning are being engaged. Colleges are encouraging natural learning, the spontaneous learning within the environment including social interactions, and formal learning, through the sharing of information at college events and trainings for committee chairs and participants (Knowles et al., 2012) . After encouraging a culture change within the institution, maintaining the new culture can be difficult. However, community college administrators can maintain this new institutional culture through “personal leadership, mixing encouragement with ultimatums, and fostering desired cultural norms like accountability with their own behaviors” (Charan, 2006, p. 1). Charan (2006) observed that altering social interactions systematically,

through a strategic “social architecture” (p. 2) can change the ways in which individuals work together across the organization.

### **Sustaining Organizational and Cultural Transformations with Change Models**

Rebuilding trust and guiding an institution toward a cultural transformation is a complex and lengthy process that requires a change model. McAuliffe, O’Shea, and Wyness (2007) stated that “In terms of understanding organizations, systems thinking suggests that issues, events, forces, and incidents should not be viewed as isolated phenomena, but seen as interconnected, interdependent components of a complex entity” (p. 108). Whether administrators are attempting to rebuild trust or shift the institutional culture, bringing about change in a large and complex organization is a difficult task with many components that must be considered. Beckhard and Harris (1977) defined a large system change strategy as a plan defining interventions or steps to move the system to a state “Where it can optimally transform needs into results in a social environment that nurtures peoples’ worth and dignity” (p. 15).

A number of change models exist today, including Kotter’s Eight Stage Change Model and Coghlan and McAuliffe’s Process of Large System Change. The key element to creating successful change within an organization is to have a defined plan. The steps within many of these change models are synonymous, from determining the need for change (McAuliffe et al., 2007) to creating a sense of urgency (Kotter, 2012). In Coghlan and McAuliffe’s (2003) Process of Large System Change, the first step involves determining the need for change, requiring an “inclusion strategy” (p. 110), engaging the stakeholders in the planning, design, and implementation of change. As discussed previously, participatory governance plays a major role within educational institutions within California. Engaging the shared governance groups can create buy in and signify a turning point within the organization. Defining the desired future

state is the next step in Coghlan and McAuliffe's model. This critical step provides focus and energy by describing the desires for the future of the institution in a positive light. "Credible leaders are optimistic and full of hope. They arouse positive images and cause positive action. Credible leaders inspire others with their willingness to suffer first. They seek and give support and recognition that enables others to excel" (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 195). Allowing all invested groups to communicate their vision for the future can help educational administrators create a shared vision for the institution. Shared vision can be a powerful tool when attempting to change the culture of an institution. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), when shared vision exists,

The critical credibility difference is an increase in a person's willingness to put forth effort on behalf of the shared vision and values. Rather than acting sheepishly compliant in following orders, constituents act with moral commitment in following a common purpose. Rather than doing it because they have to, they do it because they want to, and because they know that what they do matter. (p. 29)

Kotter (2012) argued that for change to be successful, 75% of the company's management must "buy into" (p. 37) the change; he recommends that when trying to change an organization, one should assemble a group of individuals with the power and energy to lead a collaborative change effort. This strategy is also supported by legitimate peripheral participation, placing the experts within the center of community practice to guide the shift in culture (Jonassen & Land, 1999). Change strategies differ by the culture, values, and individuals within an organization; these strategies must differ in order to create change that is custom to each organization. Even within the CCC system, the change strategies may not be identical due to differing cultures, values, and visions for the institution. There is no "one size fits all" (Sullivan, Sullivan, &



Buffton, 2002, p. 247) model for change. Sullivan et al. (2002) asserted that in today's climate, change is the only constant, with "Individuals now seeking meaningful, rather than simply well-paid work" (p. 247). The authors stated that clarifying individual and company values can help create a win-win outcome for all concerned. Individuals can find meaning in their work, and companies can develop a committed workforce that is able to function well through periods of change. Values that are defined both by the individual and the organization encourage intrinsic employee motivation and provide a standard for the organization to use when evaluating decisions and their impact on the institution.

Acknowledging that a culture exists and performing an in-depth examination of its functions is an integral step in creating cultural change (Charan, 2006). Many sources discuss change models from a corporate or business perspective. By acknowledging, examining, and adapting change models to an educational institution's culture, the change models can still be considered effective. Numerous "tools for culture change" (p. 3) impact the social architecture of how people work together at all levels of the organization. These tools specifically target "People's behavior, beliefs, social interactions, and the nature of their decision making" (p. 4). The power of these tools is that they not only address the operational purpose of cultural changes, but also identify the psychological effects. Using metrics and quantified data, management is able to replace "anecdotal report" (p. 4) data with statistics to change employee perceptions. These metrics can also allow for a new executive team to take accountability and collaborate in order to address the identified issues. If culture is not taken into consideration, when a shift in culture begins, it can create polarization: "A judgmental orientation that views cultural differences in terms of 'us' and 'them'" (Hammer, 2009, p. 4). This judgement can take on an uncritical view of one's own cultural values and practices and an overly critical view of

other cultural values and practices. Polarization can occur, but should not be met with minimization,: “An orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may also mask deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural differences” (p. 3). Kouzes and Posner (2011) noted that values are so deep-seated that no one actually sees values themselves. Instead, “What is seen are the ways in which values manifest themselves in opinions, attitudes, preferences, desires, fears, and actions. Values can be personal, professional, organizational, or societal” (p. 65). Hammer (2009) argued that acceptance or adaption of values are the cultural attitudes that management should strive to achieve. Acceptance is the orientation that “recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and commonality in one’s own and other cultures” (p. 4), whereas adaption is an orientation that “is capable of shifting cultural perspective and changing behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways” (p. 4). Accepting responsibility for one’s actions and avoiding the distortion of trust or shifting of blame can create authenticity and is linked to faculty trust within schools (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Culture is the differential to consider when administrators within and organization are considering a change model for implementation. Hammer stated that in education, intercultural competence

Reflects the degree to which cultural differences and commonalities in values, expectations, beliefs, and practices are effectively bridged, an inclusive learning environment is achieved, and specific differences that exist in your institution are addressed from a ‘mutual adaptation’ perspective. (p. 3)

Charan (2006) delineated the mechanisms for changing culture within an institution into several categories: (a) *metrics*: describes what the culture values and make clear what people will be held accountable for; (b) *processes*: changes how work is done and thus integrates the new

culture into the organization; (c) *programs*: which generate support for and provide the first demonstration of the new culture's effectiveness; and (d) *structures*: which provide the framework for the new culture to grow, often by changes where and how decisions are made. These metrics must all be accounted for and integrated into the organizational change model an institution elects to implement. For any large institution to achieve a major and permanent change in "Business performance, they must create a sustainable change in culture tied to performance goals" (p. 5) and desired outcomes. Attitudes of key administrators can directly impact the success of organizational change and culture shifts. "Large-scale organizational change is not a spectator sport, and it's easy to be a cynic when you're in the stands" (p. 7); for this reason, it is imperative that acquiring and sustaining employee commitment to the new culture is tied to the ongoing training of educational administrators. In communicating the selection of a change model, establishing and enforcing accountability, and communicating to and training with leadership, change models can be structured to succeed. Kotter (2012) recommends that institutions consistently produce, track, evaluate, and celebrate small and large accomplishments and correlate them to results, reinforcing the positive changes to the culture of an organization. Using the established workforce to create a coalition for change can move a change model forward. Reay et al. (2006) discussed the legitimizing of new practices by accomplishing three interdependent, recursive *microprocesses*:

- (1) Cultivating opportunities for change,
- (2) fitting a new role into prevailing systems,
- and (3) proving the value of the new role.

These microprocesses are demarcated by an accumulating series of small wins that consolidate gains while facilitating continuous change efforts. Most accounts of institutional change focus on embeddedness as a

constraint, yet embeddedness can provide the foundation and opportunity for change. (p. 977)

Using a coalition of actors “Who use their established networks and intimate knowledge of their work environments to take a series of purposeful actions designed to change established patterns of work” (Reay et al., 2006, p. 978) can begin to institutionalize change. According to Reay et al. (2006), individuals within the organization who adopt new practices acknowledge they are “doing things the new way” (p. 978), but also assert that they believe it is right. Eventually the practices are no longer considered new, becoming fully institutionalized and creating permanent change. Identifying actors within the organization who are less embedded in the old processes are more likely to act as change agents. These less embedded change agents develop and implement new operating practices that challenge and eventually replace established practices. These actors use their knowledge of institutional contexts and of other actors to enact each microprocess at the right time and right place.

Rynes (2007) summarizes that the adoption of new ideas or processes follows a nonlinear progression, beginning with a small number of highly innovative individuals adopting a change in the beginning. Once the opinion leaders adopt the innovation and begin to persuade others, the adoption rate begins to surge, with more and more individuals embracing the change, finally reaching a tipping point. Gladwell (2002) elaborated on the tipping point concept with the “Law of a Few” (p. 67), inferring that any social change depends not only on those few individuals who embrace the change, but also on their social skills to share, influence, and persuade others to embrace the change. Rynes (2007) asserted that only a small number of influential people who choose to see the potential and take action need to embrace an idea. Communicating information,

needs for change, and quantitative data in an enlightening rather than frightening way can also impact how small changes can become institutionalized.

### **Why Transformation Efforts Fail and Consequences**

CCCs face a number of consequences if they are unable to successfully meet accreditation standards and support student success. The loss of accreditation, low productivity and enrollment, loss of public faith, detrimental fiscal impact, and reductions in workforce and class offerings can be ramifications experienced by CCCs that fail to change. Kotter (1995) noted that the most successful cases of change transformation require a significant length of time and that skipping steps creates only the illusion of speed and never produces a satisfying result. Kotter recommends that an institution remove obstacles to change, changing systems or structures that pose threats to the achievement of the vision. The president of a college and the executive team must work together to identify and remove as many obstacles as possible before and during the change efforts. Failing to do so can delay and even prevent a successful change model and culture shift. Robbins and Judge (2010) stated that both employee involvement and participative management can promote organizational change, and many organizational change efforts fail due to lack of buy in from staff.

Change is a constant, and a change model cannot stop after one or two successes. Kotter (2012) encourages institutions to use the momentum from successes to continue to influence change within the institution. Schank (2005) stated that organizations should build on knowledge and skills learned to implement knowledge immediately. Learning must be practiced and maintained continuously, and the best programs help participants function on their own after functioning as part of a group during the training. If an organization claims success too early or fails to continue to pursue a clear vision and achievable goals, an organization can fail to sustain

its change model. Trompenaars and Woolliams (2002) highlighted two key areas of consideration: “(1) the difficulty and reality of creating and sustaining change, and (2) not discarding the best, past practices that still exist within the organization” (p. 361). Trompenaars and Woolliams noted that “changing an organization’s culture is a contradiction in terms...because cultures act to preserve themselves and to protect their own living existence. So rather than seeing change as a thing opposing continuity, the authors see it as a difference” (p. 362). The authors asserted that “The problem of changing from the current to the ideal situation cannot be solved, in the sense of being eliminated, but can be wisely transcended organization” (p. 362). The increasing pressure to create change can increase resistance and create resentment, which can be observed with attempts made by the previous administrations. If not taken into consideration, these characteristics from the Trompenaars and Woolliams model can detrimentally impact a cultural shift within the institution.

According to Bridges (2003), change is situational while transition is psychological, and it is the transition associated with change with which individuals struggle most. Having change be successful requires supporting people through the transition, and successful transition management requires a three-step process. Failure to engage these steps can jeopardize change efforts and sustainable change. Bridges lists the three steps as: (a) letting go of the old ways and identity people had; (b) going through an in-between time when the old is gone but the new is not fully operational; (d) coming out of the transition and making a new beginning. Without allowing transition to occur within the change, individuals can cling to the past and fail to let go. Change focuses on an outcome that the change produces, where transition is the starting point, not the outcome, focusing on releasing an old identity and embracing a new one. Many change

models fail because they do not consider transition, and the requirement of releasing an old identity as the first step to embrace.

### **Gaps within the Literature**

As discussed earlier, individuals recovering from broken trust can expect an arduous road to recovery, especially if the decision is made to rebuild the broken relationship (Gordon et al., 2005). An array of emotions is experienced during the rebuilding of trust, foundations are broken and must be rebuilt, and respect and communication must be re-established (Kearney, 2013). Leaders must be aware of their own and their organization's shortcomings and be willing to admit to them. They need to encourage and support others in admitting they are wrong without fear of punishment or reprisal (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Collegial support must be reciprocated for the good of the institution and its students (Piland & Randall, 1998). An institution's vision, mission, goals, and student successes cannot be achieved when division, mistrust, anger, and fear exist (Hitch, 2012). Through sensemaking, creating shared values, and engaging in participatory governance with candor, college presidents can heal their institutions and move the organization forward to achieve its student success goals (Eddy, 2013).

Throughout this chapter, numerous studies have referenced examining leadership within community colleges, participatory governance and its role, change theory, trust, credibility, and adult learning, as well as conditions that support organizational change. There are also studies documenting the breaking of trust within the workplace and building trust within the workplace. However, this researcher was unable to locate any studies documenting the rebuilding of trust specifically within a community college after mistrust is experienced on an institutional level. There is significant need for the study to be conducted to document on a qualitative level, the emotional and organizational recovery process from mistrust within a CCC setting, specifically

identifying steps for recovery, and highlighting key activities that can begin the rebuilding of trust.



### **Chapter 3: Research Methods**

This chapter presents an overview of the research methods utilized in this study. The chapter discusses the research design, participants of the study, data collection and analysis processes, and the validity and reliability of the study.

#### **Purpose and Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the critical activities of rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken. The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction (Creswell, 2013). According to Morse (1991):

Characteristics of a qualitative research problem are: (a) the concept is “immature” due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous research; (b) a notion that the available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; (c) a need exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory; or (d) the nature of the phenomenon may not be suited to quantitative measures. (p. 120)

Little research exists in regard to the topic of rebuilding trust from this population’s perspective. “The researcher will seek to listen to participants and build an understanding based on what is heard” (Creswell, 2013, p. 29). This study explored the rebuilding of trust from the perspective of CCC presidents. Although many studies have documented the process of trust building and the importance of shared governance (Blanchard, 2006; Lau, 1996; Piland & Randall, 1998; Sullivan et al., 2005), this study explored a different perspective on the process of rebuilding trust within an institution from experts in the field, focusing primarily on the president of the college. This exploratory study employed qualitative inquiry using interviews to understand the behavioral patterns used to rebuild trust within a CCC setting.

## **Research Question**

To explore the perceptions of CCC presidents, the following question was explored through this study:

- What practices can CCC administrators engage in to rebuild trust within their Institution after trust is broken?

## **Research Design**

This study used qualitative, one-on-one interviews to explore the beliefs, observations, and best practices of CCC presidents regarding how to rebuild trust within a community college setting after trust has been broken. The research design involved an interpretivist framework to study practices that college administrators adopt to rebuild trust. Conclusions were drawn regarding information that was offered from the interviewed presidents. This work will potentially provide insight into overcoming obstacles in rebuilding trust within a CCC setting.

This research design involved semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. In these semi-structured interviews, the researcher utilized a framework with questions that were posed throughout the interview process. With this technique, the interviewer was able to carefully gauge responses and probe where necessary to ensure appropriate data were collected. The data was analyzed thoroughly and coded to identify any existing trends. There was no single ideal method identified for data collection in president level positions. Almost all forms of qualitative inquiry use some form of interview strategy (Richards & Morse, 2013). A common form of qualitative interview is a semi-structured interview that is also interactive. This form of interview allowed the interviewer to develop and use an interview guide, with ordered topics and questions, during the one-on-one interview process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

This study involved phone interviews, due to the participants' preference and availability. Initial communication was conducted through email with potential participants (Appendix A). The participants were instructed that if they wished to participate in the research study, they could contact the researcher via email or phone and convey their interest. Once the participant responded to the email and agreed to participate in the study, a list of questions was provided to obtain basic information for the interview (Appendix B). The phone interviews were then conducted within 60-minute timeframe.

### **Role of the Researcher**

According to Creswell (2013),

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study. The investigator's contribution to the research setting can be useful and positive rather than detrimental. (Creswell, 2013, p. 207)

My perceptions of CCCs and rebuilding of trust have been shaped by my personal experiences. I have served as a community college administrator for over 10 years in two different states, and four different colleges. Currently I serve as the Vice President of Administrative Services at San Diego City College. As a member of the president's cabinet, I am involved with all top-level administrative activities and decisions and work closely with both internal and external constituencies. My experiences provide both understanding and context and enhance my abilities to code and interpret the information that stems from this study. Due to my previous experiences working closely with college presidents and constituency groups at college campuses, I bring certain biases to this study. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, these biases

may shape the way I viewed and understood the data I collected and the way I interpreted my experiences.

### **Study Setting**

With 72 CCC districts composed of 113 community colleges, there is a clear population for the study (Foundation for CCCs, n.d.). A total of 113 CCC presidents made up the total population of the study. The interviews were conducted between August and September 2016. All interviews were conducted by phone per the preference and availability of the participants. All interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. The researcher also took detailed notes documenting each interview. All phone interviews were conducted at the researcher's office using speakerphone to record the interview with the participants' permission. All interviews were conducted at a time and on a day that was most convenient for the participant. A request to record all interviews was completed using the interview instrument with consent provided verbally (Appendix E). Before each phone interview, the participants were given the instrument in advance with a request to indicate their consent or lack thereof, which was recorded verbally before beginning the interview process. The consent was provided verbally to the researcher to provide an additional layer of confidentiality for the participants.

### **Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures**

For a qualitative study, a general sample size typically ranges from five to 25 individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Dukes (1984) recommended studying between three and 10 participants. This study purposefully sampled eight presidents within the CCC system. The interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length. One pilot interview was conducted to gauge the interview questions and timeframe for both data collection and timing. The interview questions were modified to improve their composition. The timing for the pilot interview was

approximately 55 minutes. However, the data obtained from the pilot study were not included in the final study data.

A typical interview resembles the format of an informal conversation, with the researcher looking for meaningful, although sometimes subtle, cues in the participants' responses, expressions, and tangents. The researcher is required to listen intently while the participant does most of the talking (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is required to follow the interview protocol, but he/she is able to follow any tangents that occur throughout the conversation that stray from the guide, if relevant to the study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews were the strategy utilized for this study. Throughout the processes of interviewing and data collection, the researcher generated useful and respectable qualitative conclusions. After the data were collected, analysis of the content was performed. The content of the data was reviewed and analyzed to discover trends, or common themes.

The researcher interviewed eight CCC presidents, purposefully sampling a seven percent sample size of the total population. Creswell (2013) asserted that narrative research usually includes one or two interviewees, whereas phenomenology typically ranges from three to 10 interviewees; as this was an exploratory study on a small population, the eight-interview sample size representing seven percent of the population met the needs of this study. Although face-to-face interviews were the preferred method, due to the participants' busy schedules, all interviews were completed by phone.

Open-ended interview questions allow for some standardization during the analysis process. The standardized open-ended interview is structured in terms of wording; however, the received responses are open-ended (Turner, 2010). The open-ended responses allow the

“Participants to contribute as much detailed information at they desire and...also [allow] the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up” (p. 756).

### **Recruitment of Participants**

The selection process of participants for this study began by considering all 113 community college presidents within the state of California (Foundation for CCCs, n.d.). The sampling framework considered presidents throughout the state of California, although no assertions are being made regarding the generalizability of this study. Criteria for inclusion were that the participant was a current CCC president, has served in that capacity for at least 1 year, and indicated he/she has experience with rebuilding trust based on his/her response to the Letter of Invitation to Participate (see Appendix A). A population sample size of eight participants was considered appropriate for this study (Creswell, 2013).

To solicit participation in this study, an email was sent to all potential participants, explaining the purpose of the study, describing the benefits of the study, outlining the criteria for participation, and explaining the 60-minute time commitment to participate in the interview process (see Appendix A). The email was sent to each college president individually to preserve participant confidentiality. The email invited all CCC presidents who were eligible to participate voluntarily and requested that they demonstrate their interest by completing and returning a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix B). Eight qualified participants responded to the request for interviews, fulfilling the purposeful sample size identified for the study.

The researcher scheduled interviews with all eight presidents throughout the months of August and September 2016, deliberately omitting the end of the spring semester and completing interviews before the return of students to campuses for the fall semester beginning in September 2016. Once responses were received from interested participants, an email was sent to the

designated email address thanking them for their interest in participating in the study. This email included a request that participants respond with their availability to participate in the interview and indicate their preferred interview method (see Appendix D). Once the responses were received, the researcher coordinated interview times and dates with all interested participants.

### **Data Collection**

In this research, one-on-one semi-structured, qualitative interviews were used to solicit information from the participants. The researcher followed a script and asked a series of predetermined, open-ended questions. During the interview, the researcher requested clarification and elaboration using prompts, such as “Can you please provide me with an example?” and “Can you discuss this in more detail” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 165)? All interviews lasted between 35 and 60 minutes, depending on the participants’ responses. Before beginning the interview, the researcher requested the participant’s permission to record the interview using the Interview Instrument (Appendix E). The researcher used a digital audio recorder to record the interview, and then transcribed all interviews for analysis. The researcher also took notes to clarify responses. The recorded files will be kept on an external hard drive for 3 years and kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s home. The hard copies of the transcribed notes will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home as well. Both hard copies and recorded files will be destroyed after 3 years.

### **Human Subjects Considerations**

This study involved interviews with an adult population. Participants in the study are community college presidents that are currently serving institutions within the state of California. These college presidents are also considered public officials; however, the participants will be protected by the confidentiality of this study. As these individuals are public officials, their

reputation in both the community and their organization could be impacted. To protect the participant population, this study will keep all participant identities confidential. In keeping the identities of participants confidential, it is researcher's opinion that the disclosure of the data outside of the study will not place the participants at any risk of criminal/civil liability, damage their employability, reputation, or financial standing. As such, this study met the requirements for exemption under section 45 CFR 46.102 (i) of the federal regulations of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that govern the protection of human subjects (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). The only identified risk was the obligation of the participants' time in contributing responses to this study. However, as participation was voluntary, this was also seen as a minimal risk to the participants.

To remain compliant with all Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and procedures at Pepperdine University, an exempt application was completed and approved by the Institutional Review Board. After discussion with the IRB chair, the recommendation was made to request participants complete the informed consent form without signature before any interviews were conducted (Appendix C). The waiver of signature was to further protect the participants' confidentiality and reputation. The informed consent form included: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the methodology of the study, (c) the benefits of the study, (d) the estimated time commitment required of the study, (e) a statement indicating the participation was voluntary, (f) a statement that the identity of participants can be kept confidential if preferred. The researcher ensured confidentiality of participants by using data in aggregate form only. Only the researcher has access to the original data and all information is housed in the researcher's home in locked cabinets. All electronic files are maintained with password protection on the researcher's personal computer. All data are available only to the researcher and will be



maintained for 3 years. All confidential data in relation to this study will be destroyed after 3 years following the completion of the study. Participants will have access to the final study results and aggregate data per their request. Participants will be able to request the study results in writing (Appendix A).

### **Instrumentation**

Interviews can result in a great deal of information being obtained (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). It is required that the researcher be a good, active listener. The total time of each interview lasted no more than 60 minutes. This interview method is called in-depth interviewing (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). This study was limited to one interview per person. The interview protocol is outlined in Appendix E. In an effort to identify common themes, the responses to the open-ended questions were organized into common topics. Statements were categorized into dominant themes according to their underlying meaning as opposed to the repetition of specific words or phrases. An analysis of the frequency of themes allowed the researcher to determine the relative frequency with which specific experiences, practices, obstacles, or observations occurred for the participants.

Qualitative research uses a “naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as ‘real world settings [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest’” (Patton, 2002, p. 39). Unlike quantitative researchers who seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers instead seek illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). As discussed earlier, the researcher utilized a qualitative approach, conducting semi-structured, 60-minute interviews. The researcher developed an original instrument and interview protocol to facilitate the interview process (Appendix E). A panel of two experts provided validation of the

protocol and questions. These content experts were identified as two vice presidents of administrative services, representing both Northern and Southern California. Vice presidents of administrative services were identified as content experts as they interact with all populations throughout every aspect of community college operations. They must be knowledgeable about establishing and maintaining participatory processes, leadership, emotional intelligence, and constituency engagement. The review of the interview protocol and questions by these two content experts provided content validation of the researcher's interview process.

One pilot interview was conducted to review the validity and reliability of the instrument. The pilot interview participant is an established CCC administrator who agreed to participate. With the pilot interview completed, the researcher reviewed and revised the interview questions as needed before continuing with the study.

The researcher used the interview protocol to engage the participants and collect data on observations and perceptions in regard to rebuilding trust within a community college setting. This instrument established the script, structured questions, and potential follow-up questions during the interviews. Responses were open-ended and allowed participants to elaborate in detail on their experiences, observations, and anecdotes. There were eight interview questions with five possible follow-up questions during the scheduled interviews. Butin (2010) described the importance of structuring interview protocol to ask open-ended questions that "elicit meaningful and deep responses that take the shape of narratives" (p. 107). Creating a structured interview protocol can prevent response effect bias and encourage the interviewee to discuss experiences, feelings, and intuitions rather than provide data that could have been collected through a survey. All interviews were recorded with permission; the researcher also took notes during the interview and allowed for follow-up questions throughout the interview process. After the

interviews were transcribed, the researcher utilized an inductive coding procedure that allowed categories to emerge from the responses to the questions (Thomas, 2003). Using the computer program HyperResearch 3.5.2, the researcher determined groupings to analyze the data and address the research question.

### **Instrument Validity**

Guba and Lincoln (1994) discussed two key criteria for assessing validity in a qualitative study: (a) credibility, whether the findings are believable; and (b) transferability, whether the findings apply to other contexts. The use of a structured interview protocol and open-ended questions allowed for credibility in gauging the participants' observations, professional judgment, and feelings. Winter (2000) explained that the concept of qualitative validity is not a single, fixed, or universal concept, but "rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects" (p. 1). Creswell and Miller (2000) suggested that validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and his/her choice of paradigm assumption. As a result, many researchers develop their own concepts of validity, replacing validity with constructs they consider more appropriate such as quality, rigor, and trustworthiness. Kirk and Miller (1986) also stated that validity in qualitative research "concerns the interpretation of the observations whether or not the researcher is calling what is measured by the correct name" (p. 69).

Many of the interview protocols observed in this study attempted to ensure validity and transferability. The selection of participants as CCC presidents and subject matter experts inferred for transferability and credibility. The use of a panel of content experts also strengthened the validity of interview responses. Stenbacka (2001) discussed the need for both doing and documenting high-quality qualitative research, explaining that the quality of research is related to

the generalizability of the results, reinforcing the validity and trustworthiness of the research. Bryman (2008) defined validity as “the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (p. 31), whereas Neuman (2003) indicated that “validity means truthful” (p. 185), referring to the bridge between the construct and the data within the study.

Triangulation methods are also used in qualitative research to improve validity, reliability, and the evaluation of findings. Mathison (1988) noted that triangulation has risen as an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation in order to control bias and establish valid propositions.

Some threats to validity can include potential problems with the researcher’s internal processes and generalization or transferability of findings external to the study. The researcher attempted to work diligently in constructing an unbiased and clear procedure and interview protocol to ensure that these threats to validity were addressed. Some criteria that the researcher included in order to ensure validity in this qualitative study were: rigorous data collection, clarity in philosophical assumptions, and an exploratory approach investigating a single phenomenon.

Validity of the study can also be affected by “response effect bias” (Butin, 2010, p. 103), where individuals report to the interviewer what they think the interviewer wants to hear. This concept suggests that interviewees can modify answers to be more socially acceptable. However, the depth and breadth of interviews should remove outliers as well as identify themes that can be considered accurate due to the theme’s repetition throughout the interviews (Butin, 2010).

### **Instrument Reliability**

Golafshani (2003) asserted that although the term *reliability* is a concept used for evaluating quantitative research, the idea is used frequently in all kinds of research. If testing is a way of eliciting information, Golafshani argued that the most important test of any qualitative

study is quality. Eisner (1991) noted that a good qualitative study can help others “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (p. 58). This assertion relates to the concept of a “good quality” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601) research, when reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a “purpose of explaining” (p. 601), whereas the concept of quality in qualitative study has the purpose of “generating understanding” (p. 601). To be more specific with the term *reliability* in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term *dependability* in qualitative research as closely corresponding to reliability in quantitative research. Neuman (2003) noted that “reliability means dependability and consistency” (p. 184) and that qualitative researchers use a “variety of techniques to record their observations consistently” (p. 184).

### **Internal Study Validity**

The researcher has had extensive training in building relationships in both a professional and academic setting. The researcher spent over 10 years in the CCC system, pursuing best practices and structured processes in an effort to support presidents and the institutions they serve in rebuilding trust and ensuring healthy college operations. From extended service in the industry as well as the detailed literature available, the researcher believed that there were several areas that needed further exploration to support the CCC presidents in rebuilding trust. The researcher was open to the presidents’ experiences and shared perspectives. The researcher hopes that the information from this study will further the literature within this topic and provide tools and best practices for presidents to rebuild trust within the CCC environment.

To ensure the data and findings were accurate, the researcher focused on using objectivity throughout the entire process, particularly during data analysis. The researcher reflected on the process throughout the interviews and analysis, while reviewing the transcripts, verifying codes,

and ensuring accuracy in the qualitative data provided by the participants. In addition, the researcher used qualitative software to check the accuracy in the analysis process. Lastly, the researcher used a qualified, objective peer examiner to ensure validity. The peer examiner held a doctoral degree and had experience as a researcher.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Using the interview protocols discussed, the researcher utilized the semi-structured, open-ended questions to facilitate the phone interviews with participants (Appendix E). The researcher conducted each interview carefully, recording each one using a digital recorder and taking notes throughout the process. The researcher was already in possession of preliminary information from the participants and used this information to prepare for each interview (Appendix B). The interviews were conducted between the months of August and September 2016.

### **Data Analysis**

After the researcher transcribed all interviews, coding procedures were utilized to analyze the data. The data analysis process included:

1. *Preparation of raw data files:* The researcher formatted the raw data files in a common format, including font size, margins, and font. A hard copy and backup file were created for each transcription.
2. *Careful reading of text:* Once the raw data were prepared, the text was read in detail so that the researcher could become familiar with the themes, details, and dates within the text.
3. *Creation of Categories:* The researcher identified and defined categories and/or themes throughout each transcribed interview. The general categories were derived

from the research question. The more specific themes were derived after analyzing the raw data using HyperRESEARCH 3.5.2.

4. *Continuing refinement of categories and themes:* Within each category, subtopics were created. This allowed for analysis with consistent themes as well as contradictory points of view. The researcher selected appropriate quotes and anecdotes to convey the core themes of each category.

Once the researcher completed the coding, she then engaged in an interactive process with a second, objective reviewer to enhance the reliability of the interpretation. The second reviewer was given transcripts of the raw data from each interview. The researcher also gave the reviewer the research question and categories identified by the researcher through the coding process. The percentage of agreement of inter-rater reliability was calculated “as the number of times of observation or coding in which the two coders agreed divided by the number of possible observations” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 154). Landis and Koch (1977) suggested that an inter-rater reliability above 60% is substantial; for this study, a percentage agreement of 83% was tallied and considered a substantial agreement as reference.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The interviews conducted throughout this study were based on personal experiences of CCC administrators. The validity may be questioned due to the subjective nature of the interview questions. Confidentiality could also present issues when the findings are presented. Due to the cross-sectional nature of this research, the data were collected during a fixed period of time. Given the continuously changing landscape for CCCs, it is possible that the steps and best practices to rebuild trust in a CCC setting may change over time. Another limitation is that this study only included CCC presidents. It is possible that college presidents in other states may face

different obstacles to rebuilding trust, possibly rendering this study's results not fully generalizable.

### **Summary**

This research was conducted on the topic of rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken. As discussed in Chapter 2, no studies were identified that addressed this topic from the perspective of a CCC president. This chapter explained how the researcher conducted this qualitative, exploratory study, identifying college presidents to participate and creating a developed interview protocol to be applied. This chapter also reviewed the research design, sample population, and procedures, as well as data collection and instrumentation. This chapter concluded with a discussion of the data analysis processes, validity, reliability, and participant considerations.



## Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory study was to explore the critical activities of rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken. This study also sought to provide insight into overcoming obstacles in rebuilding trust within a CCC setting. The study focused on the following central research question:

- What practices can CCC administrators engage in to rebuild trust within their Institution after trust is broken?

The interview protocol was specifically designed to understand the role and experiences of the college president, his/her perspectives on breaking and building trust within a CCC setting, and his/her recommendations on rebuilding trust within an institution after trust is broken.

Eight current CCC presidents who have served their institutions for 1 or more years were interviewed as a part of this study: six men and two women. Table 2 lists the participants by code, gender, total years of experience in the CCC system, and total years as president of a CCC.

Table 2

*Presidents by Codes, Gender, Time in CCC system, and Time as President of CCC*

Code	Gender	Total Years within CCC system	Total Years as President of CCC
President A	Male	10 Years	6 Years
President B	Male	27 Years	5 Years
President C	Female	16 Years	4 Years
President D	Female	20 Years	3 Years
President E	Male	27 Years	3 Years
President F	Male	23 Years	8 Years
President G	Male	36 Years	2 Years
President H	Male	14 Years	3 Years

The interviews produced a total of 585 coded passages grouped by six categories:

- (a) president background and experience, (b) methods for establishing trust between a president

and the community college they serve, (c) actions that break trust with a CCC, (d) methods for rebuilding trust after trust is broken by a current or previous administration, (e) methods for calming emotions within the institution, and (f) the ideal leadership style a president should adopt when rebuilding trust within an institution. Table 3 displays the distribution of themes within each category. The counts for each theme are also listed in the table to document the frequency with which the themes were found within the data. This chapter will detail the findings of this study by category, including participant narratives to provide additional facets into the complex scenarios for rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust is broken.

Table 3

*Categories, Themes, and Counts Resulting from the Data*

Categories	Themes	Count
President Background & Experience		
	Academic Affairs/Instruction	3
	Administrative Services	4
	Student Services	6
	Classified Staff	2
	Dean	4
	Vice President	11
	Vice Chancellor	3
Methods for Establishing Trust		
	Care with Communication, Promises, and Information Sharing	63
	Defining Roles, Expectations, Participatory Governance and Respecting Process	54
	Modeling Positive Behaviors, Integrity, and Consistency	33
	Visibility and Accessibility through Meetings & Open Forums	37
Actions that Break Trust		
	Abuse of Power	36
	Dishonesty and Miscommunication	49
	Lack of Accountability	39
Methods for Rebuilding Trust		
	Create Vision and Redirect, Set Boundaries and Expectations	40
	Demonstrate Positive Change and Do Not Make Excuses	36
	Acknowledge and Validate Institutional Emotions	40
Methods for Calming Emotions		
	Active Listening and Storytelling	26
	Facilitating Healing through Initiating Calm Conversations	28
Ideal Leadership Style		
	Authentic Leadership	3
	Humanistic Leadership	4
	Servant Leadership	3
	Situational Leadership	5
	Transformational Leadership	3

## **President Background and Experience**

All of the participants within the study met the minimum qualifications for participating including: (a) serving as a current CCC president, (b) having served as a CCC president for at least 1 year, and (c) self-identifying as having personal experience with rebuilding trust within a community college setting. The CCC and presidential experience varied throughout the participant population as documented in Table 1. The CCC experience varied among participants, ranging from 10 years to 36 years. Three participants identified higher education experience outside of the CCC system including the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and private education sectors, as well as out-of-state higher education experiences. The newest president within the participants currently served in his/her role as president for 2 years, while the longest standing president tenured at 8 years. The background of the presidents also varied throughout their careers: three of the presidents had academic affairs/instructional experiences, four of the presidents had administrative services/business services backgrounds, and six presidents had student services experience throughout their careers. Two of the presidents began their careers as classified staff, whereas the other six presidents had faculty or administrator positions within the CCC system. Four presidents had previous dean experiences, three presidents had vice chancellor experience, and all of the presidents had vice president or multiple vice president roles across one or more disciplines. Of the participants, only one president had worked at the same college throughout his/her entire career. All other presidents participating in the study had worked at three or more institutions throughout their careers until obtaining their current role as president.

## **Methods for Establishing Trust in a CCC**

Throughout the interview process, the presidents appeared to be candid about the numerous methods for establishing trust between a president and the institution they served. The participants shared a variety of challenges they experienced and had to overcome. The participants also discussed methods for influencing trust building between their administrative team and the institution. The presidents conveyed sincerity in their tones as well as humor and seriousness in regard to how trust can be established between a president and his/her college. It appeared evident through the emotions conveyed that the presidents were impassioned and committed to their institutions, particularly on the topic of trust and its relationship with student success. President D stated:

Well I think first and foremost, they [the President and their constituents] have to have a mutual desire and understanding for what they are trying to accomplish. And I think from that, they can assure that we're on the same page and that student success and the focus on student learning is what we're all here for and we all play a different role in that. Then the trust develops around that. You know what, I think it has to be real; we have to be working on a common goal. It's not about me, it's not about you, it's about the students we serve!

The strategies that emerged from the president interviews to establish trust within their institutions initially included: (a) care with communication, promises, and information sharing; (b) defining roles, expectations of staff, participatory governance, and respecting process; (c) modeling positive behaviors, integrity, and consistency; and (d) visibility and accessibility through meetings and open forums. Throughout the interview process, all presidents touched on

these strategies and their significance with respect to initially establishing trust within their institutions.

**Strategy 1: Care with communication, promises, and information sharing.** The most frequent strategy discussed by all participants was the importance of communication, framing promises, listening, engagement, and information sharing. All presidents cited communication in one form or another as a strategy for trust development. All participants discussed in detail the deterioration of trust due to poor communication and overpromising. Many presidents discussed various facets of communication, including demonstrating care with messaging, information content, and promises being made. President A shared:

I'm a big fan of the do what you say you will do people. You know, I think the way I've tried to build trust, the way it's worked for me is to be very careful in saying what you'll do. Then making sure you follow through. So don't promise or imply so that you end up being unable to accomplish.

President B stated, "Spend enough time to explain what direction you're going and what it is that you are trying to achieve collectively." Information sharing was highlighted as a key element of establishing trust. Without transparent information sharing, rumors, mistrust, and unanswered questions could become an avalanche of employee concerns for the serving president. President F noted,

I think communication is really a key, both written and oral and providing regular updates to the institution. Engaging in crucial conversations that impact the institution was a required activity for the presidents, especially if decision-making at the President-level differed from recommendations made by participatory governance groups.

President D shared,

If you, as an individual, have to say no to somebody, or don't take a recommendation, explain the why of it. And it's just a matter of open communication and accessibility. And if you say you're going to do something, then do it. And if you can't do it, tell them why.

President C observed:

The other critically important piece is transparency. And so, being able to talk about shared interests in regards to stability. Having those conscious conversations so that you can be very transparent and be able to show this is the budget, this is where the money is. And so for me it's about information sharing with, in particular, the dean-level employees and meeting monthly with the managers and having those conversations and talking about things like FTES [Full Time Equivalent Students].

Communication was also emphasized as being two-way, with active listening being required at all levels. President G shared:

You need to communicate with people. That's a big part of it. And let people speak into the process and if a decision is made then that isn't what a particular person would have preferred, at least they understand they had the opportunity to speak into the process and you really want to try to explain why we went in a different direction.

President D reinforced that Presidents should, "Be able to see things through multiple lenses and not be dismissive. Knowing what it all means and then approaching the situation. To help [staff] do their jobs and listen to what the challenges are." President D discussed that presidents should,

Make sure that we have good communication structures in place. [The campus] needs to be informed about things that are going on. And you also better listen to what they are telling you. It's easy to say, "Well I just want it my way." Well, that's not helpful!

President E added that, “It’s just being open and honest about everything. There’s no such thing as talking points. You deal with the truth. You tell people what’s going on to the degree that you can.” President E did discuss that there is information that you cannot always share due to the nature of the information, such as Human Resources information, confidential information, and board decision-making. However, President E emphasized that framing communication into “talking points” can have ramifications if the message becomes diluted or seems to be hiding some other meaning. President E emphasized the need for clear and honest communication without muffling the true message, because that is where miscommunication and confusion can occur. President H stated, “In short, the actions that you feel break trust is the overall lack of communication; or the perception of the lack of communication.”

**Strategy 2: Defining roles, expectations, participatory governance, and respecting processes.** Throughout the interviews, four participants emphasized the importance of defining roles throughout the campus. President B shared,

It’s important to help the administrators understand what their collective role is. So a president’s responsibility here is to help the deans and the vice presidents, as those are the most vulnerable levels, to understand ultimately that they have the authority to make that decision and they have the responsibility for making that decision.

President G shared that presidents must, “Be aware of the 10 plus one, and participatory governance, and what everyone’s roles are. And to tell people that you expect that they will use participatory governance appropriately.” President H also substantiated the need to be clear with all administrators, noting that, “A president can influence the building of trust between administrators and the institution they serve by setting expectations that the administrators work within the participatory governance structure at the college.”

All eight presidents emphasized the need to follow established channels of participatory governance and the need to educate the campus on these processes, even if there are time constraints and external pressures. As President C commented,

One of the elements required [to build trust] is time. And that is a challenging piece when someone comes into an institution that has pressure, whether it be budgetary or accreditation; or some other pressure that is requiring institutional change, in the short-term rather than the-long term.

President H shared some of the crucial steps a president should take when defining roles including:

Being really clear about which decisions are input [participatory requirement] versus actual decision making power [administrator role]. So making sure the committees are structured with membership from each group. Making sure that the charges are aligned with the goals of the institution, or goals of the district and then making sure that budgets are in line with those particular charges.

I think that's the cloudiness around participatory governance, which is often mixed in with what people want to call shared governance. But I think the participatory label which is the original label under AB 1725 (state required participatory governance) is the appropriate label. In that, shared sounds like it's a shared responsibility which to me sounds like shared accountability.

President H also touched on the institution's culture, stating that, "Some would say as a president, you should start to cultivate the culture at the institution, where the systems are actually in place to support participatory governance."



President E shared that, “For the most part, you try to get as many people as possible participating in the processes of the college. And you get as many ideas as you can and you deal with those.” President H contributed that committee engagement is key not just at the president level, but throughout the administrators, stating:

It’s more about information, input, being able to see the issue from all sides and being able to speak to it, but not making the decision [at the committee-level] and certainly not taking the accountability for having to make such a decision. I really see that as an administrative function. And I think that that’s something that the president has to manage from that CEO perspective and make sure that it’s a part of what all administrators do in every single meeting that they’re involved in; is to be very open and engaging and allow for input from multiple constituency groups.

President E voiced the stigma in regard to doubting administrator intentions within the community college system, stating that:

Unfortunately, people are skeptical of administration, even if they were a former colleague as a faculty member. Once you become an administrator, there’s the assumption that you’re going to do something that will be unfavorable to faculty or staff. So, there’s just inherent..., maybe not mistrust, but skepticism that comes with job, even if you were their department chair before, it doesn’t matter.

President G discussed honoring the college participatory governance structure, processes, and procedures in order to have healthy engagement be valued within the institution. President G shared, “You have to honor the process. If you make exceptions to the process and fairness seems to be missing or lacking, that’s a clear break in the trust and people will call you on it.” President C asserted that a president must:

Follow process and policy, including if a decision is made that is not fully in alignment or might even be in opposition that would come from the college council or the highest participatory governance body on campus; then following up with written rationale and data that supports why a different decision was made. But really, it's around information and data sharing so that you can really eliminate the things where distrust starts to bubble up.

**Strategy 3: Modeling positive behaviors, integrity, and consistency.** Throughout the interviews, four participants shared that the college president should display integrity, honesty, and knowledge while providing leadership to thousands of staff and students. President C shared, "Modeling expected behavior is huge." President F further supported that a president's reputation is cultivated:

Through a series of demonstrated actions and words over time that show the integrity and the values of the individual. The strength of their words. Honest, trustworthiness. All of those dimensions play an interconnected kind of woven tapestry of values and characteristics and traits that really take time to develop for the most part.

Participants shared that a president must also encourage staff to model these positive behaviors and hold staff accountable for their actions. President C shared that, "It's really about modeling and encouraging administrators to engage in those practices that the leader has found that help to build and sustain trust in the institution." The modeling of positive behaviors throughout the administrative team was also supported by President D, who stated, "It's very critical that the president sets the tone and helps develop that [modeling positive behaviors] culture in the administrators. And it helps to model it for them as well."

Throughout the ongoing discussions of modeled behaviors, the importance of maintaining and demonstrating integrity was discussed specifically by every participant throughout the interviews. President G stated, “Well I think you have to have integrity.” President G asserted, “It’s leading by example, exhibiting integrity and expecting your administrators to do that. You show integrity and expect that from the people you work with and that’s really critical.” President D shared,

It is really important in having a sustained presence of integrity throughout everything that you do. And all those other things are important, but being accessible, personable, presenting that professional image is really important. It sets the tone for the institution and the organization. You really have to model the behavior.

President F said:

[A president] really has to walk the walk...the most important thing to have is integrity. You’ve got to have integrity...because people need to know that your word is gold that it is solid. That is probably the most important thing, is having your integrity, and having it intact throughout your career. Because even if you have one or two slips, you can really damage the organization and your role as leader and the trust that the organization places in you. So I think that is really important in having a sustained presence of integrity throughout everything that you do.

Possessing and maintaining integrity was a consistent theme throughout the interviews with the presidents. With modeling positive behaviors and integrity, consistency in the modeling of behaviors was discussed. President B stated,

I think the most important thing is consistency in the relationship. Obviously a consistently bad relationship is not a good thing. But trust, I like to think of it as trust

through predictability in that the president can set a tone and explain the goals and the thinking behind it.

With the increasing levels of administrative turnover within community college, trust cannot be developed if an administrator leaves the institution. President C shared, “I knew that when I came in the door what I had to do for this college was stay. I had to stay...you have to know what it is that good for the institution in the long haul.” President D continued to reiterate the need for modeling behaviors and more importantly consistency by stating, “Your follow through matters a lot. I have three words for you, follow through, follow through, follow through. You know that in your job.”

**Strategy 4: Visibility and accessibility through meetings and open forums.** Seven participants discussed the need for a president to be visible and demonstrate his/her character in one-on-one and group settings. Through the participatory governance committee meetings, one-on-one interactions, and college events, the president can demonstrate his/her character and trustworthiness. President E shared, “Openly and honestly seeking people’s input and participation and being as inclusive as possible is one of the keys in being accessible.” To ensure visibility, many participants discussed being visible in non-structured settings that provided a more casual outlet for staff to engage with the President. President E stated,

I walk the whole campus at least once a day, and I talk to people along the way. I’m on campus usually between 6 and 6:30 in the morning and I leave later in the afternoon. But I’m in the community a lot and I’m on the campus a lot. I think that they can see my commitment to the college and to students. I think that’s one of the most important things.

President H shared that ongoing communication and relationship development does not need to occur only in participatory meetings, stating,

It does occur there, but I think there are so many other opportunities to communicate with people that are less structured to develop the relationship. And I think over time the relationship develops given the normal trials and tribulations of an institution or organization of size that involves people.

President D shared his/her “scaffold” approach, which involved multiple layers of intentional meetings to connect with all stakeholders throughout his/her campus. President D shared how he/she met with each administrator, faculty, and staff member individually over a 3-year period, stating, “It took me 3 years to get through it, but everybody knew that I was doing it. I think that was a really critical component with establishing new relationships on campus.”

All eight participants shared their personal stories of trying to create a personable and approachable persona. President F shared that a president must:

Have an ability to walk around the campus. Put people at ease and have an ability to be approached. You really have to go out of your way to change that perception that although you’re in a suit, you’ve got to be approachable. I mean I walked through student services twice in the past week without a jacket. I roll up my sleeves, and try and get out there. Today at cabinet I told my team, I don’t want to see you people in your office next Monday, every administrator better be walking this campus with maps and I better see you out there. And so, that along with walking into offices and really being approachable.

President F also discussed that the title of “president” or “doctor” can also cause intimidation with staff and students in particular, serving as a barrier to the development of personal relationships, indicating:

I have a little bit different of a philosophy. I don't always prefer to be called Dr. (last name). If you want to call me, you can call me Dr. (first name). But I came from student services and I put people at ease because we're not a tier 1 research institution. The reality is we're serving a very fragile group of students and we really have to go out of our way to make people feel comfortable the first time they sense that this is the ivory tower, I think it sends a bad message.

Planning unstructured events on campus was another approach used by five presidents to provide welcoming environments for dialogue. President H shared that:

There are many opportunities to connect so there can be open forums, there can be informal chats; we've had coffee with the president. We've done popcorn with the president. I've spent time in different areas of the college working with various constituency groups, whether they are classified staff, whether they are administrators or faculty. And just seeing what they do on a day-to-day basis.

President D also supported the idea of unstructured events and information sharing, stating:

I actually host open forums, kind of town halls, I call it pizza with the president sessions for students. And I have them at all different times and all different locations so that I can have a cross section of students that I'm targeting.

These types of opportunities were a trend throughout the interviews.

However, three participants warned of boundaries in regard to visibility and accessibility. Strategic visibility, specifically knowing when and where to be visible, was an integral process in developing trust and defining roles. For example, President A discussed that he sometimes attended the Academic Senate meetings; he only did so during strategic periods within the semester or by invitation. President A stated,

[Academic Senate] meet twice a month. But just during the semesters, not during the summer. So I usually go to one or two [meetings], I try to go to the beginning and the end of the semester meetings just to be available. But once in a while they ask me to come....If you're overly accessible you can't do your job. It's finding strategic times in your calendar. I don't have my administrators walk the campus every single day of the year, but clearly at the beginning of the term I want people out there and visible. That stresses the tone and expectations. Doing things that are very symbolic that will carry a lot of weight through the year and set the tone.

Although the interviews demonstrated the need for visibility, the participants also shared that a president's personal accessibility is vital for a campus to begin developing a relationship with their president. President H stated that, "I think that's the part that's often unwritten about how to do things. But I would say it's about the relationship building." Four participants discussed accessibility through an "open door" policy and structured "office hours." President E shared that they always structured time within their calendar to be accessible and available to the campus. President E stated, "My door is always open when I'm here. The only time my door is closed is if I'm meeting with somebody and there needs to be some level of privacy. So people can pretty much just walk in." Office hours, open door policies, and open forums were just a few of the avenues that the participants utilized to create more informal meetings.

In addition to the informal meeting opportunities, all eight participants shared that they held recurring monthly meetings with the key strategic stakeholders within their institutions including, but not limited to: the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, ASG, and Union Leadership. President D shared that within their institution:

We have a newsletter that goes out four times per year on the very high level kinds of things around the strategic planning, ed [education] master plan status, the initiatives, state-wide initiatives that are going on. And then I have regular standing meetings with our current leadership for both the academic senate and the classified senate, as well as the represented unions; which really allows for an opportunity to be aware of the things that are going to keep the channels of communication open. I also meet monthly with the ASG presidents as well.

President A also utilized the monthly meetings, stating,

I also set up monthly meetings with the two unions that we have; with their leadership to go just over our board agenda and see if there are any questions or concerns they have over what's being brought to the board for the business of the district.

To increase engagement, interviewees also identified other outlets to encourage staff engagement and information sharing, including: College Committees, Newsletters, Administrative Team Meetings, Manager Meetings, and Open Forums. President E stated, "We have forums on the first Friday of every month. It's open to the campus, no agenda; whatever anybody wants to talk about." These engaging information sharing opportunities allows for more recurring opportunities to connect with the president, developing relationships and trust.

Recurring participatory governance committee meetings were also a common theme throughout each interview. All presidents reported a standing, high-level committee like a "President's Council" or "College Council" that they attended periodically. President A commented,

We have a College Council, which is our main committee that participatory, where all groups are at the table. And that meets twice a month. I probably attend 75% plus of the



meetings, but stay very involved with it so I can hear what people are saying and have some interaction.

President D shared that their institution has, “A very active Participatory Governance Council. That is a great communication conduit and I use it such, not only for supporting the decision making processes so we have constituency review, but as a critical communication channel.” All participants also stated that they required weekly or monthly executive cabinet and administrative leadership meetings. The purpose of these meetings as to support building trust internally through the administrative teams. President D commented,

There’s a variety of things that are done to make sure we keep those open, different kinds of communication. We have a regular cabinet meeting, which of course includes all those people who have responsibilities and leadership in specific areas.

President B stated,

We have very complex systems. And understanding the systems and any particular piece of how the dialogue or decision making fits into the very complex system is also hugely important. As an organization, a CCC is probably one of the most complex organizations.”

### **Actions that Break Trust within a CCC**

The participants of the study were asked to share examples of actions they felt broke trust within a CCC. The presidents shared many similar scenarios falling under three identified themes: (a) abuse of power, (b) dishonesty and miscommunication, and (c) lack of accountability. These themes will be discussed in depth in the next sections.

**Abuse of power.** Five of the presidents provided specific examples of how the abuse of power within a community college led to broken trust within the institution. President B

discussed that, “Given the complexity of the organization, imbalance between any of the entities there, any imbalance of power can cause trust to break.” When a president chooses to exercise unilateral decision-making, these observed actions can break down trust very quickly. President H shared that:

Folks feel that participatory governance or their ability to participate is taken away when they don’t actively participate. There’s three scenarios: one, they don’t actively participate in a decision; two, they hear about a decision after the fact; three, or they don’t get an opportunity to participate because of the timing of the decision that needs to be made. And I think that each of those scenarios can create mistrust as it would in any relationship.

President G also agreed that an abuse of power through unilateral decision-making can damage trust, stating,:

Well, I think if you say one thing and do something else, you know, that breaks trust. If you just say, “Here’s what we’re doing now” without any kind of dialogue, where a dialogue is warranted, people don’t have the opportunity to speak into the process, and that breaks trust. If you don’t keep them informed of what’s going on, you don’t let them participate, you just say, this is what we’re doing with no explanation; it needs to be a more collegial environment. So if you don’t do that, of course the trust goes away because you have to build trust.

President H asserted, “Trust is a form of participatory governance. There is a trust there that you are going to follow that process right.” Two participants provided specific examples of broken trust due to the arrogance or overconfidence of a president. An individual serving as

president is observed closely. When he/she portrays overconfidence in a piece of information and then that information turns out to be untrue, trust can begin to falter. President A shared:

One major thing I see is when, I don't know if overpromise is the right word but, when you are overly certain that this is what's going to happen; Especially with state funding and state proposals and state laws being proposed. You have to communicate that we think this is what's going to happen but it could change. You've got to give those real clear messages of uncertainty when there's uncertainty or when there's a possibility.

President F shared an example of a president who spoke overconfidently in public, but in private was not knowledgeable or technically adequate to run the college. The administrative team and other individuals within the institution recognized quickly that this individual was not credible. President F shared that:

And here's another thing I don't think I added earlier, but, pretending to be a know-it-all, pretending to have all the answers. I know I'm constantly, I'm learning every day.... But I'm learning things every single day. I have seen presidents that at former institutions... Behind closed doors, the person did not know anything. And then all of a sudden this person would get up and start to pontificate. And you sit there and go, this person is not even close.... I think it plays into the integrity and the trust issue too. Because if somebody later finds out you're just being this "BSer," that doesn't help you at all either. So again, I've seen that with that individual. And that individual was only here, they got fired after 9 months.

Two presidents discussed that the confusion of roles, specifically an abuse of power at the board level, can cause trust to deteriorate as well as high administrator turnover rates. President C stated,

[Board dynamics is] a really difficult one, and that's one where you often see individuals leave. And it's incredibly complex because the president serves at the pleasure of the board. And sometimes the president is carrying out decisions that were not their decision, and yet that cannot be communicated.

President B commented that:

Another place that trust can be broken is at the board level. We are creatures of the cultures that our boards make. The locally elected board can build trust and maintain focus on the college's mission, or they can break trust and drive the institution into disarray if they don't allow the professionals that they hire to do their appropriate role... There are boards that interfere with content in teaching and investigate individuals who teach outside of these beliefs.... People wanting to do good, but not respecting their own roles can also break trust and create problems...or individuals acting for personal gain.

**Dishonesty and miscommunication.** Throughout the study, all eight participants discussed examples of miscommunication, poor communication, or complete dishonesty as trust breaking actions. Also, a lack of transparency, omitting information, and negatively communicating about constituency groups in public environments within the college played a role. President D shared that a lack of transparency can cause a breakdown in trust, but it can be difficult at times to communicate clearly without divulging sensitive information. President D commented that,

I think sometimes, even when we try to communicate the best way we can, even when it's fully honest, people don't always understand the full picture. And from their point of view or perspective, they just can't. And that can be very difficult and very challenging when they, people have a perception that they've gone back on their word."

President H also discussed the need to keep the campus community informed, emphasizing that a lack of information can break trust and create unnecessary strife. President H stated,

More importantly, outside of the participatory structure, you've got people that think they know what's going on. And...you have to give them information so that they can see all sides of the pieces of the puzzle. And sometimes it's not you as the president or the administrator, but setting them up so they can get informed through another vehicle.

President H also expressed concerns about being believed after trust is broken by the current or previous administration. A president can attempt to share information honestly and transparently, but if trust is not present or not fully developed, it can hinder the campus community from receiving and believing information. President H shared that:

A lot of times, through titles or broken relationships, or already broken trust, you can't get the information to them because they [campus community] don't necessarily believe you, or they are not as open to receiving it. So then that's where it gets really tricky because you need for people to know or learn something and you're telling them the same thing that someone else might tell them...but that has to be fostered so that that opportunity can take place for that kind of communication to occur. As opposed to professional level communication, which you still have to take advantage of every avenue to get information to people. In short, the actions that you feel break trust is the overall lack of communication or the perception of the lack of communication.

President A reinforced the need for clear and concise communication, sharing, "You just want to be communicating very carefully. So when you communicate more sloppily or make it

sound like something's going to happen, that can break trust." President A also discussed concerns related to overpromising, stating,

That's when you overpromise and don't deliver. Or when you say you're going to do something and you don't do it. So I think that's probably the biggest thing. And once in a while, that can happen and you better have good reasons and good explanations of why something didn't happen that you really were or intending to do.

President F also shared an example of a president breaking trust within an institution by blatantly overpromising:

Evidently before I got here, there was a president that was promising people, they would promise the vice president of instruction something and then they would promise the same thing to the vice president of student service, even though he would only have one to allocate, for example. And they [the president] would pit people against each other and then it's kind of like having somebody having an affair, and all of a sudden these people start to compare notes and it's like oh my God you've been lying to us all along.

And I think there may be some times where, I don't want to say little white lies, but when you're dealing with sensitive personnel issues, you may try and soften the blow on something. But even in those situations people want to be told the truth and even that can haunt you if you don't come forward and really say things straightforward.

Small untruths or framing information to omit facts can cause a breakdown in trust throughout the institution.

President F shared some examples and observations of a president who used communication to lie internally to their administrative team and other constituency groups.; "I later found out that there were a lot of duplicitous conversations; and how this individual [the

president] was pitting vice presidents against vice presidents, instead of really bringing the team together, again, with conflicting information.” It is highly destructive for a president to lie to his/her administrative team or speak badly about individuals in public situations. President F shared an example:

We were having a meeting and the academic senate president comes in and he [the president] breaks away from the cabinet meeting...but then he [the president] comes back in the room to us...and then he says he had to deal with that a-hole right now...And he’s starting to berate this person and you’re thinking, God if he is talking about these people that just a minute ago he had his arm around ... it really eroded the trust that we had in our leader at that point.... That trust starts eroding with even those little types of interactions like I just illustrated. It doesn’t have to be the promising of a dean position to each division when you only have one.

**Lack of accountability.** Seven of the presidents provided specific examples of how the lack of accountability and making “side deals” breaks trust within a CCC. President C asserted a lack of accountability and actions that can rapidly remove trust, stating,

Actions that don’t align with the board established policies and administrative procedures of the institution; Actions that are in opposition to recommendations made through a participatory governance process; Actions that are against a recommendation that comes from a hiring committee, and anything that is perceived as done in secret.

If a president is not held accountable for any of the aforementioned actions, trust can be completely broken. President C also shared the impact of side deals, sharing an example:

We had had some change over in Human Resources and the prior [administrator] had created all of these side deals. And the issue was it popped up all of the time and the

union would bring it forward that we have this MOU that says whatever...it's those kinds of manipulations where I see, unfortunately they try to work against creating an environment of trust.

Four different participants specifically identified not following established procedures and making side deals as a method to break trust quickly within a CCC. President B stated that, "Special deal making, even if it's well-intentioned, can break trust. This is an example of departing from well documented processes."

An inability to address critical or difficult issues within the institution can also diminish a president's credibility and trust in his/her intentions. President D shared an example of diversion tactics, speaking about something as trivial as paint colors, rather than addressing a key issue such as resource allocation at the campus level. President D commented:

That if they [the president] are unwilling to address difficult topics...but we never talk about the hard things. Rather than dealing with...for example, resource allocation in a very open and transparent way. That can break trust when it really becomes a diversion.... And I don't know a better way to say that then deal with the real issues, even if they are tough. Diversion techniques only make people angry, and some things are just hard. Everybody can't have their way. We are in complicated institutions.

President E reiterated,

Don't be afraid to answer tough questions... If you don't have an answer immediately admit to that. Get back to them. You have to be very careful when you're a college president because everything that comes out of your mouth is policy. Whether it is or it's not doesn't matter.



President E summarized the breaking of trust concisely by stating that trust is broken by “Keeping secrets, trying to hide stuff, trying to do something without talking to people or being open and honest about it.”

### **Methods for Rebuilding Trust in a CCC**

Throughout this study, the presidents were asked what methods they would use to rebuild trust after trust is broken within their institution, whether by the current or previous administration. Of the participants, six presidents stated that the methods were the same whether the trust was broken by the current or previous administration. Two participants disagreed, stating, “Yeah, I think so” or “maybe slightly,” when asked if the methods of rebuilding trust are different if it was the previous administration that broke trust. However, there was an alignment with the strategies in rebuilding trust after trust is broken within an institution. Three key strategies emerged from the president interviews to rebuild trust within their institutions after trust is broken: (a) create a vision, redirect, set boundaries, and expectations; (b) demonstrate positive change and do not make excuses; and (c) acknowledge and validate institutional emotions. Throughout the interview process, all presidents touched on these strategies and their impact in reestablishing trust within their institutions. These strategies will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

**Strategy 1: Create a vision, redirect, set boundaries and expectations.** Throughout the interviews, six of the participants specifically mentioned creating a new vision and redirecting staff to this vision. President G expressed that acknowledging and reflecting upon the mistakes of the previous administration is important. President G stated,

That’s my situation here because my predecessors, the trust really wasn’t there for a lot of the things I mentioned earlier. You know, they were not thinking, we’re all in this

together. They made decisions and just said this is what we're doing now and didn't explain it. People felt that their complaints or suggestions fell on deaf ears.

President H also shared the value of acknowledging the flaws of the previous administration and allowing staff to engage in conversations, while simultaneously redirecting them to the potential of the future. President H commented:

Many times you hear about something that occurred 10 years ago or people want to give you the history on something. You need to be patient and listen to it because that's how they got where they are. And you need to understand that before you can take them where we all want to be presumably: a better college for promoting student success. And if folks have [been] burned by, or the perception is that they were burned by a previous administration, you need to take stock of that. I think the absolute wrong approach would be to say, "Well those people aren't here anymore, and this is what we're doing." It sounds good and it's logical in many ways, but the way that matters is that people want to make sure that the same mistakes aren't made, so that they can then get on board and rebuild trust with the new administrative team or leadership team.

President H highlighted the importance of listening to the concerns of staff to ensure that mistakes are not repeated. These interactions can also provide strategic opportunities for the new president to begin redirecting conversation towards the new vision. President G also shared some perspective on acknowledging the previous administration, stating:

Again it's the lack of that trust; it can really cause a problem. But if you tell people, I see why the trust went away, I see why you're upset about this, I see what we went through here. You know I agree with you that we shouldn't have done that. So we're not going to

operate that way here. So I've talked to a lot of people and building that credibility back and the trust.

However, there are instances where a current administrator within the institution becomes the new president of the college. Now, this person is tasked with trying to create distance from the previous administration and rebuild from within. President F was an administrator who became president within their current institution after a previous president broke trust and then exited the college. President F shared that although there were doubts and a desire to leave, reflection and investigation allowed for some resolution. President F stated:

I was like, "I'm done with this." Then I started to piece some things together and I realized that it's not such a bad place, but really being able to distance yourself from that individual. I mean administration is cast with such a dark light all the time. You have to continue to say, judge them as an individual, and judge me as an individual. Don't stereotype all administrators and judge me by my actions and give me some time to prove to you that I'm not like this past individual, and reiterating that.

Making clear statements about change and then presenting a new vision can facilitate the rebuilding of trust between a president and the institution. President G shared:

So when I came in I was able to say, you know, we shouldn't have done a lot of those things. I'm not going to behave that way, we're going to go through this together and we're going to change the culture back. I've been saying we're going to institute best practices and a lot of things from the past were not best practices.

Many times, new administration continues to be blamed for the old administration's actions. President A shared the following example:

The furthest back that I've been blamed for something was 1984. So there's long memories, especially in the faculty so I think you know most people recognize if you remind them gently that within the heat of a tirade that, there were some other people in these positions. And I understand that they made mistakes that you're still upset about and what can we do to make improvements. It's a different time now and let's look at what we've done in the last few years and where we can move into the future.

President A shared that if an administrator needs to be held accountable and take corrective action, a president can support this process. President A offered an example of correcting poor communication within an administrative team:

Coaching them [the administrator] on how to...take the responsibility and admit that they shouldn't have said it that way. That wasn't what they were trying to communicate. Coach them through the communication. And then, I would say let me help you work through this problem. Instead of reacting when someone accuses you of whatever, you know, let's talk about it and talk through an appropriate response that might help them understand and still get the point across. That we're trying to make a fixing of the situation or coming up with a solution to the problem we're trying to address. And come up with a plan of communication and interaction that will help us get to the point we need to get to and not be distracted and pulled away from accomplishing the things that need to be accomplished.

President B supported the need to address the organization's vision and redirect staff appropriately, stating:

Broken trust becomes a characteristic of the institution.... Organizational climate is the worst used word. And this is something you can change with good leadership. It has to be

purposeful and getting beyond the problem. You may not be able to solve the problem until you get people to focus on a greater good, a visionary climate.

Creating a “visionary climate” and redirecting staff to this vision can facilitate change and rebuild trust within the college culture. President C discussed the need to have targeted discussions on the collective vision to create buy-in and identify how all stakeholders play a role within this vision. President C shared that, “Being able to talk about shared interests in regards to stability, and long-term and sustainability of a college and a district...having those conscious conversations so that then you can be very transparent.” These transparent and focused conversations can create relationships that will provide the president support during the efforts to rebuild trust.

President G discussed the need to hold all administrators accountable. After clearly stating expectations of the administrative team, President G asserted that the president should be: Monitoring what they do and stay in touch on a regular basis with all of your managers...I think that if you see an administrator, part of it’s through the evaluation process and regular feedback, and you see someone who’s not behaving exactly the right way you want to talk to them about corrective action and sometimes you have to deal with progressive discipline to help someone do a better job if they’re not inclined to treat people the right way or what have you. And to tell people that you expect that. You show integrity and expect that from the people you work with and that’s really critical, I think.

President C shared an example of how strategic interventions can directly address an issue and create corrective behaviors, resulting in the campus community regaining boundaries and adopting appropriate behaviors. President C stated that when arriving within this institution as president:

This was an institution that had a long and proud history of having horrific email exchanges that were open to all. You just vented, you did whatever. And my approach was that I absolutely did not engage in that. And when someone would send one of those rants I would privately to them, send an email and invite them to my office. And I operate with an open door policy that's really that. Anybody is welcome, come in. And in my first year, one person took advantage of that. But within 3 months, that venting via email was gone. And I never ever asked anyone not to do it. So I think modeling expected behavior is huge.

How a president communicates and assumes accountability is observed and scrutinized.

President F shared:

You know, I'm not perfect and I've made mistakes.... And the reality is that we have to be humble and recognize that we make mistakes.... Now, I'm not saying to apologize all the time, but you know, if you think you're infallible then that leads to your downfall as well. So really acknowledging, that one, they have made a mistake, and I always tell people that I do this too.

President F went on to share that making mistakes is a part of any job; however, a president must take accountability for the mistake, and more importantly, learn from the mistake and not repeat the behavior. President F continued that when mistakes occur, one must:

Learn from it, that's the most important thing. Just don't make the same mistake again. I ask that of myself and I ask that of my team and, because the worst thing that can happen, by trying to cover something up, it kind of snowballs it and it goes back to that thread of mistrust that erodes the confidence in the leadership and can impact the culture of the organization.

**Strategy 2: Demonstrate positive change and do not make excuses.** The second strategy in rebuilding trust within a CCC after trust has been broken is to demonstrate positive changes and not make excuses for poor behaviors. Three participants stated that demonstrating positive changes was necessary during the slow process of rebuilding trust. President A stated that, “You’re going to have to demonstrate new ways of, or new situations where you’re following through on things.” President B shared that when trust is broken and a president is attempting to create positive change, it must be done in a public way. President B stated that a president must,

Not hide, because presidents are watched very closely. I think one mistake presidents make is that they forget how influential they are and that they have some power...because you are demonstrating to sometimes thousands of people the desired course of action and you are demonstrating this constantly.... They know who you are and they are watching and so it’s good to be visible. And since we’re talking about repairing or rebuilding trust, it’s good to talk about it.

All eight participants agreed that excuses cannot be made for poor behaviors or the past. There may be valid justifications, but making excuses can serve as a diversion tactic, creating doubts about intentions and a lack of trust in administrator actions. President A stated:

I guess first would be to take responsibility.... Say I messed this up, I made a mistake. Be honest about it... with each organizational culture, there’s a differing level of second chances.... Depending on perhaps the history of the institution and the current leaderships in the various positions. So, sometimes there’s a feeling of broken trust when there wasn’t really anything that the president necessarily did.... Nobody likes to have somebody just immediately make excuses.

It is necessary to apologize for past transgressions, whether or not the president was involved, and then demonstrate positive change. President E supported the admission and accountability method, not making excuses for activities that occurred. President E stated,

If it's an error on the part of administration then take the hit. Admit the mistake and move on from there. If it's a matter of hiding things, it's going to be very difficult to get it back because people will always expect you to be hiding something no matter how much information you give them.

Making excuses or hiding information is not conducive to the rebuilding of trust. President G tied together the demonstration of positive change with the omission of excuses, stating:

You have to face up to it and then...you have to try and act in a manner that builds trust and reestablishes that. And once it's gone, it's really, really hard to get it back. If you're still at the institution, you've got quite a hill to climb. And you're going to have to really build that credibility back and the trust. And there's always going to be some people that will never forgive or forget, so you're working on the majority of the people to try to get them buy in. And then those dissenters, the naysayers, they may feel questioned at times, saying wait this is the person who did that, do you remember that? So you have to try and change the culture of the institution. It can be done, but it is really hard but you have to be doing really good things.

President H also supported taking accountability for broken trust: "I think the first step, is again, like in any relationship, admit when something went wrong." President H continued to reiterate the admission of guilt if necessary, and then to speak out about the situation through multiple avenues; "Admit something went wrong. And if it was the president's fault, then he or she needs to really step up and say that. And they need to say it not necessarily in one circle, but



multiple circles, understanding that people talk to each other.” President H highlighted the value of sharing this message of accountability throughout the campus, naming it the “broken record technique.” Continuing with this theme, President H expressed the importance of stating the facts:

Here’s what happened. Here’s what should have happened. Here’s how we’re going to approach this next time...then taking it from where it is, and really owning the problem or the break as a president...that does wonders, because no one is perfect.

**Strategy 3: Acknowledge and validate institutional emotions.** To build upon the candor occurring by not making excuses, seven participants stated that acknowledging and validating institutional emotions was paramount to the reestablishment of trust. President C shared that learning about the institutional history can often play a significant role in a president’s ability to facilitate trust-building activities. President C commented that,

I have to continuously bear in mind the history that individuals have. And the big piece was that in 2011, there were significant rifts and the president who was in place at that time, just made decisions as to who would go and it was not supported by data and was not following any program discontinuance policy or practice.... That’s hard for people to get over.

President G shared their experiences overcoming the historical barriers:

It’s challenging. I still get comments that some people say, well I’m worried about this...they will say [name of previous president] did this, 6 years ago. And the good thing is that the folks they’re talking to will say well, [name of previous president] has been gone for years. And [President G] doesn’t operate that way and no one is talking about doing that. But they’re still skittish because they really get burned. If you have a misstep

while you're going through that, then they're going to tag you with that negative feeling that goes towards those previous people

President D advised presidents to:

Acknowledge and validate that the feeling or emotion is coming from somewhere;

Whether or not you agree, personally as a president with that, doesn't matter. If it's a real perception or real emotion and from their perspective a very real thing; validating the situation dynamic and then owning it and sometimes saying, "I know you don't trust us" or "I know you're frustrated, what can we do?" bring a solution and let's talk about it.... I think that goes a very long way [rather] than "It's just going to be my way."

Candid conversations can open the communication channels for continued discussions about emotions at the college. President D shared that, often, a president must play the role of therapist, asking questions as to why something occurred and what the facts are. President D shared:

Sometimes you have to figure what the real truth was and that can be tougher...sometimes what happens is we're seeing a reaction to a situation or dynamic that there's a lack of trust that may not be in any particular situation that's in front of us...That is almost always based in history. That is where it can be, "Tell me what is really going on here." It can be because sometimes we have to back track and find out what the truth really was and then sometimes we can't even, because there could be implications around it and it cannot be divulged. And again acknowledging, I know you're frustrated but we have to move forward today...it is validation, but it is also, it has to be a little bit more fact finding and historical context and context building to address, or rebuilding trust that is

broken by previous administration, even if it is very ugly. The constraints of legal ramifications, personnel, and all that kind of stuff can be very difficult.

Demonstrating awareness of and sensitivity to the emotional climate of an institution is vital to the reestablishment of trust. President G commented:

You have to be very understanding and sensitive to what had transpired and the lies and just explain to people, you know we're not going to go back to that kind of an institution. We're going to be a healthy organization where we support one another. And treat each other with respect and that's key.

Through the acknowledgement and validation of institutional emotions, the president can then begin to move people to a state of healing. President B summarized:

Broken trust becomes a characteristic of the institution. It is the environment that you're in. They [the campus] are still feeling rotten and burned. You really have to listen to the stories to find out. Because how you to respond to it, you really need to figure out and accept it and make it your problem.... Sometimes you can't solve it, you just have to move beyond it and help people get beyond their emotional attachment to it.

### **Methods to Calm Emotions in a CCC**

The participants in the study reflected on the emotional state of institutions when trust is broken. They observed the different emotions experienced by the campus community and the relationship of those emotions to institutional paralysis. The presidents described two steps for calming emotions after trust is broken: (a) active listening and storytelling, and (b) facilitating healing through initiating calm conversations. These steps will be described in the next sections.

**Step 1: Active listening and storytelling.** When discussing the emotions observed around institutions experiencing broken trust, all eight participants had observed some type of

emotional response from the campus community. Not only were an array of emotions observed, but also these emotions became embedded in the emotional climate and culture of the institution. The eight presidents were asked what emotions they observed in institutions after trust was broken. Table 4 lists the different emotions described as well as their frequency.

Table 4

*Emotions Observed by Presidents when Trust is Broken within an Institution*

Emotion Observed	Frequency
Anger	10
Defensiveness	8
Hurt	11
Low Morale	7
Organizational Paralysis/Disengagement	13
Sensitivity	5

When questioned about strategies to calm emotions to allow meaningful conversations to occur at the campus, six presidents shared that active listening combined with storytelling were effective methods for calming emotions. President B shared,

So in my case, I made it clear I wanted to learn. There was no shortage of people who wanted to teach me, so I did a walking tour of those leadership bodies and looking for sources of information. It was qualitative research and asking questions from different angles and different people, you get a sense of the true story. I asked people to tell their story and there was catharsis in that process as well. They saw a direction and consideration for matters that they were not happy with. Helping people trust that if they put their efforts into the governance process, all voices would be heard and actions would be taken as long as they were best for the collective institution. You also look for patience, and if you didn't get into a problem quickly, it will take time to resolve.

President B stated that the “catharsis” that occurred when individuals gained the opportunity and were specifically asked to share their personal experiences. In this anecdote, the walking tour made the president visible and demonstrated a willingness to listen and learn. President H expressed the importance of active listening and looking beyond the emotions being conveyed to identify the real issues. President H shared that strong emotions can often inhibit a person’s ability to be receptive to new information, stating:

I think it’s important to listen to what the real, what’s behind the emotion.... First and foremost, is to just hear them out, I think that’s half of it. But learning how to listen to someone, either people know how to do it or they don’t, or it can be learned, like in any argument. If two people are extremely emotional, for whatever reason.... It’s hard to listen when you approach the situation from that kind of a perspective or lens.... And then being able to calm emotions by listening and asking people, what would they do.... And so the emotions are calmed by the listening, the discussions, the sharing of ideas, and the explaining of why something needs to be managed. And then getting ideas from those who are impacted.

President E discussed the need for direct communication, making a president available for face-to-face discussions. President E asserted that direct, face-to-face communication can allow listening and sharing to occur, commenting:

Well, I believe in direct communication. So sometimes that causes people to feel threatened or not listened.... But I just go and talk to them directly. Don’t use email, don’t use written communication very often. It’s much better to go down, or go sit down in their office and talk about the issue and talk about it directly. Or to talk to a group,

whether it's the academic senate or a department or those kinds of things. Go talk to them directly and you know address the issue directly.

President F described the circumstances of being an internal candidate who then became president after trust had been broken at the presidential level. Becoming the new incoming president included the challenges of mending trust. President F shared,

But, you know, for me, it was kind of coming in and saying look I was with you. I tried to leave, and I was interviewing out there. And the reality is that I suffered and felt the same way.

President F also shared the value of validating the feelings that staff are communicating, and redirecting when appropriate, stating,

Validating the way people felt, but not letting them dwell on it. It was the way I came out of the gate, and I think that forged relationships that allowed us to start to engage in those activities and planning for all the good things that are happening here now.

**Step 2: Facilitate healing through initiating calm conversations.** The process of active listening and storytelling acknowledges emotions and allows the campus to share their story and pain. When asked about managing emotions, seven participants stated that initiating calm conversations was a key element of regaining control of an emotional situation. President A shared that:

I would try to do is calm down the irate people. And explain, yeah you're right...and acknowledge the justifiable, righteous, indignation that would exist. And then try to facilitate, you know that this is how it really comes together. Eventually get it to where...people can talk reasonably.

President D reinforced the need for the president to remain calm in this role as facilitator, while providing empathy and a safe environment for staff to share their feelings. President D commented that:

You know, keeping your cool is one and being compassionate, but straightforward. And say what you can say. I think that probably the emotions were very high.... And they [staff and students] were already here and so they felt let down.... And for me it was the hardest because you have to validate their feelings and say I'm sorry but here's what we're going to do for you now. Things like the budget, the matriculation, the processes, we've put in a corrective action and we're very open and transparent so everybody can see what is happen. So then, therefore it's no longer speculation saying this is happening or this is happening. It comes out very clear now to everybody.

President D provided a specific example of validating feelings, modeling behavior, and redirecting to positive changes and future thinking.

President G reinforced the need to model positive behaviors when initiating calm conversations and facilitating healing. President G emphasized the importance of staying calm by stating that:

I think it's a matter of, number one, stay calm yourself. And don't react emotionally; take a little bit of time. Maybe you need to say well let's think about this and we'll get back together and we'll do some research and talk again. But if you start raising your voice when they raise their voice and everyone's voice gets higher, and you're yelling at each other. To exhibit calm, and treat people with respect, even if they're not behaving that way. You treat them with respect you try and calm it down; sometimes you have to say well we're going to take a time out, like you do with kids. We're going to pause here and

we'll get back together and come up with some more information. And what happens is that you win over more and more people. Because they're saying, looks he's being reasonable, and let's be realistic here.

As emotions calm, this is also the time to engage in candid conversations about the current realities of the institution as well as the possibilities for the future. President H shared that once emotions begin to calm, a president should begin presenting the college with:

The actual consequence, whether it be financial or political, whether it be programmatic or educational for the students, be able to discuss all fronts with the impacted parties. And that will help them [the campus community] get a broader perspective. Someone will say "that's a lot of work" and it is, it is. And there's no shortcuts to getting that done.

President G shared that a president can be successful in rebuilding trust by:

Staying calm. Treat people with respect. Be seen as having integrity, and end up doing the right thing. And allow people to communicate into the process...there has to be a balance there. You know, but you let it go for a season or a certain amount of time, maybe a little bit beyond what you think reasonable is, and then you say ok, we need to move on.

President F shared that through the creation of relationships, an end point is possible at which the college must begin to shift thinking towards the future. President F stated,

So I tried to create a bond based on the perspective and said and it was a crappy time for all of us. But we have to move forward. That was when we reenergized and we did get on a roll.

By allowing the campus to emotionally heal, the campus community can gain trust in new leadership and begin to make progress toward the new vision of the campus. President F asserted that healing can occur by:



Getting out there talking with people, forging relationships. They knew me from before, but they didn't know me in this role. But, they did see that I had a genuine concern, that I came from the perspective. I understood the view of the world from their lens. I didn't try and paint the picture of what I knew from that perspective. I just tried to move forward. I didn't think that looking back was healthy. It was really being forward focused. On getting through the budget crisis and serving our students...and we pulled together and got that. And I think that created some momentum from a positive standpoint that focused on future instead of looking back, and I kept pushing forward, and it really did snowball.

Through active listening, storytelling, validating feelings, and initiating calm conversations, a president can begin to cultivate a healing environment for his/her institution.

President A stated that,

Showing appreciation for the work that the various folks do, the various groups on campus...recognizing their service is a big part of, if they feel you understand a little bit about what their job entails, then they feel appreciated and it helps build trust.

However, four participants highlighted that the breaking of trust does not occur over a short period of time, but as a result of multiple interactions throughout the institution. For this reason, a president must remember that the rebuilding of trust is a progressive process that will take time. President G stated, "It's a matter of this didn't happen overnight, it takes time to heal and to correct things." President F shared that this is a process and that, "It wasn't, you know, hit the home run at the beginning, but it was building those little wins from the relationship and getting people on board." President C noted that, "It takes a long time to rebuild trust. Even being very transparent, even being very much collaborative and sharing." President F also advised that a president should be patient and:

Don't do anything major in 6 months...and that was probably some of the best advice. I continue to tell people, build those relationships. Really work on building the relationships with people and get to know them. And get to understand their needs and then work with them to meet their needs. And then you'll get a good bond and you're off to a good start. I think coming in from a different administration, does require that nurturing of relationships. Whereas the other [internally promoting] is more damage control the other is creating new relationships, healthy relationships based on trust and mutual expectations and goals.

### **Ideal Leadership Style for Rebuilding Trust within a CCC**

The participants in the study were asked what they felt was the ideal leadership style for a president to implement when rebuilding trust within a CCC. Upon reflection, the following leadership styles were discussed: (a) authentic leadership, (b) humanistic leadership, (c) servant leadership, (d) situational leadership, and (e) transformational leadership. Through the interviews with the participants, it became clear that a president may need to engage in one or more of the leadership styles listed or create a blended style. Five participants struggled to identify one leadership style, instead listing multiple styles or leadership characteristics that a president must exhibit. President C discussed the struggle of trying to define one leadership style with so many styles available. President C shared,

I always struggle with the questions when somebody says what leadership style would you use? And when I think about leadership styles and my bookshelf, I know looks like yours, and its book after book after book about what leadership looks like.

President B highlighted the need for consistency, stating, "There is not one leadership style that is best for a college. Consistency in leadership and consistency in messaging leads to

trustworthiness.” Even with the struggles of attempting to define one leadership style, the aforementioned styles emerged as possible styles that can be engaged as appropriate. These leadership styles will be described in the next sections.

**Leadership style 1: Authentic leadership.** Three of the presidents discussed the need for a president to be authentic. In defining authentic leadership, President C shared,

I think it is that a leader has to be their authentic self.... It’s really understanding your own strengths, but then also knowing which areas are not your strengths and then having a focus on when you’re in a situation that really requires that, being mindful of doing it with intention.”

President D supported the need for authenticity as a president and leader, stating,

You have to be brave and very authentic. And the core purpose of being here is for students and for learning. And then when you have a trust factor, you address it and you earn back the trust. You show them, you live it, you’re honest and you open up.

President G also added a component to the need for authentic leadership describing,

Leading by example, being open to people. I think being open to everyone is really important.” Being authentic, but also maintaining an authentic self was one leadership style supported by the presidents.

**Leadership style 2: Humanistic leadership.** Three of the participants described a human approach that demonstrated an inclusive or collaborative leadership style, coinciding with the participatory governance culture within CCCs. President E clarified that the use of a humanistic leadership approach conveying collaboration does not necessarily mean consensus. President E continued that including all parties did not mean allowing the campus to dictate

decision-making, only that they would be incorporated in the processes appropriately. President E commented that,

The most important thing in a leadership style is to try to be as inclusive as possible. That doesn't mean that we follow the recommendations of everybody. But it is important that everybody does feel like their voice can be heard.

Participants discussed preserving individuals' humanity and leading from a human perspective.

President H described community college leadership as:

Having a humanistic style...it has to be the interaction of people within that system [community college]. So I would say humanistic in terms of understanding that people are sometimes overly anxious, they're afraid. And they are... healing from some past mistrust, whether it be in the organization or even their personal life. And they have now transferred it onto the organization. And so, understand we all have family, we all have health concerns. At one time or one point or another, whether it be us or our significant others. We all have relationships outside of the college, hobbies. So I think, really personifying the system and looking at it from a humanistic leadership approach is the best type of approach for a community college that is run by this participatory governance structure. And it really is nothing but brick and mortar without the people.

**Leadership style 3: Servant leadership.** Three presidents described a leadership style that demonstrated Robert K. Greenleaf's servant leadership or *servant as a leader* approach. Servant leadership focuses primarily on the organization or community that the leader serves, focusing on personal growth, well-being, and the sharing of power to place the needs of others above those of the leader (Center for Servant Leadership, 2016). President D shared, "I think you

really have to pay attention to...the fact that you are a servant leader in many ways.” President C also self-identified that,

My own style is really a servant leadership: somebody who walks around, tries to talk to people...I now purposefully block my calendar and am out and about and trying to get to more feet on the ground work group type meetings, just to make some of that connection.

**Leadership style 4: Situational leadership.** Three participants identified situational leadership as a leadership style that college presidents should exhibit when rebuilding trust.

President A shared:

I think it’s more of a situational approach because each different party or group might have a different spin or different twist on why they don’t trust or what they expect to rebuild the trust. So I think its situation and each interaction with the various people that the leader has to take a slightly different communication style. It would be a very situational approach.

President F stated, “It is situational based on the constituents and the circumstances.”

Depending on the audience and the circumstance, a president may need to adapt his/her leadership style to be successful in that specific situation.

**Leadership style 5: Transformational leadership.** Two participants discussed that transformational leadership was the appropriate leadership style for a president to implement when rebuilding trust. President A shared, “I really like the transformational leadership approach to things.” President F also shared that although transformational leadership is a valuable leadership style when rebuilding trust, one may need to use a combination of leadership styles in order to be successful. President F stated that the leadership style within a community college may be a:

Hybridized, transformational style that is somewhat between servant leadership and kind of an action oriented, transformational...it's real interesting to see people get excited about their own ideas.... I want to see somebody get involved, have the idea, articulate it, get it into a plan...and I, as a president, have an ability to affect the organization...being that open-ended, open accessible person, walking around campus, you hear these people who talk about all these things...it's creating an environment where people do sincerely believe that they can impact and have a change.

### **Chapter Summary**

After completing a total of eight qualitative interviews with eight CCC presidents, interviews were transcribed, read, and coded in an effort to analyze the data related to rebuilding trust in CCCs after trust has been broken. Six categories emerged from the data: (a) president background and experience, (b) methods for establishing trust between a president and the community college they serve, (c) actions that break trust with a CCC, (d) methods for rebuilding trust after trust is broken by a current or previous administration, (e) methods for calming emotions within the institution, and (f) the ideal leadership style a president should adopt when rebuilding trust within an institution. These categories and themes provided detailed methods, steps, and strategies for answering the research questions, developing conclusions, discussing implications, and making recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 5: Study Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The CCC system continues to serve as the largest system of higher education in the United States (CCC's Chancellor's Office, n.d.). Unique to the CCC system are the legal requirements for participatory governance and *collegial consultation*, requiring that faculty, staff, and students participate effectively in district and college decision-making (Community College League of California, 2014). With these legal requirements come additional political layers including elected boards of trustees, unions, the ACCJC, and the ongoing changes to state and federal regulations. Accreditation serves as the tool by which CCCs are evaluated.

Schools that are unable to maintain their accreditation and receive a warning or probationary status are subjected to negative media attention, loss of faith from stakeholders, and severe mistrust from both internal and external constituencies (Martindale, 2014). The ACCJC has been criticized in recent years for being “overly punitive... In the past 10 years, all but 37 of CCCs were placed on some level of sanction, two-thirds of the total colleges in the system” (Warth, 2015, p. 6). Public sanctions exacerbate the lack of trust in CCCs. Presidents and administrators who do not engage actively in participatory governance can destroy trust and the ability to communicate with constituency groups on campus, creating long-term detrimental results. Many traumas experienced by community colleges have occurred due to the dissolution of communication with constituencies on campus (Sullivan et al., 2005).

One method to address the broken trust with CCCs is to establish strategies that can facilitate the rebuilding of trust within an institution by the college president. This study utilized qualitative research techniques to document steps, behaviors, and methods for rebuilding trust from the perspective of a CCC president. The central guiding question was, What practices can CCC administrators engage in to rebuild trust within their Institution after trust is broken? This

chapter provides a summary of the problem, the significance of the study, and key findings leading to the study's three conclusions. Implications and recommendations are also provided in this chapter.

### **Background and Significance**

With 72 districts and 113 colleges, the CCC system empowers over 2.1 million students every year to achieve their dreams (Foundation for CCCs, n.d.). These campuses are composed of educators, staff, and administrators tasked to create a student-centered learning environment where all populations excel. Unique to CCCs is the required participation of its staff in the decision-making process. California Education Code 70902(b)(7) requires that faculty, staff, and students participate effectively in district and college governance (Community College League of California, 2014). Participatory governance plays a major role within CCCs, establishing trust among the constituency groups and college administrators.

Participatory governance, transparent processes, and administrator trust are also key factors in the accreditation process that all 113 CCCs must undergo (ACCJC, 2015). If an institution experiences negative accreditation feedback, administrative turnover traditionally occurs. Old regimes exit institutions, making way for new administrators hired to problem-solve and bring the college into compliance. Retirement can also be used to encourage old administrators to exit quickly, allowing new administrative teams to enter and begin addressing issues (Nevarez & Wood, 2010).

Administrator turnover and the need to establish new relationships with constituency groups can further impact trust within a community college environment. Many community colleges around the country have experienced administrative turnover due to the retiring workforce, fiscal mismanagement, or administrator scandals (Gardner, 2013). A common



recourse is that these administrators exit the institution quickly, leaving behind an array of emotions and crumbled infrastructures that must now be rebuilt. To begin rebuilding trust, college personnel must learn how to adapt to the new administrators and create new relationships, operating within shared governance effectively. If trust is broken within an institution, its emotional climate can become one of the most powerful barriers to rebuilding trust within the community college.

Numerous studies document how to build trust and the importance of shared governance, but no studies have analyzed the rebuilding of trust within a CCC after trust is broken. This study provides clarity on how trust is being broken within CCCs and the factors that cause trust to deteriorate at an institutional level. This study also provides overall academic research on CCCs documenting their complex internal operations. Finally, this study shares successful strategies, steps, and leadership styles that can and should be adopted by all community college leaders.

## **Methods**

A qualitative, exploratory study was selected as the best method to accomplish the intent of this study. Eight CCC presidents were selected to share their personal experiences on building and rebuilding trust within a CCC, forging personal relationships to provide emotional healing, and changing a college culture by creating and communicating an institutional vision. Each participant in this study is a current CCC president, has served in this capacity for at least 2 years, and self-identified as having undergone experiences of rebuilding trust within a community college. The total years of community college experience varied among participants, ranging from 10 to 36 years. Two of the presidents were female, six of the presidents were male, and all presidents volunteered for participation by replying to an invitation email sent by the researcher. The interviews were all completed by phone and lasted between 35-60 minutes.

Following the interviews, the interviews were transcribed and the data underwent a thematic analysis process. Qualitative software (HyperResearch 3.5.2) was utilized to examine the data and emerging themes.

### **Key Findings**

After completing the eight interviews with the CCC presidents, several key findings emerged. The analysis resulted in 585 coded passages grouped by six categories: (a) president background and experience, (b) methods for establishing trust between a president and the community college they serve, (c) actions that break trust with a CCC, (d) methods for rebuilding trust after trust is broken by a current or previous administration, (e) methods for calming emotions within the institution, and (f) the ideal leadership style a president should adopt when rebuilding trust within an institution. The key findings are themed in response to the central research question and interview questions that provided the framework for this study.

**Presidents' experiences.** The presidents' background varied throughout their careers; three of the presidents had academic affairs/instructional experiences, four of the presidents had administrative services/business services backgrounds, and six presidents had student services experience. Two of the presidents began their careers as classified staff, whereas the other six presidents had faculty or administrator positions within the CCC system. Four presidents had previous dean experiences, three presidents had vice chancellor experience, and all of the presidents had vice president or multiple vice president roles across one or more disciplines. Of the participants, only one president had worked at the same college throughout his/her entire career. All other presidents participating in the study had worked at three or more institutions throughout their careers until their current role as president.

**Establishing trust.** One set of interview questions focused on practices employed by a president to build trust among the president, his or her administrators, and the institution they serve. Four clear strategies emerged from the thematic analysis of the data. First, a president must be a vigilant and strategic communicator within his/her institution, willing to share and receive information in a transparent manner. The president is a very public position, being scrutinized closely by internal and external stakeholders. All participants advocated that communication at this level must be clear, concise, and accurate. It was deemed critical to have developed communication structures in place to provide platforms for communication. All participants emphasized the importance of sharing vital information on topics such as budget, FTES, and other operational information across as many platforms as possible. Communication from administrators within the institution should also mirror this communication style to establish trust. The presidents warned against making promises due to the political complexities within institutions. If promises are made, follow through is expected, and if the promise cannot be met, the president must again present clear, concise, and accurate information as to why a promise cannot be kept. As President D shared, “if you say you’re going to do something, then do it. And if you can’t do it, tell them why.” Overall, President H summarized, “In short, the actions that you feel break trust is the overall lack of communication; or the perception of the lack of communication.”

Second, to build trust within a CCC, a president must clearly define and communicate roles and expectations to all staff while using participatory governance to establish healthy campus operations. Four presidents discussed the importance of defining individual roles, collective roles, and the roles of participatory governance committees and constituency groups within the institution. All eight presidents stressed the need to utilize the established channels of

participatory governance at the campus as a method for building trust and relationships.

Participants also highlighted the importance of encouraging campus engagement and allowing staff to speak into the decision-making processes through participatory governance. A president should cultivate a culture where systems are in place to encourage participatory governance, setting expectations, and holding staff accountable.

Third, the personal and professional integrity of a president is a key element of building trusting relationships within the institution. All presidents stressed the importance of personal integrity. A president must model positive behaviors consistently throughout all campus interactions. Four presidents explicitly described integrity, honesty, and knowledge as required characteristics of a college president. President F stated,

Through a series of demonstrated actions and words over time that show the integrity and the values of the individual. The strength of their words. Honest, trustworthiness. All of those dimensions play an interconnected kind of woven tapestry of values and characteristics and traits that really take time to develop.

A president must set this tone of integrity and model behaviors to establish an administrative culture that can be trusted. Most importantly, these positive behaviors must be consistent in order to develop relationships built on trust.

Lastly, a president must be visible and accessible to build trustworthy relationships within a college. A president should utilize a number of recurring formal and informal interactions to develop trust within their institution. Seven participants discussed the importance of presidential visibility and accessibility. Methods such as the participatory governance committee meetings, one-on-one interactions, unstructured activities, and college events can provide outlets for the

president to engage with the campus community. All eight presidents shared best practices for developing personal relationships on campus, including recurring informal events such as:

- Coffee with the president
- Popcorn with the president
- Pizza with the president
- Unstructured open forums with the president
- President office hours
- Open door policies
- Town hall meetings

Five participants discussed being present on campus and specifically taking time to walk the campus and meet staff individually. Also, all eight participants shared personal stories regarding how they crafted an approachable persona at the campus level to further diminish barriers to accessibility. Participants offered examples of engaging in those personal, one-on-one interactions and encouraging staff to address the president more informally as ways of making themselves more approachable. President F noted that the title of “president” or “doctor” can cause intimidation with staff and students in particular, serving as a barrier to the development of personal relationships. Allowing staff and students to address the president more informally and attempting to “put people at ease” were described as methods to encourage the development of relationships. A president should also attend the participatory governance meetings on campus consistently, such as the College Council or President’s Council. All eight presidents described the importance of engaging in participatory governance committees to allow face-to-face interactions to occur. One last method to help a president be visible and accessible was to set up recurring monthly meetings with the key strategic stakeholders at the campus. All eight

participants stressed the importance of connecting with these constituency groups, including but not limited to: the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, ASG, and Union Leadership.

**Breaking trust.** A second set of interview questions guided discussions on what actions break trust within a CCC from a president's perspective. These findings were based on the participants' thoughts and observations. Three themes emerged from the data related to breaking trust within an institution: (a) abuse of power, (b) dishonesty and miscommunication, and (c) lack of accountability. Five participants described an abuse of power at the presidential or administrator level as a means for breaking trust within an institution. These abuses of power were categorized as:

- Unilateral decision-making without engaging in participatory governance processes
- Arrogance or overconfidence
- Confusion of roles at the board level

All eight participants discussed the abuse of power in relation to the aforementioned categories.

Dishonesty and miscommunication were identified as additional reasons for the breakdown of trust within a CCC. All eight presidents shared examples of miscommunication, poor communication, or complete dishonesty as actions that break trust. These actions included a lack of transparency, omitting information, or communicating negatively about individuals or groups in public settings. Sloppy communication, hiding information, or being perceived as hiding information contributed to the breakdown of trust between a president and his/her college.

Seven presidents acknowledged that a lack of accountability and making side deals were trust-breaking actions within a CCC setting. President C stated concisely that accountability and trust in the president diminish if a president engages in:

actions that don't align with the board established policies and administrative procedures of the institution, actions that are in opposition to recommendations made through a participatory governance process, [or] actions that are against a recommendation that comes from a hiring committee.

Four participants stated specifically that if a president fails to follow established policies and procedures and engages in side deals, this can break trust within the college quickly. A lack of accountability was described as avoiding critical or difficult issues within an institution, including engaging in diversionary tactics rather than addressing critical campus issues.

**Steps to rebuild trust.** Participants in the study were asked to share their steps for rebuilding trust within a community college after trust has been broken by the current or previous administration. Three strategies emerged from the data that could guide a president in rebuilding trust: (a) creating a vision and redirecting staff to that vision while setting boundaries and expectations, (b) demonstrating positive changes within the institution and not making excuses for inappropriate behaviors, and (c) acknowledging and validating institutional emotions. Six presidents stated that these methods were the same methods to rebuild trust regardless of whether trust was broken by the current or previous administration. Two participants disagreed, stating the approach was slightly different. However, through the interviews, these strategies emerged as themes in the data gathered from all participants.

Whether the institutional vision was new or pre-existing, six participants stated that having a vision and redirecting staff to this vision was a key element of rebuilding trust. It is important to acknowledge the flaws of the trust-breaking administration and allow staff to engage in candid conversations, but there needs to be a redirecting during these conversations to the potential, future, and vision of the college. Active listening is a key element in ensuring that

mistakes are not repeated. These interactions also provide strategic opportunities for the president to begin redirecting the conversation toward the vision. Making clear statements about change and then presenting the college vision can facilitate the rebuilding of trust between a president and the institution. Creating a visionary climate and redirecting staff to this vision can facilitate change and rebuild trust within the college culture. President B summarized that:

Broken trust becomes a characteristic of the institution.... Organizational climate is the worst used word. And this is something you can change with good leadership. It has to be purposeful and getting beyond the problem. You may not be able to solve the problem until you get people to focus on a greater good, a visionary climate.

Presenting the vision and redirecting staff to the vision also requires strategic interventions that can directly address an issue and create corrective behaviors, resulting in the campus community regaining boundaries and adopting appropriate behaviors. Doing so can increase clear boundaries and embed a sense of accountability and trust throughout the institution.

Taking action, specifically by demonstrating positive change and not making excuses, was identified as a strategy for rebuilding trust. Three participants stated specifically that demonstrating positive change was necessary in order to rebuild trust with a college. All eight participants agreed that excuses cannot be made for poor behaviors or past indiscretions. There may be valid justifications, but making excuses can serve as a diversion tactic, creating doubts about intentions and a lack of trust in administrator actions. A president must apologize for past transgressions, whether or not he/she was involved, and then demonstrate positive change.

President H supported taking accountability for broken trust, stating, "I think the first step, is again, like in any relationship, admit when something went wrong." President G summarized,



“You have to face up to it and then...you have to try and act in a manner that builds trust and reestablishes that...you have to try and change the culture of the institution. It can be done.”

The third strategy to rebuild trust that emerged from the data was to acknowledge and validate \ institutional emotions. Seven participants stated that acknowledging and validating institutional emotions was paramount to the reestablishment of trust. Allowing the campus to share experiences from the past validates emotions and can support a president in overcoming historical barriers. Emotional responses to broken trust were observed by all eight presidents. Candid conversations can open the channels of communication for continued discussions about emotions at the college. Demonstrating awareness of and sensitivity to the emotional climate of an institution is vital to the reestablishment of trust. Through the acknowledgement and validation of institutional emotions, the president can then begin to move people to a state of healing.

**Addressing the emotional climate.** In acknowledging and validating institutional emotions, a college president must then engage in steps to calm the emotional turmoil within the institution. All eight presidents described anger, defensiveness, hurt, low morale, organizational paralysis, disengagement, and sensitivity as symptoms of broken trust within an institution. The presidents described two steps for calming emotions after trust is broken: (a) active listening and storytelling, and (b) facilitating healing through initiating calm conversations.

All eight participants observed emotional responses from instances of broken trust. These emotions became embedded in the emotional culture of the institution. Six presidents advised that active listening combined with storytelling are effective methods for calming emotions.

President B stated that “catharsis” occurred when individuals gained the opportunity and were specifically asked to share their personal experiences. President H discussed the importance

of active listening and looking beyond the emotions being conveyed to identify the real issues. President E expressed the need for direct communication, making a president available for face-to-face discussions. President E advocated that direct, face-to-face communication can allow for listening and sharing to occur. President F shared that,

Validating the way people felt, but not letting them dwell on it. It was the way I came out of the gate, and I think that forged relationships that allowed us to start to engage in those activities and planning for all the good things that are happening here now.

Allowing staff to share their emotions and demonstrate listening and caring can help them to feel heard and validated.

When asked about managing emotions, seven participants stated that initiating calm conversations was a key element of regaining control of an emotional situation. Facilitating healing through initiating calm conversations was described as the second step in calming emotions at a college. The process of active listening and storytelling acknowledges people's emotions and allows the campus to share its story and their pain. A president must remain calm in this role as facilitator, while also providing empathy and a safe environment for staff to share their feelings. President G reinforced the need to model positive behaviors when initiating calm conversations and facilitating healing. As emotions calm, this is the time to engage in candid conversations about the current realities of the institution as well as the possibilities for the future. By allowing the campus to heal emotionally, the campus community can gain trust in new leadership and begin to make progress toward the college vision. Through active listening, storytelling, validating feelings, and initiating calm conversations, a president can begin to cultivate a healing environment for his/her institution. These healing conversations can take time to calm emotions. Four presidents highlighted that rebuilding trust and calming emotions is a

progressive process, requiring time and dedication. President C summarized that, “It takes a long time to rebuild trust. Even being very transparent, even being very much collaborative and sharing.”

**Leadership styles.** The participants were asked what they felt was the ideal leadership style for a president to implement when rebuilding trust within a CCC. Although the findings were inconclusive in regard to a single leadership style, the presidents specifically mentioned five leadership styles: (a) authentic leadership, (b) humanistic leadership, (c) servant leadership, (d) situational leadership, and (e) transformational leadership. Five of the presidents struggled to identify only one leadership style, instead listing multiple styles or leadership characteristics a president should exhibit. More importantly, consistency in leadership was highlighted as a requirement for rebuilding trust. President B highlighted the need for consistency, stating, “There is not one leadership style that is best for a college. Consistency in leadership and consistency in messaging leads to trustworthiness.”

Three presidents specifically cited authentic leadership as one style of leadership that a president can use when rebuilding trust. Being one’s “authentic self” and understanding one’s personal strengths were described as a few facets of authentic leadership. Bravery, authenticity, being purposeful, and demonstrating integrity were also incorporated in the discussions of authentic leadership. Three presidents described a human approach that exhibited inclusive or collaborative characteristics. Preserving the humanity of individuals and leading from a human perspective were described as key leadership traits for a president to demonstrate. A “humanistic style,” engaging in interactions, and approaching individuals and scenarios while respecting individuals’ humanity were descriptors of humanistic leadership that the participants shared. Three presidents mentioned servant leadership, emphasizing the “servant as a leader” approach.

President C and D self-identified as servant leaders who make purposeful choices to be accessible and serve their campus community. Three participants also described a need for situational leadership when rebuilding trust at the presidential-level. President A explained,

I think it's more of a situational approach because each different party or group might have a different spin or different twist on why they don't trust or what they expect to rebuild the trust. So I think its situation and each interaction with the various people that the leader has to take a slightly different communication style. It would be a very situational approach.

President F also advised presidents to take a "situational approach" when rebuilding trust within a CCC due to institutional complexities. Two Presidents specifically discussed transformational leadership as a way to engage in rebuilding trust. The ability to transform followers and the institution as a whole was highlighted as an advantage to transformational leadership within the community college setting. Overall, the data were inconclusive in identifying a single leadership style best suited for rebuilding trust within a CCC. Six participants indicated that a "hybridized" or blended model of leadership would be most appropriate when rebuilding trust within a CCC setting.

### **Study Conclusions**

All of the key findings were analyzed in depth to develop final conclusions for this study. Three conclusions were identified; each is presented in the following sections along with the implications of these conclusions. Recommendations for future practice and research are presented following the three sections.

**Conclusion 1: President character and ethics.** The first conclusion from this study was that a president's personal character and ethical and moral code impact the rebuilding of trust

within a CCC, as well as the overall operational success of a college. According to Walker and McPhail (2009), “The culture of the community college and challenges brought on by a proliferation of forces require a different kind of leadership” (p. 321). The participants in this study were all presidents who self-identified as having experiences rebuilding trust within an institution after trust was broken by the current or previous administration. These presidents exemplified similarities in leadership strategies as well as personal character traits. First, all of these presidents demonstrated integrity. Second, each president had an internal moral and ethical code by which he/she made decisions. All had a clear understanding of what they would and would not do and what behaviors were outside the scope of their internalized code. Four presidents specifically demonstrated a strong sense of self, and a clear understanding of right and wrong. President F shared, “I’m not the most spiritual person but I do have an upbringing, a Christian upbringing that really embedded into me certain tenants that I don’t violate.” President C commented, “I came in knowing, having a very strong sense of my own personal values, and morals, and ethics.” These leaders know who they are and what they stand for.

Third, all of these presidents invested the time to rebuild trust. They dedicated time in their schedules to actively pursue the rebuilding of trust within their institutions using multiple methods. Fourth, these leaders genuinely demonstrated care and made visible efforts to connect with all staff members and students within their respective campuses. Three presidents shared actions that not only connected with staff, but also encouraged staff to engage within the college. President A shared, “If you listen and interact and let them feel and see that you are listening to their opinions, that’s a big part.” President F commented, “It’s creating an environment where people do sincerely believe that they can impact [the college].” The observed character traits

support the conclusion that a president's personal character and ethical and moral code impact the rebuilding of trust.

This study's findings directly support the research that trust in a specific leader rather than generalized trust within an organization is the "most important determinant of the formation of trust (as a state of mind) in a work situation" (Clark & Payne, 2006, p. 1,164). Clark and Payne (2006) define character-based perspective as the, "Focusing on the perception of the leader's character and how it influences a follower's sense of vulnerability" (p. 1,162). The authors also noted that "followers attempt to draw inferences about leader's characteristics such as integrity, competence, and openness" (p. 1,162). A CCC president must be a person of high moral and ethical character, with integrity and the committed patience to build trust. The literature suggests that these characteristics may be seen as "necessary conditions for trust to develop in leader-follower relationships" (p. 1,163). Butler (1991) identified 10 conditions of character-based trust: openness, receptivity, availability, fairness, loyalty, promise fulfillment, integrity, competence, discreteness, and consistency. This study identified the characteristics listed, further supporting the existing literature that a president's personal character plays a significant role in the development and reestablishment of trust. Cummings and Bromiley (1996) supported the notion that trustworthy behavior implies that a leader does not abuse power or take advantage of another's vulnerability; rather, this leader makes good-faith efforts to fulfill promises.

In addition to his/her strong personal character, a community college president's internalized moral code and spirituality is a key element of performing as a leader who can instill trust. This study supported the research findings of Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005) who found that community college leaders must possess not only technical skills to manage the complex

operations of a college, but also spiritual skills to embrace and enrich their journey. Rouechem and Baker (1987) discuss the need for morality and ethics by finding that an outstanding leader is a symbolic, spiritual leader who impacts the organizational climate and culture through selective attention to specific behaviors. A study by Terrazas (2005) found that participants believed perspectives of spirituality can influence leadership in higher education. This spirituality can allow for a positive impact on community college leaders, specifically in three areas: the inner self, their interactions with others, and their tasks and activities. Terrazas's study concluded that spirituality influences higher education leadership in positive ways. Walker and McPhail (2009) found that, "Leaders express spiritual qualities in the leadership of their organizations through their principles, values, and beliefs that center on servant leadership, community building, creativity, and communication" (p. 322). Walker and McPhail noted that community college leaders' values shape the culture of the organization and that their spiritual foundation leads to "positive energy, compassionate communication, and inclusive decision making processes" (p. 325).

This moral and spiritual code provides a "moral toughness to reprove and discipline as required, manifesting a well-honed moral character that allows him [the president] to patiently persist and persuade, not being diverted from his central vision or basic principles" (Whetsone, 2002, p. 391). The unique nature of CCCs and the complex decision-making required by a president can cause ambiguity if that president does not also possess an ethical framework to reference. This ethical code is a means by which all interactions can be navigated. Wood and Hilton (2012) discuss that ethical decision making requires "leaders to view issues that they encounter through multiple ethical lenses before making decisions" (p. 213). The authors also noted that, "By considering holistic approaches to issue resolution, community college leaders

may better serve the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and local communities under their authority and stewardship” (p. 214). The conclusion of this study also supported the study by Nevarez and Wood (2012) reporting that a community college leader must possess ethics, and that an ethical framework is “An integral component to effective organizational leadership. A leader must develop a strong moral compass that guides his or her actions and behaviors” (p. 314). This conclusion also supported Oliver and Hioco’s (2012) study that a college president must “understand their own ethical values and principles as a starting point. They then need to understand the ethical perspectives of stakeholders and factor these assessments into a critical thinking process” (p. 254). The authors drive the significance of ethical decision making as “a key responsibility of leadership” (p. 254), identifying that “a succession of bad decisions or unethical leadership can drive even stable colleges into a state of challenge” (p. 254).

Clawson (1999) maintained that the moral foundation of effective leadership incorporates integrity. This study found that personal character, a moral code, and an ethical framework are critical elements of a CCC president’s ability to rebuild trust within an institution. Character and personal spirituality are intertwined throughout all facets of the president position, including personal interactions, decision-making, participatory governance, and communication style. The president who is able to facilitate the rebuilding of trust is a “good person” (Wright & Huang, 2008, p. 983) who genuinely cares, demonstrates compassion, and possesses empathy for his/her institution and the stakeholders he/she serves. A president who can demonstrate moral autonomy, or “The necessary discretion and the skills of judgment...to freely act morally,” (p. 983) has character and demonstrates this character as a positive outlet for rebuilding trust.

**Conclusion 2: Development of relationships.** The second conclusion from this study was that the development of relationships is a critical component in rebuilding trust within a



CCC after trust is broken. President H stated, “That’s the part that’s often unwritten about how to do things. But I would say it’s about the relationship building.” A president must invest in developing personal relationships with all staff on campus to rebuild trust. This study identified steps that all of the presidents rebuilding relationships employed. First, a president must be visible and accessible to his/her campus. Although written communication is a useful and appropriate communication channel, the study found that face-to-face communication was a more powerful communication strategy when establishing relationships within a college. Presidents E and G shared the importance of “direct communication” and “building strong relationships” to rebuild trust. President F reinforced that a president should “Really work on building the relationships with people and get to know them.” Whether through open office hours or walking the campus, the findings indicate that a president must appear visible and accessible as an individual. This accessibility allows for meaningful, face-to-face conversations to occur, developing relationships and creating opportunities to rebuild trust. These interactions also humanize the title of president, allowing him/her to be perceived as more approachable and welcoming of input. President H shared that in order to develop relationships, “Very open, ongoing communication that doesn’t occur at the participatory meetings” must occur regularly at the presidential level. President F shared that “finding strategic times in your calendar” can allow a president to establish recurring availability for the campus community in order to develop these campus relationships. President F continued that this structured availability “stresses the tone and expectations” of a president to connect with his/her campus.

Second, the study found that a president must model positive behaviors during this face-to-face communication with stakeholders. Calm communication focused around the institutional mission and vision is a method for modeling positive behaviors that all participants exhibited.

Calm communication includes holding individuals accountable and correcting behaviors of those who model inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors within the institution. Walker and McPhail (2009) shared that, “Community college leaders value communication, and they demonstrate this value in a variety of ways including coaching staff to be more thoughtful and considerate, showing respect and courtesy for others, and communicating honestly” (p. 324). President D commented that stakeholders must align with a “Mutual desire and understanding” of what the institution needs to accomplish. President G shared that the campus must “See that [modeled behaviors] in their leader, ...respecting people, ...seeking the greatest good for the greatest [number of] people.” These modeled behaviors by the president set a level of expectation for appropriate interactions within the college. By modeling these appropriate interactions, stakeholders can develop relationships through meaningful connections that allow trust to rebuild. President D reiterated the importance of modeling positive behaviors, stating, “It’s very critical that the president sets the tone; ...working on a common goal...and then provid[ing] redirection when necessary.” President F discussed modeling behaviors in terms of “being accessible, personable, presenting that professional image is really important. It sets the tone for the institution and the organization.” President C also shared the importance of consciously encouraging others to model positive behaviors, stating, “It’s really about modeling and encouraging administrators to engage in those practices that the leader has found that help to build and sustain trust in the institution.” This conclusion supported the study by Yaffe and Kark (2011), who shared that role modeling “is seen as a major way in which transformational and charismatic leaders transform followers’ values, goals, and aspirations” (p. 808). Schminke, Ambrose, and Neubaum (2005) emphasized that consistency between leaders’ words and behaviors is helpful in establishing a sense of trust among followers within a group. Through the

leadership practices inventory Kouzes and Posner (1993), argued that managers' credibility is necessary for the development of employee loyalty and commitment.

Third, this study found that a college president must practice purposeful, strategic communication utilizing multiple outlets throughout the college in order to develop meaningful relationships. This strategy includes customizing communication styles to adapt to the different constituency groups. As presented in the findings, strategic connections can be made through multiple outlets, including participatory governance meetings, one-on-one interactions, strategic communication with key stakeholder groups, and unstructured events at the college. President D highlighted the importance of having "good communication structures in place" like the aforementioned outlets. President A discussed participatory governance committees and communicating "broadly to appropriate committees or teams...broad strokes communication" as an effective outlet. Most importantly, President A discussed the need for a strategic "plan of communication and interaction" that a president should have in place to maximize purposeful communication through the most powerful outlets at the campus. This conclusion supported the study by Corrigan (2002), who listed multiple communication outlets including weekly campus newsletters, emails, websites, gatherings, and campus events to establish great relationships between a president and his/her college. Clark and Payne (2006) stated that "direct, strategic, and concise" (p. 1,166) communication must occur and must be visible in order to develop relationships based on trust, but that a leader must tread carefully. Bolman and Deal (2003) stated that the shaping of an organizational culture stems from the human connection and development of relationships shaped around the sharing of values, beliefs, stories, myth, rituals, and ceremonies. Clark and Payne (2006) summarized that trust is developed and maintained by leaders within an organization through interpersonal relationships. President F stated that,

“Creating new relationships, health relationships based on trust and mutual expectations and goals” is a key element of rebuilding trust within a CCC.

**Conclusion 3: Authentic, strategic, consistent leadership.** The third and final conclusion drawn from this study was that a president must be authentic, practicing his/her leadership strategically and consistently, adapting his/her personal leadership style as needed. Each president identified one or more leadership styles that he/she used as his/her foundation for leadership. However, a president’s authenticity was the umbrella under which all other discussed leadership styles aligned. President C shared,

I think it is that a leader has to be their authentic self.... It’s really understanding your own strengths, but then also knowing which areas are not your strengths and then having a focus on when you’re in a situation that really requires that, being mindful of doing it with intention.

This finding supported McNair, Duree, and Ebbers (2011) who stated,

Because of the dynamic nature of community college leadership, the complex skills required of community college presidents, and the regional differences in community college systems, there is no one set of experiences that lead to the acquisition of skills required of today’s community college presidents. (p. 3)

This complexity requires a president to be self-aware and authentic in his/her leadership. This self-awareness and mindfulness was reflected specifically throughout the discussions of authenticity. George (2014) asserted:

Authentic leaders genuinely desire to serve others through their leadership. They are more interested in empowering the people they lead to make a difference than they are in

power, money, or prestige for themselves. They are as guided by qualities of the heart, by passion and compassion, as they are by qualities of the mind. (p. 12)

George (2014) also noted that authentic leaders “lead with purpose, meaning, and values. They build enduring relationships with people. Others follow them because they know where they stand. They are consistent and self-disciplined. When their principles are tested, they refuse to compromise” (p. 12). In his book, *Authentic Leadership*, George discussed the five qualities authentic leaders demonstrate: (a) understanding their purpose, (b) practicing solid values, (c) leading with heart, (d) establishing connected relationships, and (e) demonstrating self-discipline. Self-awareness and authenticity were consistent themes throughout all of the findings within this study. A president’s ability to be authentic and support his/her constituencies before his/her personal needs are characteristics of leadership required within CCCs.

This finding further supported Hyatt (2016), who described his thoughts on the five characteristics of authentic leaders: (a) insight, (b) initiative, (c) influence, (d) impact, and (e) integrity. The author framed insight as having vision, specifically in regard to future thinking. In demonstrating insight, these authentic leaders “need to be able to look at complex situations, gain clarity, and determine a course of action” (p. 4). Hyatt defined taking initiative in terms of leaders who “Don’t ask others to do what they are unwilling to do themselves. Instead, they lead by example” (p. 4). This definition shares similarities with many of the comments made by the participants throughout the study. Exerting influence and practicing persuasion empowers an authentic leader to draw followers and create buy-in. Impact is used as a tool of measurement as the influence that a leader has on his or her followers, creating real, lasting changes. Integrity is the last characteristic: one identified specifically by participants in this study. Possessing and exhibiting integrity, even in the harshest climates, signifies that one is an authentic leader.

Characteristics from all five leadership styles played a role throughout different scenarios shared by the participants. However, the need to be authentic and self-aware was the consistent underlying theme throughout the interviews. The relationship between the authenticity and humanity of a president was evident throughout the interviews. Hancock (2016) described humanistic leadership as a “philosophy that recognizes the dignity and worth of each and every human” (p. 1). This leadership style models compassion, ethics, and morality. The author summarized humanistic leadership in three points: (a) grounding action in morality and ethics, (b) basing decisions on knowledge and not assumptions, and (c) living life that infuses meaning and purpose, giving back to society and improving the world overall. Again, this leadership style supports the need for a president to be authentic and utilize his/her personal character to lead by example.

Three of the presidents discussed their identification with servant leadership. The Center for Servant Leadership (2016) defined a servant leader as a “servant first” (p. 2) to his/her institution. The characteristics of a servant leader include an individual who:

Begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types...The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 5)

The association among servant leadership, authenticity, and humanity, combined with the personal, moral, and ethical character of a president provides a recipe for a dedicated public servant.

Aligned with these leadership styles, Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as “a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems” (p. 37).

Transformational leadership focuses on the enhancement of followers’ motivation, morale, and performance. The four elements of transformational leadership include: (a) individualized consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence. Individualized consideration refers to the leader’s attention to meeting followers’ needs, with a leader often acting as a mentor or coach. Intellectual stimulation highlights the leader’s ability to challenge generally accepted assumptions within an institution. Doing so can stimulate creativity and independent thinking and learning. Inspirational motivation refers to the leader’s ability to craft and communicate a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Communicating future goals with optimism, providing meaning, and creating a sense of purpose for followers is integrated into this element. Idealized influence allows the leader to serve a model for ethics, gaining respect and trust. The characteristics of these leadership styles were discussed and modified at an individual level for a president to lead authentically and with integrity, remaining true to his/her personal values while attempting to reestablish trust within his/her college.

With this authenticity in leadership comes the self-awareness to adapt a leadership style to be strategic and thoughtful in the intended outcomes of interactions within the institution. Three of the participants discussed situational leadership; however, this study found that presidents are required to do more than just practice situational leadership. Instead, their

leadership style must be strategic, using multiple leadership styles systematically, modeling a different leadership style based on the audience and the intended outcome of the interaction. President A shared, “I think its situation and each interaction with the various people that the leader has to take a slightly different communication style.” Participants struggled to identify one leadership style predominantly because using one leadership style is just not feasible. With thousands of employees and students looking to the president for leadership, it is unrealistic to assume that all individuals would receive or respond to a message consistently. The vast range of demographics, diversity, education levels, and socio-economic positions also necessitate that a president be thoughtful and strategic when leading a college. Situational leadership theory, developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1977, infers that leadership “depends upon each individual situation” (p. 11) and that no single leadership style can be best. The authors state, “A good leader will be able to adapt her or his leadership to the goals or objectives to be accomplished” (p. 13).

President F supported the need to adapt leadership styles based on the situation. However, situations only infer the need to adapt among differing individual situations, whereas strategic leadership is a broader sense. This strategic leadership requires a plan of action before any interaction takes place; some examples include changing not only the communication, but also the leadership style when speaking with the board of trustees, which would be different from addressing the Academic Senate or the Associated Students. This finding further supported McNair et al. (2011) who stated,

A community college president is not simply a problem-solver. The president is also expected to meet a governing board’s need for impartial and expert counsel; inspire faculty and staff in matters pertaining to curriculum and instruction; serve as a model of



ethical behavior; and provide, as conditions warrant, vision for the entire community.

(p. 13)

A CCC president must adopt a strategic, adaptable leadership style in order to establish meaningful relationships and rebuild trust. The authors also noted that the position of president is complex, and that a president will “benefit from a multifaceted skill set to help ensure their success” (p. 15) and that these skills are acquired incrementally, “through an organic, individualized” (p. 15) set of experiences.

Finally, the personal and professional commitment to become a CCC president can be overwhelming. As discussed in Chapter 2, a college can experience a hot zone during presidential transitions, causing emotions to run high and creating a strong need for new relationships built on trust to be established. If an individual chooses to become a college president, he/she must commit to staying for a reasonable period of time to provide institutional consistency. This time commitment is necessary because even if a president is authentic and strategic, if he/she does not invest time into the institution to develop relationships, create positive change, or create institutional healing, he/she can cause even more damage, regardless of his/her intentions. As President B highlighted, “Consistency in leadership and consistency in messaging leads to trustworthiness.” A president must be consistent and choose to remain at an institution. The reestablishment of trust takes time, and without this investment of time, trust cannot be rebuilt. This finding is supported by Thompson, Cooper, and Ebbers (2012) who stated, “Community college presidential transition is a topic of increased importance due to many factors, some of which include abrupt presidential change (e.g., medical, death), derailment” (p. 300). The authors continued that presidential transition can create “a form of chaos” (p. 301) and that “A poor presidential succession process may result in a diminution of

legitimacy for an institution” (p. 301). An institution experiences uncertainty during a presidential transition, and for this reason, once a president invests in an institution, he/she must commit to providing stability and leadership in the long-term. Without consistency in leadership, relationships cannot develop, trust cannot be rebuilt, and the institution will continue to experience instability. McNair et al. (2011) summarized that a presidency is defined by “intentional, strategic choices on the part of aspiring presidents” (p. 16) and that the complexity and commitment of the individual can impact the institution as a whole.

### **Recommendations for Practice and Scholarship**

Numerous practical and research related recommendations arose from the results of this study. It is recommended that a college thoroughly assess presidential candidates before hiring. This assessment goes beyond the scope of the basic hiring processes to determine fit and shared institutional values. Some questions to consider are:

- Will this individual respect the authority he/she is granted as president?
- Will he/she hold himself/herself and others accountable?
- Will he/she practice transparency and model positive behaviors for the institution?

It is also recommended that a candidate considering the presidency evaluate whether he/she will align with an institution and board of trustees. Will that individual be able to maintain his/her integrity, as well as his/her personal morals and ethics? Is the board of trustees trained and do they understand their role within the district/campus culture and operations? It is also recommended that a president be knowledgeable about the CCC system and understand the layers of complexity involved in the effective management of an institution. Individuals hired without this knowledge will be at a disadvantage and may inadvertently damage or break trust due to inexperience or misunderstanding. It is further recommended that defined communication

channels be determined and utilized as a tool to provide a clear and consistent message. A president who is able to provide strategic communication can rebuild trust more effectively than those presidents who do not communicate.

From a research perspective, this study's findings suggest several areas for additional research. This study interviewed eight CCC presidents with an array of experience in rebuilding trust within an institution. Further research can be conducted to clarify the differences between rebuilding trust within the current institution or an institution where the president is new after trust has been broken previously. A more detailed analysis of the CCC president leadership style should be completed to provide more depth into presidential authenticity, strategy, and the leadership style's impact on building trust and relationships. A more detailed study specifically on adult learning, emotional healing, and storytelling within a CCC from a presidential perspective could provide powerful insights. A study looking at shifting the organizational culture of a college through trust building exercises could be beneficial as well for all administrators within the CCC system.

To strengthen external validity, further research could be conducted in translating the findings of this study into a quantitative study that could be sent to a larger CCC president population size to provide additional data. This study could also be replicated for presidents in another state and the findings could be compared, analyzing for similarities and differences. Also, in attempting to broaden the study's scope, conducting a similar study at the Vice President and Dean level could provide further insight into the complex layers of the CCC. One of the other areas for further analysis could be the timeframe for rebuilding trust. Requesting more information about the timeline in conducting trust building activities to observe tangible outcomes could help provide structure to the process.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to CCC presidents who self-identified as having experiences with rebuilding trust within a college after trust has been broken. The presidents who participated had a wide range of backgrounds and years of experience. It is not known whether the participants are truly representative of the targeted population. A president's personal experiences, education, leadership style, communication style, and understanding of the community college system are unique depending on their current and previous institutions. Although the personal character of a president is important, so is his/her technical competency and skill set. Also, the organizational culture of each institution is unique within each college and district.

### **Closing Comments**

This study sought to identify steps, behaviors, and methods for rebuilding trust from the perspective of a CCC president. This study succeeded in identifying an array of methods, steps, and best practices for a president to reestablish trust within a CCC. The presidents who participated in this study were experienced subject matter experts who expressed their passion, humor, and cautionary tales with trust development, breakdown, and rebuilding within the complexities of a CCC. These presidents served as role models who dedicated their personal and professional passion to create outstanding educational institutions for the most diverse and underrepresented students within California. They used their personal morals and ethics to shape a collaborative and empathetic process to rebuild trust, knowing that institutions that heal can be high functioning, powerful agents of change within the California education system.

My personal experiences within the CCC sector did provide me with assumptions and expectations for the outcomes of this study. Although I have not served as a president, as a result of having worked closely with a number of CCC presidents, I made certain assumptions about

the type of leader required to rebuild trust. I assumed that the presidents would have a structured and methodical approach to rebuilding trust. However, it was clear that the personal experiences and leadership style of each president provided him/her with a more loose direction in rebuilding trust. I also assumed that many presidents may not have observed trust being broken firsthand, but had heard or observed outside institutions with instances of broken trust. Again, I was surprised by the level of detail and candidness with which many of the participants described a blatant act of trust being broken. I assumed that due to the very public and political nature of the position of president, the participants might not be as candid or willing to share first-hand experiences. However, I was pleasantly surprised with the outpouring of support by these willing participants, as well as our frank and candid conversations, which included humor and a strong level of care and concern for their institutions as a whole.

As a researcher and a dedicated CCC administrator, I value education and have observed firsthand the power of community colleges to transform lives. It was an incredibly supportive and enlightening process to be able to listen to the passion, strength, and personal character of the presidents who shared their stories with me. Many of these presidents had families and discussed maintaining their personal balance while navigating the complex environment of their organization at a campus, district, and state level. Their resilience in overcoming challenges, their passion for education and the students they serve, and their hope for the future of CCCs was incredible. The selfless nature of these leaders, as well as their ability to adapt so that every person with whom they connected felt heard and supported, provided the foundation for how to rebuild trust throughout a college. As the education sector continues to experience turnover and growth, I believe the stories of these presidents will provide a framework for CCCs to pursue

their vision and mission in empowering students to achieve their personal and professional goals, breaking the cycles of poverty through education.

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## APPENDIX A

## Invitation Letter to Participate

<<TITLE>><<FIRST>><<LAST>>  
 <<COLLEGE>>  
 <<ADDRESS>>  
 <<CITY>>, <<STATE>><<ZIP>>

Dear <<TITLE>>. <<LAST>>,

As you know, California Community Colleges are in a state of transition. The increasing administrative turnovers due to presidential retirements, ongoing budgetary concerns, publicity regarding accreditation sanctions, and increased state and federal requirements have continued to transform the community college environment. With the nuances of participatory governance, transparency, ethics, and shared communication and vision, maintaining, and rebuilding of trust have become crucial elements within the California Community College System.

I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. The purpose of the study is to explore the critical components of rebuilding trust within a College after trust has been broken.

You are eligible to participate in the study if:

1. You are a current California Community College President
2. Have served in this role for at least one year
3. Have personal experience with rebuilding trust within a community college setting

This study will be conducted using a qualitative open-ended interview process, which will involve an in-person or phone interview for data collection via structured questions. It is anticipated that the interview will require no more than 60 minutes of your time. The anticipated timeframe for this study is to begin interviews in June 2016 and complete the final interview by July 2016.

All College Presidents who participate will receive a copy of the completed study via email. The results of the study can be used to develop best practices, document steps to rebuilding trust, address emotional recovery and its relationship to adult learning, and provide tools from experts in the field.

If you meet the eligibility requirements and are willing to participate in the study, please complete the attached questionnaire, sign the attached informed consent form, and return both to me via email to [REDACTED]. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your name and institution will be kept confidential and all interviews data will be cited in aggregate formats. You may withdraw from this study at any time that you wish.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Seher Awan, Doctoral Student, Pepperdine University  
 Vice President, Administrative Services, San Diego City College

## APPENDIX B

## Preliminary Questionnaire

In order to contact you to set up an interview, your name and preferred mailing address are required. Your individual responses will be maintained confidentially, and reported responses will not be linked to you or your institution.

The results of the study can be used to develop best practices, document steps to rebuilding trust, address emotional recovery and its relationship to adult learning, and provide tools from experts in the field.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

**Preferred Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which California Community College do you currently serve as President?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**How many years have you served as President of specified Community College?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**For how many years have you served as President in the California Community College System?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please list preferred days & times that work best for your interview schedule.**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please also sign the enclosed "Informed Consent" form and return both this questionnaire and the form via email to [REDACTED]*

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Verbal Consent for Participation in Research Activities

#### **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY**

*Graduate School of Education and Psychology*

#### REBUILDING TRUST IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by **Seher Awan, Doctoral Candidate** under guidance of **Andrew Harvey, Ed.D., Chairperson**, at Pepperdine University, because you are:

- California Community College President
- Have served in your capacity as President for at least one year
- Have self-identified as having knowledge of rebuilding trust within a community college setting

Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore the critical components of rebuilding trust within a California Community College after trust has been broken. This study will examine the rebuilding of trust from the perspective of California Community College Presidents.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a structured, 60-minute face-to-face or phone interviews based on your preference and availability. You will have the option of allowing the researcher to audio-record the interview. You may still participate in this study if you choose not to be audio-recorded.

#### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study are your time commitment. Your participation and institution will be kept confidential to minimize any psychological, social, legal, or financial risks.

## **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include:

- The results of the study can be used to develop best practices
- Steps could be documented to rebuilding trust
- Emotional recovery and its relationship to adult learning and institutional change could be further explored

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your responses will be coded with a pseudonym and transcript data will be maintained separately. All interviews will be transcribed by the researcher to further preserve confidentiality. The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be coded, de-identified, transcribed and cited in aggregate formats. De-identified data coding and themes will be reviewed by a second reviewer and subject matter expert to ensure that coding is consistent and correct.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION**

Your alternative is to not participate. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

## **EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY**

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

**INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact the individuals below if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

**Seher Awan, Researcher****Cell Phone** ( [REDACTED]**Email** [REDACTED]**Andrew Harvey, Dissertation Chair****Email** [REDACTED]**RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu).

**Verbal Consent: Do you have any questions about what participation in this research involves? Would you like to participate in this research study?**

Would you like a copy of this form to document your participation in this research study?

## APPENDIX D

## Letter to Interested Participants in the Study

&lt;&lt;DATE&gt;&gt;

&lt;&lt;TITLE&gt;&gt; &lt;&lt;FIRST&gt;&gt; &lt;&lt;LAST&gt;&gt;

&lt;&lt;ADDRESS&gt;&gt;

&lt;&lt;CITY&gt;, &lt;&lt;STATE&gt;&gt; &lt;&lt;ZIP&gt;&gt;

Dear &lt;&lt;TITLE&gt;&gt; &lt;&lt;LAST&gt;&gt;,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study that I am conducting for the completion of my doctoral dissertation at Pepperdine University. I would like to schedule an individual, in-person or phone interview to explore your perceptions and observations of the emotional climate and behaviors when trust is broken in a college setting, as well as document steps to rebuild trust. If possible, I would like to conduct this interview during the months of June or July 2016. The interview should take approximately sixty-minutes of your time.

A face-to-face interview is the preferred interview type for this study. If you are willing to participate in an interview during the specified months, please indicate three available times and dates that work best with your schedule. If you are unable to complete a face-to-face interview and would prefer a phone interview, please indicate your preference.

Prefer In-Person Interview

**OR**

Prefer Phone Interview

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Preferred Time & Date #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Preferred Time & Date #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Preferred Time & Date #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

After I have received your preferred interview schedule, I will schedule your interview based on your availability via email and will send you an email confirming your interview date and time.

Once again, thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Seher Awan, Doctoral Student, Pepperdine University  
Vice President, Administrative Services, San Diego City College

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Instrument

#### **VERBAL CONSENT TO AUDIO RECORDING & TRANSCRIPTION**

This study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. Only the researcher will be able to listen to the recordings. The recordings will be transcribed by the researcher. All electronic files will be maintained with password protection on the researcher's personal computer. All data will be available only to the researcher and will be maintained for five years. All confidential data in relation to this study will be destroyed after five years from the completion of the study. Participants will have access to the final study results and aggregate data per their request.

By verbally consenting, I am allowing the researcher to audio record my interview as part of this research. I also understand that this consent for recording is effective until the following date: \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you consent to the audio recording of this interview?

#### **INTERVIEW DETAILS**

Participant Institution:

Interview Date:

Interview Time:

Interview Location:

Interviewer:

1. Please describe your experience in the California Community College System.
2. How do you feel trust is established in a California Community College between a president and the institution they serve?
  - a. How can a California Community College President influence the building of trust between administrators and the institution they serve?
3. What actions do you feel break trust within a California Community College?
4. If a president breaks trust within their institution, what steps can he or she take to rebuild trust within their Community College?

- a. Are these steps different if they are rebuilding trust broken by a previous administration?
5. Can you describe an example of a time where you observed trust being broken in a California Community College?
6. What emotions did you observe from the individuals involved in this scenario?
  - a. Were these individuals involved directly or indirectly to the scenario?
  - b. Do you feel this scenario impacted the institution as a whole?
  - c. If yes, what was the emotional climate of the institution during this time?
7. What steps did you take in your role as a Community College Administrator to calm the emotions experienced during this scenario?
8. Is there a leadership style you feel works best when attempting to rebuild trust within a California Community College?

## APPENDIX F

## IRB Approval



Pepperdine University  
24255 Pacific Coast Highway  
Malibu, CA 90263  
TEL: 310-506-4000

**NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH**

Date: June 28, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Seher Awan

Protocol #: 16-03-237

Project Title: Rebuilding Trust in Community Colleges

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Seher Awan:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at [community.pepperdine.edu/irb](http://community.pepperdine.edu/irb).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives