ABSTRACT

Kimberly McGhee, EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACULTY LEADERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF E-LEARNING PROGRAMS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (Under the direction of Dr. David Siegel). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2020.

As e-learning continues to evolve and become a mainstream offering in higher education, colleges and universities are faced with growing online enrollments and student demand for access to courses and programs delivered in an e-learning environment. In 2019, approximately one out of three students in the United States enrolled in at least one e-learning course. Higher education leaders at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are driven to identify processes and models to support and sustain e-learning initiatives.

The purpose of this collective case study is to investigate the involvement of administrative leadership and faculty in the development and sustainability of e-learning programs at three HBCUs. The research questions that guide this study include: How do the organizational structure and operations impact the development and sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs? What role do faculty play in the development of e-learning? What internal and external factors motivate HBCUs to embark on the development of an e-learning program? The use of semi- structured interviews and document analysis, framed by Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model, provided an understanding of the organizational capability of the participating organizations to support and sustain e-learning.

Three major themes surfaced from the analysis of the data: (1) Resources and funding are needed to support e-learning, (2) A planning process should be in place to address e-learning across the campuses, and (3) Faculty have varying opinions of e-learning. Study findings provide a model for implementation and sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs and suggest that the

planning process be inclusive of institutional stakeholders. The study substantiates the importance of faculty buy-in and participation in the planning and deployment of e-learning.

Results from the study suggest implications and recommendations for leadership at HBCUs to understand, address, and support critical operational areas in order to build, enhance, scale, and sustain e-learning programs. Study findings contribute to the literature on e-learning implementation at HBCUs, specifically the role of faculty in the planning process. Finally, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the practicality of unifying e-learning operations under the direction of a leadership position responsible for championing e-learning across the institution.

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACULTY

LEADERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF E-LEARNING

PROGRAMS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Kimberly McGhee

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving family. Your unconditional love, support and encouragement provided the motivation I needed to complete this educational journey.

To my family – sister, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephew, and cousins. I want to thank all of you for the encouragement, care and concern throughout this journey. I cannot express how much the calls, emails and texts meant. For you to take the time to make sure I was progressing through classes and finishing my dissertation shows the strength of our family bond. I love each and every one of you!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

E-learning has become an integral part of higher education, compelling colleges and universities to think strategically about its development, implementation, and sustainability. Legon and Garrett's (2017) *Changing Landscape of Online Education Report* found that many of the strategies around e-learning include a wide-range of objectives such as enrollment growth, student completion, and quality enhancement. Institutions are experiencing profound changes in their delivery of instruction, faculty preparation, student engagement, and organizational structure as a result of implementing e-learning initiatives (McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013; Salmon, 2005; Snipes, Ellis, & Thomas, 2006). The research by Legon and Garrett (2017) also revealed that online enrollment continues to be a "growth engine in U.S. higher education" (p. 5), with increasing competition as many institutions indicated plans to "substantially expand online enrollments" (p. 5).

As far back as two decades ago, the benefits of distance education were recognized by institutions in a number of ways by increasing access, expanding opportunity, and, in many cases, enabling colleges and universities to operate more efficiently (Dede, 1990). Over the years, a number of terms have emerged to describe learning at a distance. Laurillard (2006) defined e-learning as the use of "technologies or applications in the service of learning or learner support" (p. 18). This definition was expanded by Edirisingha (2014) to include e-learning as the process of learning using information and communication technologies. As colleges and universities continue to embrace e-learning, it is important they consider the emergence of new technologies and applications, as well as the current and future infrastructure needs to support and sustain e-learning. Laurillard (2006) provided the following critical assessment of the sustainability of e learning:

While the ostensible aim is to use e-learning to improve the quality of the learning

experience for students, the drivers of change are numerous, and learning quality

ranks poorly in relation to most of them. Those of us working to improve student

learning, and seeking to exploit e-learning to do so, have to ride each new wave

of technological innovation in an attempt to divert it from its more natural course

of techno-hype, and drive it towards the quality agenda. We have to build the

means for e-learning to evolve and mature as part of the educational change

process, so that it achieves its promise of an improved system of higher education. (p. 72)

In the twenty-first century, students have the availability to connect to a variety of remote

educational resources globally and instantaneously, defying the barriers of space and time

(Mitchell, 2013). What once was an anomaly at institutions of higher education is now a

common instructional-delivery option for students at both public and private universities (Nania,

1999; Waits & Lewis, 2003). Legon and Garrett (2017) asserted that the

fact that online enrollment has continued to grow in an otherwise declining higher

education market is evidence of the prevalence and appeal of online courses and

programs. It is rare nowadays in any higher learning setting for online resources of some

kind not to play a role. (p. 10)

Public higher education institutions engaged in e-learning are also responding to tuition

increases, declining government financial support, increased competition from the for-profit

sector, ethical challenges regarding profit-making and financial accountability, and changing

regulations from accreditors (Kurre, et al., 2012). Additional challenges arise when institutions

decide to include e-learning as part of the overall intuitional growth strategy without a plan for

development and sustainability (Thor, 2013). There is substantial research that finds that, like

many institutions, HBCUs have struggled to plan appropriately to keep up with technological innovations that they could not anticipate (Hawkins, 2013; Kelderman, 2010; McClellan, 2016; Nworie, Nworie, & Mintah, 2010). Implementation and sustainability of e-learning in higher education requires organizational change. Institutions cannot simply depend on introducing online course content into teaching and learning. Rather consideration should be given to the development of an inclusive policy framework that includes an investment in training for faculty and administrators, support staff, maintenance, infrastructure, and pedagogical approaches in order to support campus-wide e-learning initiatives (Coomaraswamy, 2014; Edirisingha, 2014).

Traditionally, in higher education, technology leadership is the role of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). However, significant changes in academic technology over the years have led to "reorganizations, realignments, adoption of innovative administrative structures, increased demands for services, and the addition of new roles for personnel" (Nworie, 2006, p. 105) in higher education. According to Legon and Garret (2017), the management of e-learning activities and responsibilities is being consolidated under the leadership of a single institutional officer whom they designated as a Chief Online Officer (COO). As e-learning becomes a "mainstream component" (Legon & Garrett, 2017, p. 7) of higher education, changes in leadership, management, finance, and strategic objectives are needed to ensure stability and growth.

The Southeastern University System, a multi-campus state university system is comprised of sixteen institutions, including five public HBCUs established a state law providing funding for distance education degree-credit instruction in an effort to expand access to higher education opportunities. This enrollment funding was established to enable constituent campuses to make crucial investments in faculty training, staff support, and information technology to

support high-quality instruction in a rapidly evolving distance education environment. According to the current strategic plan for the Southeastern University System, institutions in the system have adapted to maintain high quality education in a time of tight public budgets and growing demand. Public institutions in the system have a statewide graduation rate above the national average and some of the lowest tuition in the country. The system office strongly encourages member institutions to provide multiple access points to higher education through the availability of online courses to reach new students and deliver a quality education that fits the needs of students.

Statement of the Problem

Colleges and universities continue to expand their e-learning operation and development to cope with increasing competition and rapid changes in the higher education landscape (Allen & Seaman, 2013; Legon & Garrett, 2017; Sae-Khow, 2014). As noted by Salmon (2005), e-learning figures prominently in the "aspirations of many policy-makers and senior managers" (p. 208). He further suggested additional research models were needed to demonstrate the transferability and scalability of e-learning in higher education. There are two main operational models guiding the organization and management of e-learning at the campus level – centralized or decentralized services. Based on the results of Legon and Garrett's (2017) study, public institutions favor a decentralized management system with more control given to the academic units offering e-learning programs. The most common management pattern noted in the report is a form of distributed control, where the academic units control the curriculum and management of infrastructure and marketing, while tuition and fees are centralized.

Concerns about achieving stability and reliability are overtaking earlier-stage innovation as e-learning moves from an "experimental phase to an established institutional function" (Legon

& Garrett, 2017, p. 5). Organization and oversight of e-learning involve the management of courses and programs, sources and distribution of revenue, process for online course development, faculty training and development, compensation, ownership, and the use of external companies (Legon & Garrett, 2017). As institutions decide where and how to be innovative, the development of e-learning should not be based on a bland view of the market but on a more complex view of the value of e-learning in meeting the university's mission and playing to its strengths (Richards, O'Shea, & Connolly, 2004). Institutions have to be concerned with providing a quality student experience and strong program outcomes.

  The role of faculty varies when it comes to e-learning development. At the core, faculty are the content specialists. However, some institutions expect faculty to enter into e-learning without a deep understanding of why it is being supported and what the impact will be on their respective academic departments and the institution. To engage faculty effectively, institutions need to ensure that ownership of content and pedagogy lies directly within the academic departments, while recognizing the need for a centralized delivery of a variety of support mechanisms to promote and encourage e-learning (Salmon, 2005).

  A hybrid model of managing e-learning could prove to be a more beneficial model for colleges and universities. While it may be more incremental and challenging for institutions, it will provide a mechanism to involve faculty and administrators in making their contribution to the process and contributing to strategic outcomes (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Legon & Garrett, 2017; Salmon, 2005). This investment in personal and departmental learning and development helps develop the capacity for long-term sustainability and allows academic units to retain ownership of the curriculum, program, and student learning outcomes. Institutions must ensure e-learning serves core programs and students, not only a desire for new market growth.

Intentional involvement from the faculty and academic units can assist colleges and universities in providing this assurance.

As the e-learning market continues to mature and develop, the field is becoming more competitive, causing institutions to scurry to launch new programs. Over 56% of the participants in Legon and Garrett's (2017) CHLOE report considered the online market to be much more competitive than just a few years ago. As noted in the CHLOE report, ambitious growth is not always the best for some campuses since "simply offering an online program is no longer a differentiator" (Legon & Garrett, 2017, p. 15).

Faculty skepticism of e-learning remains high even as the number of institutions engaged in e-learning and the number of students enrolled in online courses continues to increase (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Legon & Garrett, 2017; Mishra, 2014; Sae-Khow, 2014). According to Allen and Seaman's (2016) study, a small portion of all academic leaders reported their faculty "accept the value and legitimacy of online education" (p. 26). They suggested that a "continuing failure of online education has been the inability to convince its most important audience – higher education faculty members – of its worth" (Allen & Seaman, 2016, p. 26).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how the relationship between administrative leadership and faculty involvement affect the development and sustainability of e-learning programs at three public HBCUs in the southeast region of the United States. Institutions were selected based on their (1) designation as four-year, public HBCUs in the same multi-campus system; (2) similar student population size of 5,000 - 8,500; and (3) online undergraduate and graduate degree program offerings. This collective case study will examine

the organizational structure for e-learning and faculty roles in the development of e-learning at the three public HBCUs.

This research is important as it addresses an area that is overlooked in the literature - faculty members as decision makers in the implementation process of e-learning in higher education (McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003). By investigating the relationship between academic leadership and faculty involvement at all stages of the process, this study seeks to understand how this relationship shapes e-learning.

Conceptual Framework

Research on e-learning in higher education continues to explore the need for colleges and universities to offer online options for current and potential students and the importance of including e-learning in the institution's strategic planning process (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Legon & Garrett, 2017; Mishra, 2014; Salmon, 2005). Nevertheless, the current body of literature is limited in its discussion of the role faculty play in leading e-learning implementation in higher education. Colleges and universities are grounded in the foundation of teaching and research. Technological developments have changed the way in which institutions deliver instruction, conduct research, train faculty, and allocate funding for e-learning initiatives.

In this study, I investigated how faculty support e-learning initiatives throughout the development and planning process. In contrast to the current body of knowledge, I ventured to understand how faculty and administrators perceive their institution's organizational structure for e-learning development within the context of being a constituent member of a multi-campus university system. As such, a conceptual framework that provided a platform to define the holistic capability of an institution to deliver e-learning was necessary for this study. To address

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these issues, I used Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model (eMM) to structure my research.

This framework measures the capability of institutions to engage in and sustain technology-supported teaching and learning in such a way to assist academic leaders to undertake systematic and targeted improvements in their organization's e-learning activities. The eMM is intended to actively support organizational change activities through the examination of five major process areas – delivery, planning, definition, management, and optimization. Marshall (2011) suggested the theoretical construct of the maturity model is "explicitly designed to encourage self-reflection and the improvement of organizational activities" (p. 25). Figure 1 provides an overview of Marshall's e-Learning Maturity Model.

The eMM relates to this study and research questions because it aligns with the notion that universities must have the appropriate organizational structure, people, and processes in place to develop, deploy, support, and sustain e-learning programs. Specifically, the eMM will be used to explore and compare the capability of the three HBCUs participating in this study to engage in processes for e-learning development that allow for organizational change, growth, and sustainability. Further, the eMM will help to identify if the e-learning design, development, and deployment is meeting the needs of the students, faculty, and institutions.

Research Questions

In an attempt to understand the roles that faculty play in the development and sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs, this study seeks to answer three research questions informed by Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model. The following research questions will guide this study: (1) How do the organizational structure and operations impact the
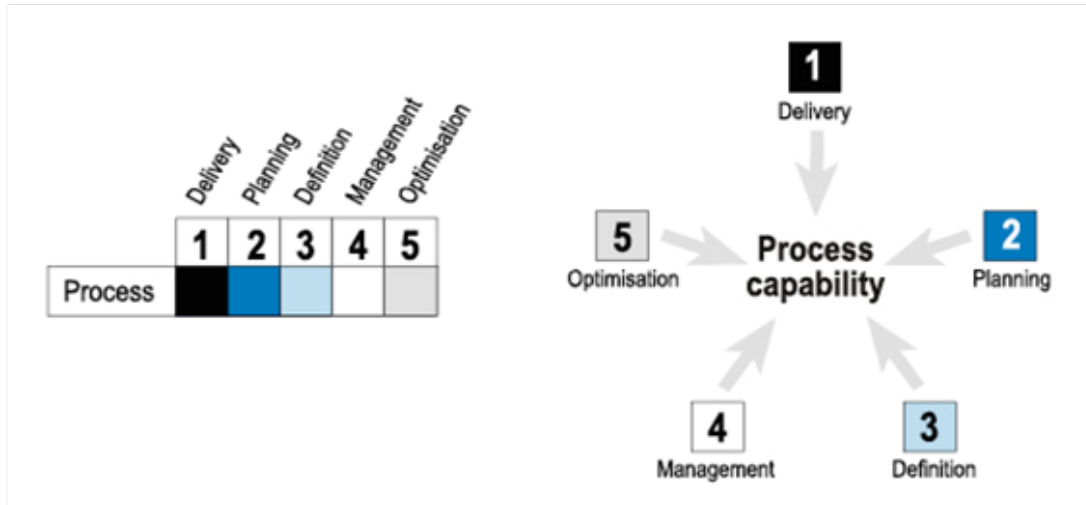
Figure 1. e-Learning Maturity Model (eMM) process dimensions (Marshall, 2011).

development and sustainability of e-learning at each of these HBCUs? (2) What role do faculty play in the development of e-learning? (3) What internal and external factors motivate HBCUs to embark on the development of an e-learning program? Answers to these questions could provide information and guidance for administrators that could lead to a deeper understanding of administrative and faculty roles and responsibilities, organizational structure, and infrastructure that should be in place prior to implementing an e-learning program.

Significance of the Study

This study should yield information that could enhance the process for the development, implementation, and sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs. This process could include: inclusive strategic planning for campus-wide adoption of e-learning; defining organizational structure, policies, and operations to ensure the institution can appropriately respond to changes in the higher education landscape; identify and implement efficient processes and procedures to support e-learning growth and sustainability; and provide effective pedagogical leadership to meet program and student outcomes.

By focusing on the perceptions of faculty and administrators at three HBCUs offering e-learning programs, this study aimed to shed light on a topic that is infrequently addressed in the existing body of literature. Although previous studies have addressed the topic of distance education at HBCUs, these investigations primarily focus on how HBCUs are slow to enter the field of distance or lag behind Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) due to lack of infrastructure, limited financial resources, and inadequate training for faculty (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2014; McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013; Moore, 2008; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003; Snipes et al., 2006). Administrators at HBCUs do not consider the leadership role faculty can play throughout planning, development, implementation, and

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delivery. These studies tend to focus on how HBCUs compare to PWIs, many of which tend to have more resources due to larger student enrollments to support distance education implementation and sustainability (Hawkins, 2013).

In an effort to understand how some HBCUs are able to implement and sustain e-learning programs, an investigation into the strategic focus and inclusivity of faculty was vital. Discovering how these institutions are able to implement e-learning could provide higher education administrators with a chance to understand the factors that contribute positively toward the sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs. Additionally, this study could provide an opportunity for HBCUs to reevaluate policies, procedures, and resource allocations to ensure they supply a foundation for e-learning growth and development. Furthermore, this study could provide an avenue to encourage dialogue between administrators and faculty with regard to the creation of successful e-learning programs that will meet the needs of today's student.

Definitions

The following is a list of definitions of terms and phrases used throughout the study:

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) - The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, defines an HBCU as: "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation (U.S. Department of Education, https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/one-hundred-and-five-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/).

e-learning – defined by the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) as consisting of entirely online elements that facilitate student interaction with content, instructor, and other students (Retrieved from https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/updated-e-learning-definitions-2/). The OLC also recognizes there are different kinds of e-learning practiced in higher education and has provided several definitions to provide institutions with some standard models to support effective data sharing.

Distance Education – defined by the U.S. Department of Education as education that uses one or more technologies, such as the internet, one-way and two-way transmissions, or wireless communications devices to:

a. deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor; and

b. support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously (U.S. Department of Education, Higher Education Act of 1965, section 103).

Online Education – defined as education delivered primarily via the Internet to students at remote locations. Online courses may be delivered synchronously or asynchronously and may include a requirement that students and professors meet once or periodically in a physical setting for lectures, labs, or exams. Face-to-face meetings should not exceed 25% of the total course time (U.S. News & World Report, 2010).

Information Technology (IT) - defined by the Information Technology Association of America as the study, design, development, application, implementation, support, or management of computer-based information systems. Although the term is commonly used in relation to computers and network infrastructure, it also encompasses other technologies such as television, telephones, and the deployment of software applications.

Academic Technology (AT) - used as an umbrella term to describe the design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of processes and resources for teaching and learning in higher education (Johnson, Lamb & Teclehaimanot, 2003).

Chief Information Officer (CIO) - described by DeSanto (2012) as the individual broadly responsible for technology adoption and integration on college campuses.

e-leadership - defined as a social influence process mediated by information and technology to produce a change in attitudes, feelings, thinking, behavior, and/or performance with individuals, groups, and/or organizations (Avolio, Kahai, & Dodge, 2000, p. 617). E-leadership can occur at any hierarchical level in an organization and can involve one-to-one and one-to-many interactions within and across large units and organizations.

Learning Management System (LMS) – defined as a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, or learning and development programs.

Summary of the Study

To develop a complete understanding of the impact faculty involvement has on the sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs, a review of literature is presented in Chapter Two. The literature review examines online enrollment trends and how e-learning has evolved into a strategic initiative in higher education, calling for e-learning activities and responsibilities to be consolidated under the leadership of a single institutional officer. In addition, Chapter Two provides a review of technology in higher education and the changes that have occurred to support the development, implementation, and sustainability of e-learning programs.

Chapter Three presents the research questions that will guide this study. Further, it provides an overview of the methodology of the study and pertinent information regarding the

study sites, selection of participants, and the interview protocol that was used for data collection. In addition, data analyses procedures and methods utilized to establish trustworthiness are presented as well.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature regarding the development, implementation, and sustainability of e-learning in higher education, with specific attention given to e-learning at HBCUs. The literature review begins with a brief overview of the current trends in online education in higher education. A review of enrollment trends gives credence to e-learning becoming more mainstream in higher education, as online enrollments continue to outpace overall enrollment in U.S. higher education (Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018). Next, this chapter discusses e-learning at HBCUs and how courses and programs are implemented and supported.

The discussion then moves to current trends in e-learning leadership, sustainability, the role of faculty, and how the use of Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model can provide new perspectives on an institution's ability to be effective in the delivery of e-learning based on their "capability to engage in high quality processes that are reproducible and able to be extended and sustained as demand grows" (Marshall & Mitchell, 2002, p. 2). In addition, this chapter will discuss how Jameson's (2013) e-Leadership Framework for Educational Technology in Higher Education provides a perspective of faculty and administrators who are involved in the development and implementation of e-learning on their respective campus.

Since 2012, colleges and universities have experienced a steady increase in distance education enrollments, in spite of a decline in overall enrollments (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018). According to the report *Grade Increase: Tracking Distance Education in the United States* (2018), distance education enrollments in higher education increased for the fourteenth straight year, with the number of students who are taking at least one distance course also

growing by 5.6% from fall 2015 to fall 2016 to reach 6,359,12. With the continued growth of online education, colleges and universities now view online programs as revenue generators and, therefore, are addressing these programs in their strategic plans (Legon & Garrett, 2017). Bullen (2013) suggested e-learning is not a "magic bullet" (p. 44) but can assist institutions with responding to growing demands for quality, relevance, accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness if properly integrated into core operations and aligned with institutional strategic plans.

Distance education originated in the early 1700s to teach writing by mailing students self-instructional texts (Holmberg, 1989). In 1680, the Penny Post was established in London by William Dockura (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2006) and then incorporated in Great Britain by Isaac Pitman in 1840 (Picciano, 2001). In the correspondence education system, only the postal service was available for educators to deliver instruction to students who lived in other places (Dean, 1994). In the early 1900s, many American university-level DE programs were designed or revised where significant technological advancements occurred in print and communications technology. While the term 'distance education' is more than one hundred years old, the field continues to adapt to new developments and technological innovations. Rapid progress in technology substantially changed the nature of distance education (Demiray & Isman, 2001). Today, telecommunication based distance education including real time interaction is a part of distance teaching and training at all levels, from primary school to university, for formal as well as non-formal education around the world.

While learning at a distance is not a new phenomenon, over the years, a myriad of definitions has been applied to this educational practice (Downs, 2017). The practice has grown from correspondence courses through mail to more synchronous and asynchronous learning. As

a relatively new term related to distance education, e-learning refers to the use of the Internet to deliver customized and highly interactive course materials to enhance the online learning experience (Nicholson, 2007). Although the various terms for distance education are often used interchangeably, Bates and Sangra (2011) argued there is a significant difference with each modality. The United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defined distance education (as reported in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) as

> Education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies used for instruction may include the following: Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and video cassette, DVDs and CD-ROMs, if the cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in conjunction with the technologies listed above. (Retrieved from https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/VisGlossaryAll.aspx)

Downs (2017) suggested that although this definition is consistent with the Code of Federal Regulations and some accrediting agencies, it is "slightly outdated for today's technologies" (Oh, What's in a name? para. 7).

Colleges and universities are required to report distance education activity to various federal and state entities, as well as institutional offices. Bates and Sangra (2011) pointed out e-learning is often used a "convenient term to cover a range of uses of technology for teaching and learning" (p. 28). In an effort to clarify the term e-learning, Bates and Sangra (2011) developed

the following definition "all computer and Internet-based activities that support teaching and learning – both on-campus and at a distance" (p. 32). They further noted the definition includes administrative as well as academic uses of information and communication technologies that support learning.

In this chapter, I briefly examine technology and e-learning in higher education, specifically leadership roles across all levels of the institution. Next, I provide a review of strategically planning for the inclusion of e-learning, paying special attention to the areas of delivery, planning, management, and optimization of operations. In the final portion of this chapter, I discuss e-leadership in higher education and how it applies to e-learning. The conceptual framework used for this study is the work by Marshall (2011). Following an exploration of technology and organizational structure and management of e-learning in higher education, I discuss each element of the e-learning Maturity Model (Marshall, 2011) and how it can be used in higher education to assist colleges and universities understand their current organizational e-learning capability. Of particular interest is how this model can be used to identify common areas where improvements are needed, as well as how examples of e-learning activities can help other institutions explore various systems and processes to facilitate sustainability of e-learning.

To better understand how e-learning impacts leadership across all levels in higher education, I will supplement the e-Learning Maturity Model with Jameson's (2013) work around e-leadership of educational technology in higher education. Marshall's (2011) model will be used to examine how the complex interaction between leadership and e-learning influences new organizational structure and behavior. The literature suggests there is a strong need for senior, middle management, and faculty-level strategic leaders to be committed to e-leadership as a

strategic function in higher education (DasGupta, 2011; Hatzipanagos & Russell, 2014; Jameson, 2013).

Technology in Higher Education

Technology is transforming the way organizations function and may be the largest single influence on organizational structure, including higher education. Technology in higher education has led to new and/or redesigned jobs. In some instances, technology has reduced the physical space needed to perform tasks and allowed for new work environments such as telecommuting and open-plan offices (Davis, Leach, & Clegg, 2011). Information technology has not only changed the way instruction is delivered or how students learn, but it has also changed the way in which organizations and individuals communicate with each other – internally and externally- including text messaging, instant messaging, videoconferencing, and social networks (Turner et.al, 2010). These technological advances have added a level of complexity and placed new demands on technology leaders in higher education. As technology continues to evolve, the role of technology leaders will continue to evolve.

According to the *New Media Consortium Horizon Report: 2016 Higher Education Edition* (Johnson et al., 2016), experts in the field of higher education identified six long-term and short-term trends that will drive change in higher education over the next 5 years. The trends are sorted into three categories and will affect technology planning and decision-making at colleges and universities. The three broad categories and six trends identified in the report are as follows:

- Long-Term Trends: Five or More Years
  - Advancing Cultures of Change and Innovation
  - Increasing Cross-Institution Collaboration

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- Mid-Term Trends: Three to Five Years

    o Growing Focus on Measuring Learning

    o Proliferation of Open Educational Resources

- Short-Term Trends: One or Two Years

    o Increasing Use of Blended Learning

The number of chief academic officers who believe e-learning is a critical component of an institution's long-term strategy has increased significantly over the past 15 years (Allen & Seaman, 2014). According to the administration of the Southeastern University System, many institutions are making progress in expanding e-learning offerings to provide educational opportunities and meet the needs and interests of students. While a growing number of HBCUs are offering online courses and degree programs (Stuart, 2012; Stuart & Yep, 2012; Sturgis, 2012), some in the Southeastern University System have been more successful than others. Nationwide, management of e-learning activities, responsibilities, and support functions are being consolidated under the leadership of a single institutional officer, while academic planning and curriculum development remain decentralized (Legon & Garrett, 2017).

Colleges and universities now address e-learning in their strategic plans, stressing a range of objectives, such as enrollment growth, student completion, and quality enhancement (Bullen, 2014; Legon & Garrett, 2017; Salmon 2005). As Legon and Garrett (2017) noted, online enrollment continues to be a growth engine in U.S. higher education but the rate of increase is slowing and competition is increasing. In order to remain competitive, institutions must ensure online learning initiatives support core programs and student outcomes. Part of the institutional planning must consider the delineation of online offerings and how students access them. Student needs vary when it comes to higher education - some supplement traditional campus-based

schedules with a handful of online courses, while others enroll in entirely online programs and never visit campus (Seaman et al., 2018). Technology leadership in higher education is evolving as quickly as the technology itself and requires technology leaders to understand, embrace, and leverage new technologies to advance teaching and learning.

With the continued advances in technology, institutions are learning to operate in a new, rapidly changing environment. Higher education leaders must be able to examine how technology is impacting their day-to-day jobs as well as how it will impact the future of colleges and universities. As noted by Davis (2015), this is a complex, expanding, and constantly changing task for technology leaders in higher education. Legon and Garrett (2017) suggested changes in leadership, management, finance, and strategic objectives are needed to support the online education as a "mainstream component" (p. 7) of higher education.

Academic Technology in Higher Education

Glick (2014) described academic technology (AT) as a fast growing field that "deserves attention given its dynamic nature and impact on educational practices" (p. xv). She went on to note the field has grown from a focus on information technology to more of a focus on advancing technology to enhance teaching and learning. According to Kowch (2013), given the blurred lines between information technology and academic technology, it has been difficult for higher education administrators to fully embrace and understand the roles and responsibilities of academic technology, and how to lead, support, and collaborate to effectively meet the needs of faculty and students. There is a need for colleges and universities to take a strategic approach to support and promote the influence of academic technology professionals (Kowch, 2013; Nworie, 2006, 2012).

Academic technology support services were established by colleges and universities to assist faculty in their roles as teachers, researchers, and scholars, as well as to improve student learning (Nworie, 2006). However, due to the many changes in higher education and the constant evolution of technology in higher education, these units are experiencing tremendous change in the types of services provided and how the units are organized. Nworie's (2004) survey results still hold true today. In an attempt to clearly delineate the roles, responsibilities, and leadership for academic technology, colleges and universities are developing new programs, reorganizing departments, and creating new positions.

To better understand the field of academic technology and its importance to higher education, Nworie (2004) suggested further research into the roles and responsibilities of academic technology professionals and support services. I suggest research should go further to include leadership of academic technology, and not just those individuals who provide end-user support services to faculty and students. According to Glick (2014), research shows the responsibilities of academic professionals include basic technology skills, training faculty and students to use technology, assisting faculty to develop academic content, managing staff, and creating strategic academic technology governance and policy. The most obvious gap is in the area of academic technology governance and policy (Nworie, 2004).

Without the appropriate leadership, the lack of strategic planning, governance, and policy can lead to faculty not fully engaging in the use of technology to support and enhance teaching and learning (Tillman, 2009). Having a clear understanding of the strategic direction and policy implications allows for administrators to ensure the appropriate levels of funding and staffing are available on a continuous basis (Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003). Bates and Sangra (2011) suggest college and university executives view technology as a tool and a service used to enhance

traditional classroom teaching rather than a way to transform the teaching. Figure 2 illustrates how Glick (2014) viewed academic technology at the heart of the "technological and academic spheres in higher education" (p. 6).

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK)

Mishra and Koehler (2006) noted the area of educational technology is often criticized for a "lack of theoretical grounding" (p. 1,017). Building on the work of Shulman (1987), Mishra and Koehler developed a conceptual framework for educational technology that captures the essential qualities of teacher knowledge required for technology integration. Although Shulman (1987) did not include technology and its relationship to pedagogy and content in his framework, Mishra and Koehler argued that "thoughtful" pedagogical uses of technology requires a form of knowledge they call Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK).

The TPCK framework identifies three main components of learning environments and their role at multiple levels of the technology integration process: content, pedagogy, and technology. The TPCK framework pays close attention to the "connections, interactions, affordances, and constraints between and among content, pedagogy, and technology" (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1,025). Since knowledge and content are key for developing good teaching, the TPCK model does not treat these two as separate domains but rather highlights the complex interplay between the two.

The standard model in higher education for getting faculty to learn how to use technology is to offer workshops and other faculty development opportunities. Mishra and Koehler (2006) argued that the traditional methods of technology training are "ill suited" (p. 1,031) to provide the "deep understanding" (p. 1,031) faculty need to become intelligent users of technology for
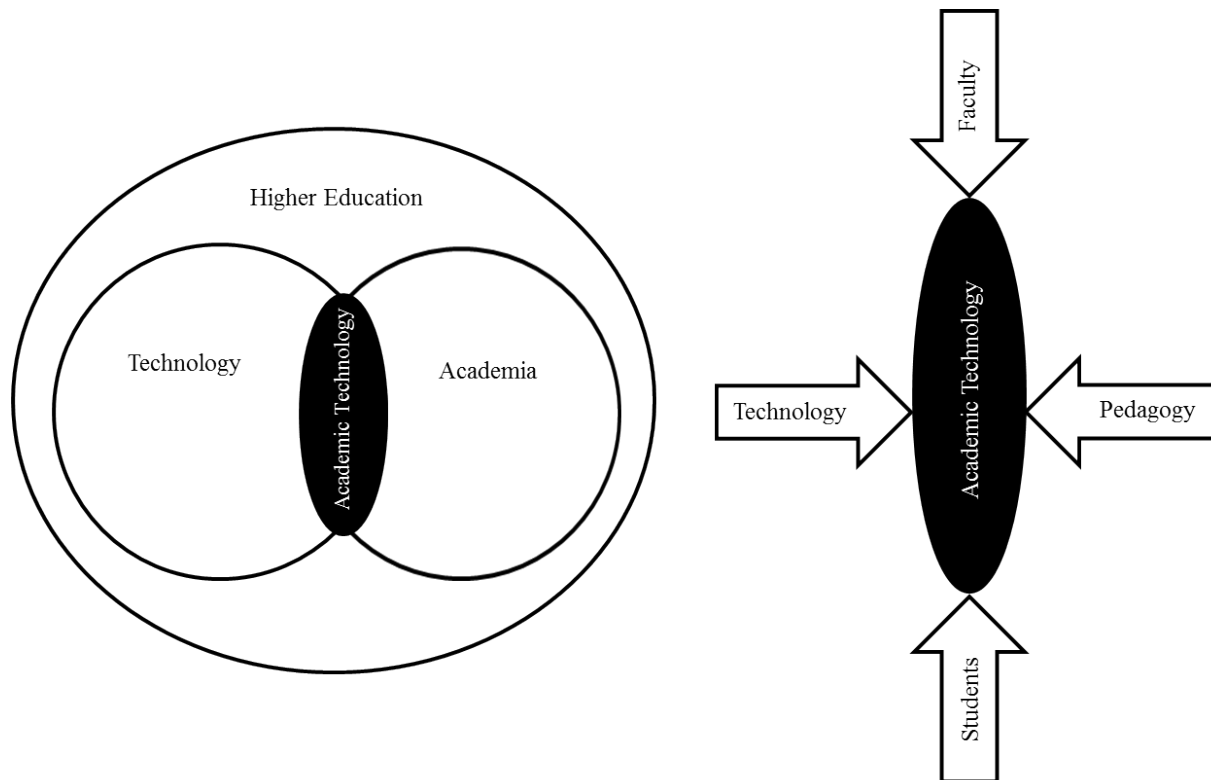
Figure 2. Academic technology in relation to technology, pedagogy and higher education (Glick, 2014).

pedagogy for the following reasons: rapid rate of technology change, inappropriate design of software, situated nature of learning, and emphasis on what, not how.

According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), simply training faculty to use specific technologies does not provide the knowledge needed to be applied broadly and creates knowledge that will quickly be outdated due to the rapid changes in technology. Zhao (2003) argued that software tools are rarely created for education as solutions to pedagogical problems, but rather to solve problems for the business world. Therefore, an emphasis on simply learning the technology may lead to an emphasis on students learning technology rather than the intended subject matter.

The work of Mishra and Koehler (2006) suggests the best approach to technology integration for faculty involves solving real educational problems with technology, through design-based activities. In this "learning-technology-by-design" (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1,035) approach, the emphasis is placed on learning by doing. Learning through design is implemented through the creation of online courses, digital content, videos, animations, and other "artifacts" that require applying theory, practice, content, pedagogy, and technology. The use of the TPCK model could result in colleges and universities developing robust techniques to support integrated and design-based approaches for teaching faculty to use technology. Research on the TPCK shows when faculty are given the opportunity to engage in the design of educational technology they became more sensitive to the complex interactions between content, pedagogy, and technology.

Faculty Leadership

Although there is a wealth of literature concerning developing formal leadership in higher education, few studies address academics in non-formal leadership roles that focus on how

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they develop their leadership in learning and teaching (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, Klopper, & Warland, 2015). The study revealed four themes around leadership in teaching: (1) ability to influence direction; (2) including culture; (3) becoming visible and speaking up; and (4) learning together. As a result of this study, they suggested ways to facilitate cultural change in higher education as it relates to faculty involvement in leadership roles. In recent years, literature regarding higher education leadership reflects an interest in more democratic cultures and less hierarchical models of leadership (Jones Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012).

What has emerged is an consensus that leadership is the responsibility of the entire campus and is needed at all levels of the organization (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2008; Marron & Cunniff, 2014). With that, distributed and collective leadership styles have been proposed as a means for faculty to develop shared responsibility in changing higher education cultures (Bolden et al., 2008; Jones et al., 2012; Middlehurst, 2008). According to Hofmeyer et al. (2015), the time has come for institutions to "consider the means to implement collaborative models of leadership to promote learning and teaching and to clearly articulate incentives, rewards and performance-based expectations for promotion and tenure" (p. 183). Research shows senior leadership would benefit from collaborating with faculty to identify and research real world problems and lead the practical application of new knowledge to solve those problems (Bolden et al., 2008; Bryman, 2007; Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Hofmeyer et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2012).

The study conducted by Hofmeyer et al. (2015) found cultural change requires "courageous leadership by academics in formal and non-formal roles" (p. 188). They suggested that courageous leadership can promote the strategic change institutions need to improve the "opportunities, satisfaction and outcomes for current and future generations of academics and students in higher education" (p. 189).

Organizational Structure and Change in Higher Education

"Educational technology is a field based on change" (Surrey, 2005, p. 933). Technology and change are so closely related that the word innovation is often used synonymously with technology (Marshall, 2010). According to Marshall (2010), university culture and capability "constrain" (p. 22) such innovation in higher education. It is important for individuals leading change in higher education to find a balance between technological, academic, and administrative concerns (McCarthy & Samors, 2009). Seel (2007) described change in large complex organizations as operating at multiple levels: process, systems, structures, organizations, and institutions. Change at the process and systems level can be frequent and occurs when new ideas and technologies are driven by individuals or small groups within the organization.

Three types of organizational change that affect higher education have been identified by Christensen, Anthony, and Roth (2004): sustaining, disruptive, and low-end disruptive. Each of these organizational changes can be applied to e-learning in higher education. Christensen et al. efine sustaining changes as those that improve the function of the organization in ways that are consistent with previous activities. An example of this would be providing students access to lecture notes and course syllabi through a learning management system, rather than providing printed copies in class. A disruptive change is described as creating new markets or reshaping existing ones. For examples, low-end disruptive changes are defined as those changes that exceed the needs of the consumer, which means they may not benefit faculty or students.

A question colleges and universities often find themselves addressing is whether they need to and should change in response to external forces such as technological change. Marshall (2010) asked whether universities are capable of change. He argued that leaders in higher

education must distinguish the "products of change, and the visible uses of technology, from the processes that result in their use" (p. 24). Strong leadership requires an awareness and appreciation of the organizational culture in order to create and support new ideas. Marshall (2010) cautioned that even with strong leadership, change can be challenging for colleges and universities. Change can be driven from a top-down approach, bottom-up approach, or a combination of both. The bottom-up approach generally takes place at the faculty and staff levels when early adopters of emerging technologies drive initiatives. For institutions of higher education, this type of change requires strong leadership along with a culture that is supportive of change (Glick, 2014; James, Ferrell, Kelly, Walker, & Ryan, 2006; Seaman, 2009). Findings from Seaman's (2009) survey of faculty involved in online learning, found that faculty represent a "critical constituency in building quality online learning programs" (p. 3). His conclusions further noted that faculty believe online instruction has become a faculty-wide issue. According to research conducted by Jones and O'Shea (2004), when seeking to improve e-learning practices, collaborative engagement can be effective and a departure from the traditional top-down style of authoritative institutional leadership.

The research in e-learning indicates that the online environment is similar to the traditional environment in many ways while showing important differences such as the changing roles of students and faculty and the importance of strategic planning (McClellan, 2016; Salmon, 2005). To be successful in the development and delivery of online instruction, faculty must be trained in research-based methods and pedagogy for online instruction (Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012). According to Crawford-Ferre and Wiest (2012), successful online instruction is divided into three categories: (1) course design, (2) interaction among course participants, and (3)

instructor preparation and support. For many institutions, addressing these categories is key to the success, or failure, of online courses and programs.

Organization and Management of e-Learning

Early stages of e-learning in higher education focused on innovation and technology application (Hatzipanagos & Russell, 2014; Jameson, 2013; Salmon, 2005; Tillman, 2009). As e-learning becomes a typical activity in higher education, the focus has shifted from technology innovation to achieving stability and reliability (Legon & Garrett, 2017). This begins with campus leadership and the management of e-learning-related activities and responsibilities. Institutions are moving towards the establishment of a "single institutional officer" (Legon & Garrett, 2017, p. 5) to manage and coordinate e-learning initiatives. The purpose of this type of permanent administrative position is to unify the functions, responsibilities, and strategic direction of e-learning. Legon and Garrett (2017) refer to this individual as the "chief online education officer" or "chief online officer" (p. 8).

The management of e-learning encompasses areas such as distribution of revenue, course development, faculty compensation, and ownership. How institutions decide to structure the management of e-learning can impact the sustainability and effectiveness of their efforts – centralized or decentralized. When surveyed, COEOs at public institutions favored distributed management and budgeting through the academic units. Whereas, more private institutions indicated management and budgeting through a central unit, Legon and Garrett (2017) suggested a hybrid model may be most effective – "control of curriculum distributed among the academic units, coupled with centralized management of infrastructure, marketing, and pricing" (p. 17). A common theme from their research was that online learning involves the coordination of administrative functions including marketing, budgeting, recruiting, advising, and meeting

regulations and accreditation requirements, while academic departments manage instruction, program development, and faculty.

Technology leadership at colleges and universities is usually the role of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). The CIO role dates back to the early 1980s, when Synott and Gruber (1981) coined the term and defined it as "the senior executive responsible for establishing corporate information policy, standards, and management control over all corporate information resources" (p. 66). The CIO position was initially designed to be:

- A member of the senior administrative team

- A manager of the technology and information resources

- The individual responsible for IT planning

- The individual responsible for IT policy development, and

- A participant in the overall institutional strategic planning process

Today, the CIO role has evolved and is undergoing a significant shift brought about by globalization, cloud computing, data analytics, and technology (Levinson, 2011). DeSanto (2012) notes the "consumerization of information technology" (p. 1) is a result of the extensive presence of smart phones, laptops, and tablets on college campuses. These technologies are driving the changes in the role of the CIO in higher education. A 2011 survey conducted by Marks and Rezgui (year) on the key qualifications universities seek when hiring CIOs, found that colleges and universities seek individuals with excellent leadership, management, interpersonal, communication, organizational, and collaborative skills. Other requirements include knowledge of current and emerging information technologies and a broad knowledge of networking and security.

Omitted from the list of desired qualifications is the pedagogical knowledge to apply methodologies and technologies in the teaching and learning environment. To fill this void, many institutions are creating positions such as a Chief Online Education Officer. According to Legon and Garrett (2017), as institutions seek stability in e-learning, the COEO would serve at the center of institutional planning and decision-making related to e-learning course and program operations. Research conducted by Fredricksen (2017) identified 820 individuals, out of 1,100 institutions, holding a position similar to a COEO. The leaders surveyed by Fredricksen identified their key strategic goals as increasing enrollment (82%) and driving instructional innovation (74%). He suggested that with so many institutions realizing the importance of technology as part of their future, it is important to understand the leaders who are guiding these critical efforts for campuses. His research found that 29% of respondents' positions were created more than a decade ago, with the majority established within the last 6 years as digital technologies became more prevalent. About half of the survey's respondents reported to the Provost and a quarter to another senior academic leader, such as a dean.

Building off Fredricksen's (year) work, Legon and Garrett (2017) further defined the COEO's role in influencing present and future policy. They surveyed over 100 colleges and universities, including public two-year, public four-year, private, nonprofit four-year institutions, as well as various institutions by size and scope of online learning operations. Figure 3 illustrates the role and functions of the COEO.

E-learning has changed the way teachers teach, learners learn, innovation is promoted and sustainable change in traditional institutions is achieved across disciplines (Salmon, 2005). Today, e-learning is commonplace in higher education and appealing to students. This is evidenced in the continued growth in the number of students enrolled in online courses as

Figure 3. The chief online education officer's role (Legon & Garrett, 2017).

traditional enrollment is declining. According to *the Changing Landscape of Online Education: A Deeper Dive*, fully online students made up 13% of U.S. undergraduates in fall 2016 and 28% of graduate students (Legon & Garrett, 2018). As institutions adapt to e-learning becoming mainstream in higher education, there is a shift to focus on the sustainability of e-learning. Institutions are choosing where to be innovative and where to increase the development of e-learning based on a more complex view of the potential of e-learning for meeting the university's mission and objectives as well as playing to its distinguishing institutional strengths (Richards et al., 2004). According to the research conducted by Legon and Garrett (2017), successful online operations have discovered a workable balance between stability and innovation through "centralized or decentralized control of such critical elements as curriculum and course development, online support services, and budgeting" (p. 10).

e-Learning Benchmarks in Higher Education

Many colleges and universities continue to expand the operation and development of e-learning in an effort to cope with competition and rapid changes in higher education (Sae-Khow, 2014). The recent rankings of online and distance education programs, as well as quality assurance in e-learning are driving institutions to compete with one another on a local, national and international level. Robere (2000) suggested an advantage to this type of competition is quality improvement in institutional reputation, research achievement, motivation of students, service users, concerned personnel, and public recognition. The comparison of e-learning competency is a continual and systematic development process and can be effective when the institutions have identified benchmarks (Sae-Khow, 2014).

The research conducted by Sae-Khow (2014) investigated concepts, competency comparison, e-learning operational process, quality e-learning assurance, and e-learning

benchmarking models. Sae-Khow described the comparison of e-learning competency as "an exploration of operational outcomes of a successful e-learning agency of e-learning leaders" (p. 35). The e-learning benchmarking model proposed by Sae-Khow supports the development and improvement of e-learning operation in higher education, while assisting institutions with identifying strengths and weaknesses in strategic planning for operation, quality assurance, scope of success, increased efficiency in managerial administration as well as service improvement (Choy, 2007; Sae-Khow, 2014; Smith, 2011).

Based on the study conducted by Sae-Khow (2014), participants identified seven e-learning benchmarks as "very highly appropriate" or "highly appropriate" (p. 37). The seven benchmarks are: (1) institution and organization; (2) curricular program and instructional design; (3) resources, technology, and information technology; (4) teaching/learning process; (5) learner; (6) faculty and supporting personnel; and (7) measurement and evaluation. The results of this study are important for my study as the sub-indicators from Sae-Khow's study showed there is strong relationship between leadership and the sustainability of an e-learning program. In addition, Sae-Khow's study showed the importance of faculty leadership in the development and sustainability of e-learning in higher education. For example, the sub-indicators under the benchmark of institute and organization point out the importance of institutions having a clear strategic vision, policies, and operational planning around e-learning. Leadership, collaboration, structure of organization management, institutional support, and the decision making of administrators are also listed as very highly appropriate for the success of e-learning in higher education. Furthermore, Sae-Khow recommended institutions have clearly defined roles for faculty involvement in e-learning as a benchmark for e-learning development.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities and e-Learning

HBCUs have a long history of providing quality educational experiences to underrepresented minority students. Accounting for only 2% of the nation's colleges and universities, HBCUs award a significant number of degrees to African American students at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level across all academic disciplines (Flowers, White, Raynor, & Bhattacharya, 2012). Prior to the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, education for African Americans was almost non-existent, especially in the South with laws such as those passed in North Carolina that prohibited teaching enslaved persons to read and write (NCpedia, Retrieved from https://www.ncpedia.org/education/hbcu). A number of HBCUs were founded with the specific purpose of educating African Americans in the era immediately following the Civil War and other institutions were established when segregation limited equal access to education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2015 there were 102 HBCUs located in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of the 102 HBCUs, 51 are public and 51 are private, non-profit institutions.

Today, many HBCUs consistently offer e-learning courses and programs. According to Beasley (2010), the number of HBCUs offering distance learning has been consistent, yet modest. Ingeno (2013) suggests the low number of HBCUs offering online programs may be due to the fact that a large number of HBCUS are private and serve a more traditional-aged residential student. The current literature established the significance of the problem by discussing HBCU challenges for financial instability, faculty, and technology infrastructure (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Foster, 2003; McClellan, 2016; Owens, Shelton, Bloom, & Cavil, 2012; Smith, 2011). A closer examination of HBCUs showed they were "addressing the needs of students by introducing online programs at a modest pace" (McClellan, 2016). Evans-Bell (2015)

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argued the slow pace of introducing online degree programs may be strategic on the part of HBCUs to ensure student success.

Many HBCU presidents and chancellors have acknowledged that the development and sustainability of e-learning programs is critical for institutional longevity and competitiveness (HBCU-Levers, 2012; Seaman, 2009). Like other institutions, HBCUs are facing challenges when it comes to declining enrollments, decreased funding, increased demand for online courses and degree programs, regulations and accreditation requirements, and increased pressure from various stakeholders (Smith, 2011). Responding to the many challenges of the changing landscape of higher education requires human and fiscal resources that can create obstacles for many institutions (HBCU-Levers, 2012; Thor, 2013).

The White House Initiative on HBCUs created by President Jimmy Carter in 1980 (Allen, 2013) has been helpful in bringing financial relief over the years. However, the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009 caused a decline in financial support for classroom buildings, faculty, and technology infrastructure. Because students today are much like consumers and tend to shop around for the best institution or institutions that meet their needs (Hawkins, 2013), HBCUs are competing with Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) for the same pool of students. In order to remain competitive, HBCUs will need to provide access to higher education in various formats, specifically e-learning. According to McClellan (2016), demanding expectations are being placed on senior level administrators at HBCUs due to the rapid rate of change in higher education. These administrators are having to be creative and strategic in their decision-making practices to remain competitive and relative.

e-Leadership in Higher Education

E-leadership is an emerging area in higher education (Jameson, 2013). There is limited research on educational technology and distance education leadership in higher education, and specifically the skills and abilities required for effective leaders in this area. "There is a need for clearly articulated goals for change supported by, rather than led or in response to technology, or coerced by external drivers" (Marshall, 2010, p. 31). Common themes, around e-leadership for higher education, identified in the review of existing literature included: (1) transformational and situational leadership - the ability to apply relevant theories to practice; (2) serve as a liaison between multiple internal and external constituencies (Jameson, 2013; Nworie, 2012); and (3) opportunities for on-going professional development.

Other key characteristics for effective strategic and operational e-leadership across all levels in higher education are also identified in much of the literature around e-leadership and technology leadership. For example, Kearsley and Lynch (1994) offered a framework for technology leadership, stating this type of leadership requires new knowledge and skills. They went on to observe that failed attempts to introduce new technologies usually contributed to the inability of institutions to adjust and innovate with the technology. Strategic planning provides the direction for the successful integration of e-learning in the existing institutional environment (Salmon, 2005). Just as there are benefits from good technology leadership, there are also problems associated with poor technology leadership. The lack of knowledge of how to use technology is common at all levels of education (Kearsley & Lynch, 1994).

"A key element to institutional change is strong leadership" (Garrison & Vaughan, 2013, p. 24). The literature reviewed revealed there is limited research on e-leadership in the context of higher education, but the research conducted by Jill Jameson (2013) provided an in-depth look at

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this emerging area. She noted e-leadership research in education, by contrast to leadership in general, has barely emerged into public recognition as a research concept within the recognizable surface of scholarly endeavor. The framework developed by Jameson (2013) categorized leadership in terms of three main areas: purposes, people and structures, and social systems.

In adapting and extending the framework for e-leadership in higher education, Jameson (2013) included the following: sense-making in complex adaptive systems, virtual team leadership, collegiality, trust, academic freedom, diversity and equal opportunities, gender issues, finance, speed of response, change management, research and enterprise management, presence, emotional intelligence, empowering others, innovation, risk-taking, distributed leadership, quality management, monitoring, human resources, and training . The literature also revealed a list of common problems associated with poor leadership:

- lack of knowledge about how to use technology,

- lack of adequate time or funds to properly implement technology,

- use of technology for its own sake rather than genuine need,

- unequal access creating "have" and "have-not" groups,

- poorly designed facilities resulting in limited access,

- poor results leading to negative attitudes about technology, and

- overt resistance on the part of potential users. (Kearsley & Lynch, 1994, p. 11)

This research further supports the recommendation of Legon and Garrett (2017) for colleges and universities to create the COEO to support and guide the institution's e-learning initiatives.

To fully support the emerging theory of e-leadership in higher education, leadership development must be at the forefront of all discussions related to technology leadership, especially in the area of e-learning. Leadership can come in many styles and there is no one best

method, however, the leadership theories described by Northouse (2012) support this relatively new theory of e-leadership in higher education. The theories and practice of situational leadership, transformational leadership, and strategic leadership are just a few that interconnect within the context of e-leadership. The research of Barwick and Back (2007) supported the literature surrounding e-leadership, with an added emphasis on the apparent imbalance of technology integration and leadership. Their findings supported the notion there is more attention paid to how new technologies are used, but little attention on the leadership opportunities the new technologies can create.

Background on e-Leadership in Higher Education

"Leadership is as complex as the organizations, cultures, and societies in which it occurs" (Scarlett-Ferguson, 2011, p. 2,249). This also applies to higher education leadership, especially in the area of e-learning. Although there are a number of studies on leadership in higher education, few specifically focus on the skills needed to effectively develop leaders in the field e-learning. The concept of e-leadership has emerged as a leadership theory to support the evolution of educational technology in higher education. Prior research has identified traditional leadership theories such as transformational, situational, complexity, systems (Nwoire, 2012), and strategic (Scarlett-Ferguson, 2011) as those that can impact distance education and educational technology in higher education. However, Jameson (2013) suggested there is a need for more critical attention to research and development in e-leadership and the related fields of e-management and e-governance as they apply to educational technology in higher education. She proposed more selective, strategic e-leadership approaches to the adoption and use of educational technology are needed as this field continues to grow. Marshall (2010) stated that in the "absence of strong leadership, the introduction of educational technology in higher education will simply be used as

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a vehicle to enable changes that are already intended or which reinforce the current identity" (p. 22).

The general area of leadership has been and continues to be significant in terms of identifying the qualities, skills, traits, and training required for leaders to be successful in business and higher education. However, the rapid growth of new learning technologies and platforms available to higher education has introduced a new level of complexity to the role of the technology leader, which requires the ability to develop and articulate a vision of how technology could bring about change in higher education. Research, professional development, and training in higher education e-leadership skills are lagging far behind the technological growth. The skills associated with e-leadership are hardly deemed an important feature of higher education and, when identified, are usually delegated to lower levels of the leadership hierarchy (Jameson, 2013). Technology leaders must take into consideration campus, state, and federal policies and procedures to ensure the successfully implementation and utilization of educational technologies. According to Avolio et al (2000):

> E-leadership can occur at any hierarchical level in an organization and can involve one-to-one and one-to-many interactions within and across large units and organizations. It may be associated with one individual or shared by several individuals as it changes over time.

What can be concluded from much of the literature review is more attention is needed on the development of e-leadership in the context of higher education. Jameson (2013) built on selected prior literature to propose an updated framework of principles for effective e-leadership in educational technology, with specific reference to higher education. Additional findings from Jameson's research suggested academic leaders must become personally committed to e-

leadership as a strategic, meaning-making function within their institution. She further noted "there is a potential threat to the existence of higher education institutions if rapid e-leadership adaption to innovations is not forthcoming" (Jameson, 2013, p. 912).

Furthermore, Jameson's (2013) e-leadership framework for educational technology in higher education proposes the field of e-leadership is a key element in educational technology research and suggests the need for more critical and strategic e-leadership approaches to the adoption and use of educational technology. The framework, developed from Jameson's 30 years of experience, professional practice, scholarship, and research into educational technologies and leadership in education, is the result of her realization that there is a gap in the existing literature on the application of e-leadership to educational technology in higher education. Her framework provides a "new framework of e-leadership skills and knowledge required in the application of e-leadership to educational technology in higher education" (Jameson, 2013, p. 890).

Jameson's (2013) approach to the e-leadership of educational technology was based on how the complex interaction between academic leadership and information technology is influencing organizational behaviors in higher education. She noted these developments were taking place "serendipitously" (Jameson, 2013, p. 911) and were often delegated to lower level or specialist position levels. However, research literature has suggested a strong need for strategic leadership from senior and middle management, as well as from the faculty-level (Chang, Chin, & Hus, 2008; Garrison & Vaughan, 2013; Gomes, 2011; Jameson, 2013; Mohammad, 2009; Yee, 2000). The three main e-leadership attributes identified by Jameson can be used to aid institutions in effective strategic and operational leadership for e-learning initiatives – Purposes, People, and Structures and Social Systems (see Figure 4).
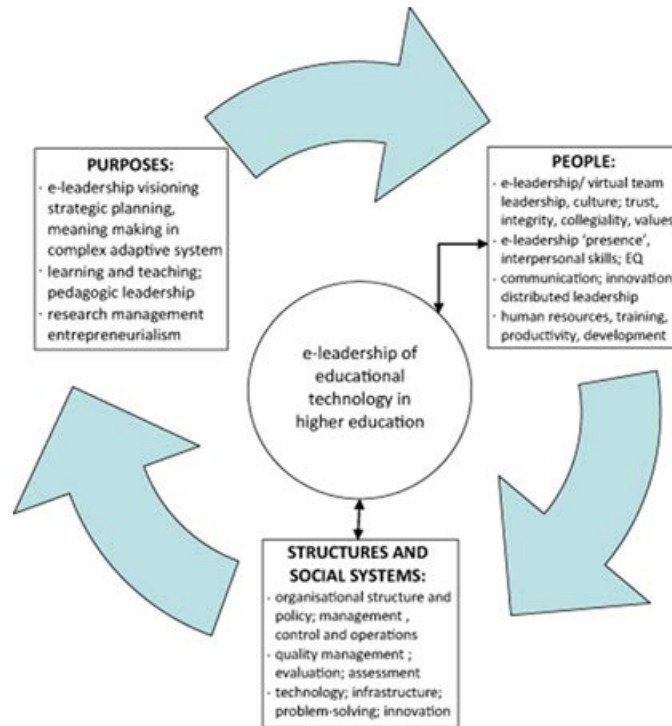
Figure 4. E-Leadership Framework for educational technology in higher education (Jameson, 2013).

Students and e-Learning

Student demographics are quickly changing at most institutions of higher education. *The College of 2020: Students* report noted that future students who are now in elementary school are going to expect more connectivity and creativity from colleges and universities. The report went on to state that students increasingly expect access to classes from cellular phones and other mobile devices. In addition, students currently expect online access to classroom discussions, lectures, office hours with a professor or advisor, study groups, and assignments. Colleges must be ready to offer all of these options. The challenge will be to provide them simultaneously and be flexible enough to change the methods as the market changes (Van Der Werf & Sahateir, 2009). One of the challenges for institutions is ensuring the technology infrastructure is in place to support these initiatives, as well as preparing faculty to provide access to content and information.

Van Der Werf and Sahatier (2009) reported that by 2020, almost a third of survey respondents agreed students will be taking up to 60% of their courses entirely online. Research showed most students report they do not expect technology to replace face-to-face instruction, but they do expect instructors to help them know how best to use technology for learning (Bates & Sangra, 2011; Ma & Runyun, 2004). According to Legon and Garrett (2019), enrollment in online grew by more than 60% between 2012 and 2017. It is important to note that students use of the internet for social and personal purposes does not necessarily prepare them adequately for academic applications of the internet, such as searching for reliable sources of information (Bates & Sangra, 2011). Given this, faculty need to embed technology skills within the subject matter to prepare students to be successful upon entering the workforce (Glick, 2014).

e-Learning in the Southeastern University System

      The Southeastern University System is a multi-campus university system composed of 16 public institutions. Online programs are offered at each institution that enable students to take individual classes, obtain certification, or complete a bachelors or master's degree. In 2012, the system president commissioned a study on e-learning as a strategic asset for the system. The report (cite) noted that with an emphasis on leadership at both the system and institutions levels, and a coordinated effort between the institutions, the system could move to the national forefront of e-learning. The report further suggested the system make a concerted effort to address the development and support of e-learning system-wide.

      Over the past five years, the system has implemented a number of the suggestions outlined in the 2012 report. One key outcome of the report was the enhancement of the online portal for students and institutions which provides system-wide access to centralized services to increase support to each of the campuses, as well as reduce redundancy. Some of the services available to institutions include: centralized marketing for e-learning initiatives, selected student services, faculty training, data collection, and access to centrally located resources for faculty, staff, and students in the system.

      According to the 2017 Distance Education State Almanac (cite), the state has 151 degree-granting higher education institutions, which represent 3.1% of all such institutions in the United States. Among the total student body, 35.9% take at least one course at a distance, which is higher than the national average rate of 29.7% (Seaman & Seaman, 2017). Seaman and Seaman (2017) noted 176,527 students were enrolled in some form of distance education course at one of the public institutions in the state. The report challenged leaders at the system level to begin the process of altering the "existing culture of colleges and universities" (Seaman & Seaman, 2017,

p. 15) to provide an "awareness and appreciation for e-learning" (p. 15). The report further noted e-learning could assist institutions in the system with responding to current and future workforce needs and maximize efficiencies through the development of new learning tools and greater collaboration.

The e-Learning Maturing Model (eMM)

The e-Learning Maturity Model (eMM) is a quality improvement framework designed to measure the capability of institutions to engage in and sustain technology-supported teaching and learning. The model assists administrators and academic technology leaders to undertake systematic improvements to actively support organizational change activities related to e-learning (Marshall, 2010) by examining five major processes within the organization – delivery, planning, definition, management, and optimization. Self-reflection and organizational improvements are the foundation of the model and serve as a mechanism for technology leaders to assess the ability of their organization to "ensure that e-learning design, development, and deployment is meeting the needs of students, staff, and the organization itself" (Marshall, 2010, p. 183). The eMM provides organizations with a tool that has the flexibility to assess outcomes, pedagogies, technologies, and other significant characteristics of the teaching and learning environment (Marshall, 2010).

The five dimensions identified in the eMM imply institutional success cannot be achieved at higher levels without being fully accomplished at the lower levels. The eMM is based on the concepts of the Capability Maturity Model (CMM, Paulk, Curtis, Chrissis, & Weber, 1993) and the Software Process Improvement and Capability Determination model (SPICE, El Emam, Drouin, & Melo, 1998). The foundation of the eMM is that the "ability of an institution to be effective in any particular area of work is dependent on their capability to engage in high quality

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processes that are reproducible and able to be extended and sustained as demand grows"

(Marshall, 2010 p. 147). The eMM is not designed to rank institutions, rather the model

recognizes that all institutions have strengths and weaknesses that can be improved upon.

Marshall (2010) noted that the focus on collecting and sharing effective practice allows the eMM

to evolve as the technology and pedagogy change, a critical factor e-learning growth and

application across disciplines.

Chapter Summary

As student enrollment in online courses and programs continues to grow, institutions will

experience changes in the way teachers teach, learners learn, and innovation is promoted and

sustained (Salmon, 2005). Colleges and universities are faced with the challenges and

opportunities with implementing or enhancing e-learning courses and programs in an effort to

remain competitive and relevant in today's landscape of higher education (Hatzipanagos &

Russell, 2014). The decision to offer e-learning should be strategic and fully woven into the

institutions processes; it requires collaborative leadership from all levels of the institution. As

noted by Hatzipanagos and Russell (2014), institutional progress for e-learning requires

leadership, vision, and the connection of strategies that support the predominant and emerging

priorities of the institution.

Proactive efforts between faculty and university leaders to develop processes that

promote and sustain e-learning development and recognition are needed to create new cultures to

support quality e-learning leadership, through responsive leadership models and collaborative

leadership development (Bryman, 2007, Bryman & Lilley, 2009; Jones et al., 2012; Parrish,

2013; Scott, Coates, & Anderson, 2008). The research conducted by Hofmeyer et al. (2015)

noted that innovative higher education institutions value all forms of scholarship and suggested

non-formal leadership roles for faculty should be better promoted and rewarded in higher

education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain insight into how the relationship between administrative leadership and faculty involvement affects the development and sustainability of e-learning programs at public HBCUs. This research is important as it addresses an area that is overlooked in the literature - faculty members as decision makers in the implementation and sustainability of e-learning in higher education (Mitchell, 2013). By investigating the relationship between administrative leadership and faculty involvement at all stages of the process, this study seeks to understand how this relationship shapes e-learning at three HBCUs in a multi-campus university system in the southeastern United States. I am particularly interested in understanding the experiences of the faculty and decision makers in the development of e-learning programs, as well as what role organizational culture and structure play in this process.

The following research questions were addressed during this study:

1. How does the organizational structure and operations impact the development and sustainability of e-learning at each of the three HBCUs?

2. What role do faculty play in the development of e-learning?

3. What internal and external factors motivate HBCUs to embark on the development of an e-learning program?

Answers to these questions could provide information and guidance for administrators that could lead to a deeper understanding of administrative and faculty roles and responsibilities, organizational structure, and infrastructure that should be in place prior to implementing an e-learning program. To gain a more in-depth understanding of how academic leadership and faculty impact e-learning, a qualitative form of inquiry was used for this study.

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to develop a better understanding of an experience or a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research studies utilize a variety of research techniques, including interviews, field observation, cultural text, and document analysis (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), qualitative research is used to gather data and generate useful findings by capturing and communicating the stories of the participants. He further noted that understanding the program's and participants' stories is useful in illuminating processes and outcomes. Qualitative research is not a quick visit to the research site or passing conversation with a participant, rather the researcher spends a considerable amount of time collecting and analyzing data in an effort to "provide a much more detailed rendering of events than even the most clearly prejudiced mind might have imagined prior to study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 34). Therefore, to learn how relationships between leadership and faculty impact e-learning at historically Black institutions of higher education, a collective case study approach was used for this study.

Case Study Approach

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon at depth and within real-life context (Yin, 2009). In a collective case study (also referred to as a multiple case study), the researcher explores a variety of cases (Creswell, 2014). This approach requires the researcher to identify an issue or concern to examine with each case individually and identify themes and interpretations. The themes and interpretations ultimately provide assertions for the collective case (Creswell, 2014).

A collective case study approach was chosen for this study for reasons that parallel those described by Merriam (1988) regarding qualitative research. Merriam stated "qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole" (p. 6), and this study is

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concerned with learning how the relationship between leadership and faculty is reflected in the development and sustainability of e-learning programs at three public HBCUs. Merriam noted, qualitative research is concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products. She characterized qualitative research as an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help to explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible, and in which the focus of the study is on interpretation and meaning.

Qualitative case study research has a long history across various disciplines and begins with a specified entity such as an individual, small group, or organization (Creswell, 2014). Yin (2009) suggested a less concrete entity such as a decision process, relationship, or specific project can be examined using the qualitative case study method. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005), educational research generates knowledge that describes, predicts, explains, and improves processes and practices related to education. Further, Gall et al. stated case studies are used by researchers for one of three purposes: (1) to generate detailed descriptions of a phenomenon, (2) to develop possible explanations of a phenomenon, or (3) to evaluate the phenomenon. Adams, Jones, Lefmann, and Sheppard (2014) suggested the collective case study methodology allows the researcher to focus on a specific issue of interest across sites. This study used the collective case study approach to examine and illustrate different perspectives on how the relationship between academic leadership and faculty involvement affects the development and implementation of e-learning initiatives at three public HBCUs in the Southeastern University System.

Study Context

This collective case study was conducted on the campus of (1) Amber University, located in the southeast part of the state; (2) Blanch University, located in the east-central part of the

state; and (3) Copper University, located in the northwest part of the state (the names of all three universities are pseudonyms). Each institution is a constituent member of the Southeastern University System and receives funding to offer distance education degree-credit instruction to expand access to higher education opportunities. The three institutions included in this study offered more than 10% of their total credit hours during the 2013-2014 academic year online – Amber University – 20.7%; Blanch University – 14.9%; and Copper University – 14.1%. Each of the three universities included in this study offers fully online undergraduate, graduate, or certificate programs and produces more than 10% of their total student credit hours through online enrollments. The number of online degree programs at each of the institutions selected for this study is provided in Table 1.

Gaining Access

Access to the research site and individuals is a critical component of qualitative research. Creswell (2014) describes gaining access as obtaining approval from the university institutional review board and individuals at the research sites. Upon approval of my dissertation proposal, I sought permission from each research site to conduct my study with human subjects. An application for approval to conduct research involving human subjects was first submitted to East Carolina University, and then to the Institutional Review Boards at the three research sites.

Amber University required researchers using human subjects to complete and submit a Human Rights in Research Committee Application and required two weeks for the review. Blanch University required the completion of CITI training or the National Institutes of Health human subjects training as part of the IRB application process. The IRB committee at Blanch University reviewed applications on a monthly basis. In order for an application to be reviewed

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Table 1

Number of Online Degree Program Offerings

Institution	Bachelor Degree Programs	Master Degree Programs	Online Certificate Programs	Total
Amber University	8	2	0	10
Blanch Universit	6	10	7	23
Copper University	5	2	1	8

during the month in which it is submitted, the completed application had to be in the IRB office by the fifth of the month. Applications received after the fifth were reviewed the following month. As for Copper University, completed applications were submitted to the Compliance Officer for a pre-review. Upon completion of the pre-review and approval, the application was sent to the IRB committee for review. As with the other two institutions, CITI training was also required.

The participants identified were contacted by phone and email to solicit their participation in the study. I contacted the directors of e-learning, distance education or online education at each institution to identify stakeholders to participate in the study. With consideration of my role at Blanch University, I utilized additional measures to gain access to minimize the likelihood of my position influencing the participants and generated data.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Site and Sample Selection</h2>

A case study should not be used to find out how often something occurs in a specified setting, but rather what occurred, why it occurred, and what relationship exists among the events studied (Balbach, 1999). The selection of institutions and participants for this collective case study followed the purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell, 2014) since the institutions and individuals selected could provide an understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The three institutions selected for this study are part of a multi-campus university system in the southeast region of the United States. Participants for this study were selected based on their ability to generate in-depth information on the organizational structure of their institutions and their experience with developing, implementing, or managing e-learning programs at their institution.

By exploring the perceptions of campus administrators and faculty, this study sought to provide a better understanding of how a broad range of involvement contributes to the sustainability of e-learning programs at an HBCU. In collective case studies, access to a group of individuals, the organizational information, processes and other information related to the study is a central consideration. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling involves the selection of "information-rich cases" (p. 273) which provide in-depth understanding rather than "empirical generalizations" (p. 273).

Although participants were selected based on their position and involvement with e-learning, faculty participation was key to this study. A range of faculty participants was identified, from early adopters of e-learning to faculty who are not actively involved in developing or teaching online. I used the snowball technique to identify other individuals who could provide a deeper understanding of the research problem. This sampling method involved using primary my data sources to generate additional information-rich subjects (Dudovskiy, 2016). I first contacted senior academic officials, faculty currently teaching online, and e-learning coordinators or directors at each research site and then asked them for recommendations of other individuals who could provide rich descriptions of e-learning activities at that specific site.

The criteria for site selection included the following: (1) designation as a historically Black institution, (2) constituent member of the Southeastern University System; (3) online degree program offerings at the undergraduate and graduate level; (4) total student enrollment between 5,100 and 8,200; and (5) more than 10% of total student credit hours from online enrollments. While there are five HBCUs in the Southeastern University System, only three institutions were selected for this study. Amber University, founded in 1867, is a historically

black public regional university and a constituent institution of the Southeastern University System. As of fall 2017, Amber University offers a total of nine online degree programs and is an accredited university offering baccalaureate and graduate programs to a diverse student population. Blanch University, founded in 1910, is also an accredited public historically black university offering programs at the baccalaureate, master's, professional and doctoral levels. As of fall 2017, Blanch University offers 13 online degree programs. Copper University, founded in 1892, is a constituent institution of the Southeastern University System and a historically black public research university. As of fall 2017, Copper University offers a total of seven online degree programs.

The largest HBCU in the Southeastern University System has an enrollment of 12,142 as of fall 2018 but was excluded from this study due to its student enrollment of more than 10,000 students and the limited number of online degree program offerings. The HBCU with the lowest student enrollment was also excluded from the study since its total enrollment is approximately 1,636 students, as of fall 2018, and the institution only offers one fully online undergraduate and no fully online graduate degree programs. This study engaged one to four individuals at each university who were involved with e-learning and various phases, to include chief academic administrators, faculty teaching online, faculty not teaching online, and e-learning administrators.

The literature suggests that many public colleges and universities consider online education as a critical long-term strategy but have not formally incorporated online into their strategic planning (Allen & Seaman, 2016). Further research suggests decisions for the deployment of e-learning initiatives at colleges and universities are made at the level of the Provost or chief academic officer (Glick, 2014; McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013). Additional

literature about online development at HBCUs suggests these institutions are less likely to provide adequate infrastructure and support for e-learning (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2014; McClellan, 2016; Moore, 2008; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003). In an attempt to achieve maximum variation in this study, a purposeful sampling strategy was employed, selecting subjects due to their relationship and position within the institution. According to Creswell (2014), the decision about who or what should be sampled can benefit from the ideas presented by Marshall and Rossman (2006) who identify events, settings, actors, and artifacts as examples of sampling strategies.

This collective case study included interviewees who were able to provide information and context about (1) the events at their institution that led to and support offering online instruction, (2) the institutional setting that supports development, faculty, and students, and (3) the appropriate personnel charged with providing support and leadership for e-learning initiatives. The participants identified were able to contribute historical information and perspectives on various issues related to the study. According to Creswell (2014), size is an equally important decision to the sampling strategy in the data collection process. He stated that "the intent of qualitative research is not to generalize information (except in some forms of case study research), but to elucidate the particular, the specific" (p. 157). The institutions selected for this study could provide specific information that may assist other institutions of comparable size in making informed decisions based on lessons learned from the generated data.

The two HBCUs that were not selected as part of this study, were excluded due to size differentiation and the number of online degree programs they offer, which may impact decisions around e-learning. Additionally, one of those institutions has a well-developed science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral

levels which may serve as the basis for the limited number of online degree program offerings.

As cited by Hollowell, Brooks, and Anderson (2017), Flowers (2011) noted there was a major

deficit in the number of STEM courses offered online compared to humanities courses.

Data Collection

According to Balbach (1999), interviews provide the researcher with an understanding of

what occurred and how those involved reacted. Yin (2009) stated case study evidence can come

from any sources. The data for this study were collected from interviews, field notes, and

physical artifacts. One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview

(Yin, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were the primary format for this study. A semi-

structured interview allows the researcher to ask closed and open-ended questions (Creswell,

2014). Interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting or in a web-based setting. Other forms

of data collection used included reviewing university documents and website content. The

interview protocol was divided into four categories – introductory questions, purposes, structures

and systems, and people. Creswell (2014) encouraged the use of a well-designed interview

protocol.

The interview protocol was designed to assist in the analysis of data using the conceptual

frameworks selected for this study, specifically Jameson's (2013) framework around e-

leadership for educational technology in higher education was overlapped with five process areas

identified in Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model. Utilizing this method, I generated

open-ended questions based on the dimensions proposed within the conceptual framework. The

open-ended questions allowed participants to provide as much information as they see necessary

to fully support their response. If further clarification was needed, I asked probing questions to

ensure I had a good understanding of the participant's experience. To ensure maximum

participation from the individuals identified to be interviewed, the interviews took place on the campus of Amber University, Blanch University, and Copper University or online. A quiet location conducive to audio recording and easily accessible for the participant was requested and secured at each site.

Additionally, I utilized the data collection method of document review. A review of university documents, such as organizational charts, job descriptions, and strategic plans provided a means to substantiate and enhance the data collected from other sources (Yin, 2009). These documents provided information on the institutions vision for e-learning, reporting structures, and duties and responsibilities of the participants. This information was cross-referenced with the information received from interviews, which provided a better understanding of the institutions capability to sustain and deliver e-learning based on the key process areas identified by Marshall (2010), learning, development, support, evaluation, and organization.

Prior to scheduling interviews, written approval to conduct the research from the IRB office at each site was obtained. Participants were solicited and extended an invitation to participate via email. Individuals who agreed to participate were required to read and sign an informed consent form. Participants were presented with possible dates, times, and locations for the interview proceedings. At each interview session, the informed consent form was reviewed with the participant to allow for additional questions or clarification. Next, the purpose of the research was reiterated to the participant and a reminder that the session would be recorded.

Upon completion of the interview, the responses were transcribed by a professional transcription company, Rev.com, and then compiled into a master document. All electronic interview transcripts were stored on the hard drive of a personal computer with password protection and on a personal external hard drive to prevent access from others and to protect

again damage or loss. When not in use, the personal computer and external hard drive were securely locked in a home office. Documents collected from participants were stored in a locked file cabinet at a home office when not in use. In order to preserve confidentiality, participant responses were coded using pseudonyms.

Data Analysis

The framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to apply a systematic approach to make sense out of the data. According to Basit (2003), coding is a significant step in the analysis process to organize and make sense of "textual data" (p. 143). Making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what participants have said and what the researcher has read and observed (Merriam, 2002). Examples of data analysis for this study include reading and reviewing interview transcripts and notes, writing memos, creating coding categories and applying these strategies to the data (Maxwell, 2012). The connection of data to a specific research question in this study was organized into the following categories: institutional planning and management, operational management of e-learning, creation and maintenance of e-learning resources, impact on pedagogical aspects of e-learning, and quality control of e-learning. These groups of questions were arranged for easier analysis of data through manual coding. Basit (2003) suggests the choice to use manual or electronic coding depends on the "size of the project, time available, and the inclination and expertise of the researcher" (p. 143).

During the data reduction phase, I sorted and condensed the data based on the research questions, interviews, demographic data collection instrument, and documents reviewed. The proposed framework of the e-Learning Maturity Model (Marshall, 2011) and the e-Learning Leadership framework by Jameson (2013) served as the guide for analysis and interpretation, which focused on five key processes to capture an institutions capability of sustaining e-learning

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– learning, development, support, evaluation, and organization. Data analysis and interpretation in a case study consists of providing a detailed description of the case and its setting (Creswell, 2014). The researcher identifies a collection of instances from the data in hopes of extracting "issue-relevant meanings" (Creswell, 2014, p. 199).

Data collected from in-person and phone interviews was transcribed at the conclusion of each interview. Upon completion of the transcription by Rev.com, I manually reviewed the transcripts to identify similarities and dissimilarities using multiple rounds of coding. Creswell (2014) describes coding as the "heart of qualitative data analysis" (p. 184). Detailed descriptions were done to describe what is seen in the data from the interviews. During the coding process, I aggregated the data into categories to develop a short list of categories that will be combined into five or six major themes. Data from the review of documents will also be analyzed and aligned to the identified categories and themes.

Due to the proposed volume of data that may be generated from interviews and document reviews, data organization and management will be the first step in the data analysis spiral - process (Creswell, 2014). For this study, theme development will be based on the key process categories of learning, development, support, evaluation, and organization as described in the in the e-Learning Maturity Model.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. To ensure credibility, I had prolonged engagements with the participants to gain an understanding of the organization and establish trust. I engaged participants through interviews and invite them to reflect on situations by describing, in detail, specific instances raised during the interview. To further ensure credibility,

I used multiple sources to obtain data; identify peers to review my interview protocol for clarity; and offered member checks by providing participants with a transcript of the interview. With member checking, "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314), the validity process shifts from the researcher to the participants in the study.

According to Merriam (2002), validity is the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. Likewise, to ensure transferability in my study, I used rich, thick descriptions of each case and the identified themes from analysis of the data. I demonstrated the dependability of my study by using multiple methods to collect data and by providing in-depth explanations of the methods used to collect and analyze data. Furthermore, triangulation of the data sources confirmed the consistency of the findings and reduce any bias. Peers were identified to provide external checks to safeguard the research process. Moreover, the peer reviewers helped clear any "emotions and feelings that may be clouding good judgment or preventing emergence of sensible next steps" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308).

Researcher's Role and Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2014) considers validation in qualitative research as an attempt to assess the accuracy of findings as described by the researcher and participants. According to Lincoln and Lynham (2011), establishing authenticity in qualitative research is done through balancing views, raising the level of awareness among participants, and advancing inquiry that leads to action by research participants. I worked with human subjects and provided thorough explanations of the research processes and findings to mitigate any bias. The participants in this study represent a group of individuals who provided in-depth information and insight into the structure, procedures, and policies at their institution. There were risks of personal disclosure, as well as the need to protect the participants' identities. Therefore, I used pseudonyms for

participant names. I clearly communicated to the participants their right to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of retaliation of any kind. I provided an explanation of my role as the researcher and why this study is of particular interest to me. Furthermore, I explained how the findings would be used and informed participants that they would have an opportunity to perform member checks to ensure accuracy, by reviewing my interpretation of the data collected.

Statement of Positionality

As the director of a unit responsible for the administration and oversight of e-learning at Blanch University, I am aware that my knowledge and experience could impact the way in which I extract and themes and concepts from the data collected. My interest in this topic stems from my experience working in the field of distance education as an administrator at two HBCUs. Creswell and Miller (2000) note the importance of the researcher acknowledging beliefs and biases early in the research process. They further state the researcher should "bracket or suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds ... individuals reflect on the social, cultural, and historical forces that shape their interpretation" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). As distance education becomes more of a mainstream activity and established institutional function at many U.S. institutions of higher education (Legon & Garrett, 2017), my interest in the relationship between academic leadership and faculty in the administration of e-learning has increased. Specifically, I am interested in the impact of centralized and decentralized e-learning activities on the institutions overall ability to offer e-learning.

Furthermore, I am interested in understanding if there are positive influences on the success of e-learning programs when academic leadership and faculty work in concert to develop and administer e-learning initiatives. Although my experiences could warrant concerns with regard to the validity of the findings, I acknowledge that these same experiences could provide a

deeper understanding of the findings due to my exposure to the cases being investigated. In an effort to preserve the reliability of the data, I incorporated measures such as thick description and data collection from multiple sources.

Limitations of the Study

Although steps will be taken to ensure the data collected reveals accurate and consistent findings, I acknowledge possible limitations to the study. However, these limitations will not discredit the findings from the study, but are being identified to show I am aware of the possibility. The first limitation of the study is the small number of HBCUs selected for the study. I purposely chose the three public HBCUs for this study due to their extensive involvement in e-learning, similar student body population, and similar funding structure for e-learning. Additionally, these three institutions have a similar organizational structure for the administration and delivery of e-learning. Even though there is literature regarding the involvement of HBCUs in distance education, literature regarding the impact of faculty involvement is absent. Therefore, I was interested in understanding if and how the relationship between academic administrators and faculty impacted the success of e-learning at these institutions. As a result, the findings of this study may be generalizable to other HBCUs with similar characteristics.

Another possible limitation to this study could be time constraints of the participants. I have identified individuals who can provide details and background information on the organizational structure of the institution, as well as e-learning development and administration. Participants range from chancellors and Provosts to faculty and instructional designers. The hope is that participants in the study will fully answer all questions to maintain the integrity of the

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study. However, the interviewees may opt not to share information to questions that may be deemed sensitive in nature.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study is to investigate the involvement of academic leadership and faculty in the development and sustainability of e-learning programs at HBCUs. I achieved this by utilizing a qualitative collective case study approach. Furthermore, this study was framed using Marshall's (2011) E-Learning Maturity Model, which states there are five key processes to capture an institutions capability of sustaining e-learning – learning, development, support, evaluation, and organization. Over the years, researchers have studied why HBCUs are slow to enter the field of distance and online education (McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013; Moore, 2008; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003; Snipes et al., 2006), this study was designed to show active and intentional involvement in e-learning at HBCUs in the Southeastern University System while examining how the relationship between academic leadership and faculty impact e-learning at HBCUs.

This chapter provides detailed information on the research design, the role of the researcher, methods of data collection, and the process for analyzing data. Additionally, I described the steps to ensure trustworthiness of the study and the role of the researchers. Finally, I address any subjectivity as the researcher and any limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Utilizing the e-Learning Maturity Model develop by Marshall (2011), this study investigates the capability of HBCUs to sustain e-learning by exploring the key processes the institution uses to develop and support e-learning. Furthermore, the study seeks to expand our understanding of the relationship between academic leadership and faculty involvement in e-learning programs at public HBCUs in the southeast region as it relates to the development and sustainability of fully online programs. The study centered on the perceptions of nine participants across three public HBCUs. All of the participants were full-time faculty or administrators involved in e-learning.

The purpose of Chapter Four is to present the results of the interviews conducted with faculty and administrators. In addition, this chapter reviews participant demographic data, the data collection and analysis procedures, and a summary of the study findings. Three research questions guided this study:

1. How does the organizational structure and operations impact the development and sustainability of e-learning at each of the HBCUs?
2. What role do faculty play in the development of e-learning?
3. What internal and external factors motivate HBCUs to embark on the development of an e-learning program?

Study Sites

For the purpose of this study, three Historically Black Universities in the southeast region of the United States were selected as the research sites. The three institutions hold the Carnegie classification of Master's university and offer baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees.

According to the institution's 2018 fact book, Amber University is a public four-year accredited institution. Founded in 1867, the university is the second oldest state supported school in the southeast system. The enrollment as of fall 2018 was 6,318 students, with 24% of undergraduates and 57% of graduate students enrolled only in distance education courses. The institution's website notes Amber University has received national rankings in several of its online degree programs. The institution has a designated office to provide training and support for faculty teaching e-learning courses. Currently, there are ten degree-completion programs offered online.

Blanch University is also a public four-year institution. Founded in 1910, enrollment as of fall 2018 was 8,207, with 9.5 % of undergraduates and 12.5% of graduate students enrolled only in distance education courses. The university offers more than 100 undergraduate degree programs and 40 graduate degrees. Blanch University has received national recognition and rankings for its e-learning degree programs in Criminal Justice and Library Science. The institution offers 18 fully online degree programs. There is a unit dedicated to the support and oversight of the e-learning, to include faculty training and resources.

Copper University is the third research site selected and is a public four-year institution. Founded in 1892, the university has received recognition as the number one public HBCU (Money Magazine, 2019) and for being in the top 50 in the nation for producing Black college graduates (Minter, 2018). Another point of pride for the university is being selected as the Best Bang for the Buck in the Southeast (Kelchen, 2019). Of the 5,121 students enrolled at Copper University, 13% of the undergraduates and 23% of graduate students were enrolled only in distance education courses.

During the fall semester of 2018 and the spring semester of 2019, during which time the data for this study were collected, each of the three institutions selected for this study offered fully online undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Amber University offered 10 undergraduate degrees and two graduate degree programs fully online. Blanch University offered six undergraduate degrees and ten graduate degree programs fully online. Lastly, Copper University offered four undergraduate degrees, two master's level degrees, one doctoral degree, and one post-master's certificate.

Data Collection Process

Data collection began after receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board at East Carolina University on October 23, 2018. Approval from each of three research sites was received between November 2018 and March 2019. The selected research design was a collective case study approach, which allowed me as the researcher to explore each institution's approach to e-learning bounded within the real-life context of the experiences of faculty, staff, and administrators. The study used the purposeful sampling strategy to select participants. Four participants were selected at each site. In reference to the number of cases I examined in this study at each of the study sites, I followed Creswell's (2012) suggestion, which states:

> For case study research, I would recommend no more than 4 or 5 case studies in a single study. This number should provide ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis (p. 157).

Furthermore, Creswell (2014) suggests that purposefully selecting participants and sites helps the researcher better understand the problem. After participants were identified, I collected data from interviews with the selected faculty and administrators, email correspondences from the individuals who provided recommendations for participants, and institutional websites. At the

time of data collection, the participants included faculty members, academic administrators, and senior level administrators. To accommodate participant schedules, interviews were conducted face-to-face, via videoconferencing technology (WebEx), or via telephone. The original study design called for all face-to-face interviews; however, it became necessary to conduct three of the interviews by telephone so that the identified participants could take part in the study. Although telephone interviews are not common in qualitative research, Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) compared transcripts from face-to-face and phone interviews and concluded telephone interviews can be "used successfully in qualitative research" (p. 108). Furthermore, Creswell (1998) notes access to hard-to-reach respondents is a well-known fact of interview studies, and Tausig and Freeman (1988) suggest a telephone interview may allow the researcher to obtain data from participants who are difficult to access in person.

By collecting data from multiple sources, I had an opportunity to corroborate my data (Yin, 2009). The search for disconfirming evidence, or negative cases, is often considered a valuable strategy for assessing the credibility or validity of qualitative research claims (Booth, Carroll, Ilott, Low, & Cooper, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The incorporation of this step added an additional dimension of reliability to this study. After the analysis was completed, I identified conflicting statements from study participants. For example, during the interview study participants were asked who is responsible for developing and implementing the e-learning vision at their institution. Each of the four participants from Amber University provided a different response – from the faculty, to the provost, c or vice chancellor for Information Technology, to the Office of Faculty Development.

Creswell (2014) provides a detailed description of how to conduct interviews. In the formula provided, after having generated research questions addressing the problem and

identifying participants to interview, the researcher must first select the type of interview that is appropriate for the study. For the purpose of this study, I conducted one-on-one interviews (in-person and via WebEx technology), as well as telephone interviews with the participants. Each interview method allowed me as the researcher an opportunity to seek clarification, if needed, through the use of probing questions.

The interviews were audio recorded with a hand-held device along with recorded hand-written notes. Interviews were conducted adhering to the interview protocol. The interview protocol comprised of 16 questions and probing questions were asked as needed. I provided the digital audio recordings from the interviews to a transcriber service for transcription. Identifiers for the research sites were assigned using a pseudonym, followed by a combination of a letter and numerical identifier (A1, B1, C1, etc.) for the participants. The methods of data collection included semi-structured interviews, follow-up correspondence via electronic mail, and document analysis in order to elicit the participants' perceptions regarding e-learning at their respective institution. In this chapter, I will provide a description of the findings from the collection of data and interviews with both faculty and administrators.

The protocol outlined by Creswell (2014) instructs researchers to plan their approach to data recording for one-on-one interviews. The equipment utilized in this study was an iPhone and a desktop computer for recording interview sessions conducted via WebEx technology. The voice memo feature on the iPhone was selected due to its compatibility with the file types required for the transcription service. Creswell's (2014) interview outline also encourages the development of a useful interview protocol.

In preparation for the analysis of data using the selected conceptual frameworks, I created my interview protocol based on Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model (eMM). Through

this method, several open-ended interview questions were generated in relation to each of the process areas proposed within the conceptual framework. Furthermore, by utilizing the e-learning maturity model, I was able to construct my questions in a way that elicited responses regarding participants' understanding and involvement in e-learning at their respective campus. Due to the open-ended quality of the questions, I presented participants with the opportunity to provide as much information in response to the questions as they deemed necessary. In the event that I felt further clarification was warranted, I asked probing questions to the participant to gain a deeper understanding of the experience. As a result of this structure, the interviews conducted could be classified as semi-structured. Mertens (2010) describes semi-structured interviews as follows:

> …the researcher develops an interview guide with topics, issues, or questions that
> they intend to cover during the interview. The researcher is open to following leads
> form the respondent to determine the ordering of questions and the use of probes to
> further explore relevant points. (p. 371)

The next step in the interview data collection process was the selection of a place to conduct the interview (Creswell, 2014). To ensure the maximum amount of participation with consideration being made to convenience for the participants, the interviews took place at either the participant's office, via telephone, or via WebEx technology. One of the main aspects considered was the assurance that the location was quiet and conducive to audio recording. As a result, participants were able to take part in the interview process from their private office either in-person, via phone or videoconferencing technology. WebEx technology was used to support videoconferencing, which allows for real-time, two-way video conversations. During the WebEx

interview, I was able to utilize the recording feature and save the interviews to a flash drive. As a backup to the WebEx recording, I was able to utilize the voice memo feature on my iPhone.

During the initial meeting with each interviewee, Creswell (2012) emphasizes that the researcher should provide the participant with consent information and explain the purpose of the study. Participants were provided an email seeking their consent, which detailed the purpose of the study and expectations for participation in this study. I informed them that participation in the study was strictly on a voluntary basis and that they may elect to remove themselves from the study at any time without fear of repercussions. As a final step in the interview process, Creswell (2012) indicates that the researcher should use good interview etiquette by adhering to the allotted time and interview protocol for each interview. I ensured that each session lasted no more than one hour using; however, interviewees were provided the opportunity to provide as many details about their experiences as they elected to share. Additionally, I made observational field notes during the interviews pertaining to voice tone, as well as facial and body expressions as observed. After conducting each interview, the audio files were uploaded for transcription by a professional transcribing service. The files were returned within twenty-four hours; at that time, I reviewed the transcriptions for accuracy and found minor corrections needed to participant names and parts of sentences were inaudible on the file. I was able to utilize my notes to fill-in those areas where the electronic transcription service deemed them inaudibleI also incorporated the validation strategy by offering a copy of the transcripts to study participants for member checking if requested. Documents accessible via university websites or provided by participants were reviewed as additional data sources. The use of documents in the investigation of a case is a means to substantiate and enhance the data collected from other sources (Yin, 2009). According to Bowen (2009),

…documents can be analyzed as a way to verify findings or corroborate evidence

from other sources…When there is convergence of information from different

sources, readers of the research report usually have greater confidence in the

trustworthiness (credibility) of the findings. (p. 30)

For the purpose of this study, I examined university websites, paying close attention to information provided on organizational structure, strategic plans, faculty handbooks, faculty senate meeting minutes, accreditation documents, and any information on current or proposed e-learning initiatives to gain a deeper understanding of e-learning at each institution. To securely store the data, I kept a master list detailing all of the collected information. I saved all electronic files on an external hard drive located in separate secure location at my home office. When not in use, the external hard drives and transcripts were stored in a locked file cabinet.

Demographic Data

The purpose of this study was to determine whether faculty involvement in the various stages of e-learning program development has an effect on the sustainability on the program. Twelve individuals were identified based on title and position listings on the websites of the three research sites. I invited identified faculty and academic administrators to participate in the research study. An invitation email to participate was sent to 12 potential participants; not all responded to the inquiry. Out of the invited participants, eight (67%) agreed to participate. Three of the invited participants did not respond to the email or phone invitations, and one declined to take part in the study citing work demands that prevented participation. At the beginning of each interview, I asked introductory questions of the participants to establish how long they worked at their institution, their current role, and their general knowledge and experiences with e-learning. Table 2 provides a summer of participant demographics.

Table 2

Participant Profile Summary

Participant Identifier	Length of Time at Institution	Position
A1	16 years	Associate Professor
A2	9 years	Assistant Professor
A3	9 years	Academic Administrator
A4	9 years	Associate Professor
B1	26 years	Assistant Professor
B2	12 years	Academic Administrator
B3	24 years	Academic Administrator
C1	1 year	Senior Academic Administrator

Data Analysis

The analysis process used in this study is one proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three phases – data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The reduction required sorting, condensing, and transforming the data from the interview transcripts and document reviews. During this phase, I identified the information provided by each participant, along with the frequency of and emphasis placed on the various issues they addressed. I was able to condense the large amount of data to make it easier to manage and provide a structured system for comparison of themes related to the phenomenon.

The Coding Process

The coding process began once all audio recorded interviews were transcribed into Word documents by an electronic transcription service – Rev.com. The data were then organized by interview question, with all participant responses to a given question being clustered together. As a first step in the reduction of my data, I began with the process of within-case analysis. By using this method, a researcher details the specifics of each case and examines each case for themes (Creswell, 2012). then performed open coding on the transcripts. Open coding involves allocating a label to sections of data that relate to one another conceptually (Mertens, 2010). I familiarized myself with the data by carefully reading each transcript, and assigned an initial set of codes. After identifying the preliminary codes, I created a more streamlined list of secondary codes.

Following the reduction phase, I compiled the data from each interview transcript to identify which data should be emphasized, minimized or set aside. This phase of data analysis allows the researcher to summarize information into a format that facilitates the generation of conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I analyzed the codes that had been generated and

performed a categorical aggregation. According to Creswell (2012), categorical aggregations are "the larger categories derived during case study data analysis and composed of multiple incidents that are aggregated" (p. 294). Upon completion of transcript coding, I identified patterns among the thematic categories in order to reduce the number of initial groupings (Creswell, 2012, p. 199). Saldaña (2009) notes themes are found by reading and reviewing data during the formal coding phase. The process of data analysis of the interview transcript was repeated for each case.

The final phase of the analysis process involved drawing conclusions and verification. This phase requires that the researcher assign meaning to the data in order to understand how they address the study's research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the verification process, I used the constant comparison method of revisiting the data and reevaluating the previously identified patterns in order to substantiate my conclusions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is at this stage that I was able to generate a broad description of the collective cases in order to evaluate how the findings answered the research questions of my study (Creswell, 2012).

Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the relationship between academic leadership and faculty involvement affects the development and sustainability of e-learning at institutions of higher education. A collective case study was used to examine the organizational structure for e-learning and faculty roles in the development of e-learning at three public HBCUs. This chapter will discuss the salient themes that answer the study's three research questions:

1. How does the organizational structure and operations impact the development and sustainability of e-learning?

2. What role does faculty play in the development of e-learning?

3. What internal and external factors motivate HBCUs to embark on the development of an e-learning program?

Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model provided the framework for this study. The interview protocol focused on three primary areas relating to the capability of institutions to engage in and sustain technology-supported teaching and learning: (1) purpose, (2) structures and systems; and (3) people. According to Marshall (2011), the e-Learning Maturity Model (2011) is a quality improvement framework designed to support educational institutions interested in improving their organizational capability to use technology in learning and teaching in a complex and changing environment. Although the e-Learning Maturity Model identifies five process areas in which institutions should engage in order to be develop and sustain e-learning, I grouped the process areas to decrease the redundancy of questions in the interview protocol. Marshall (2011) suggests the following process areas – delivery, planning, definition, management, and optimization (see Table 3).

Utilizing within-case analyses of the data collected from semi-structured interviews and documents, details for each research site were identified. For example, I was able to gain insight into the perceptions of e-learning management and institutional priorities as it relates to the sustainability of e-learning. In addition, findings from interviews and strategic plans of the research sites revealed e-learning was included in the planning process in some form. These analyses generated three themes and nine related subthemes (see Table 4). The three salient themes pertained to all participants and their experiences working in the area of e-learning.

The first major theme, resources and funding are needed to support e-learning, addressed the following three subthemes: (1) faculty professional development is a critical part of e-

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Table 3

Grouping of eMM Processes for Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Grouping	eMM Process
People	Management
Structures and Systems	Planning
	Delivery
Purpose	Definition
	Optimization

Table 4

Themes, Subthemes, Research Questions, and Descriptors

Themes	Subthemes	Research Question Addressed	Brief Descriptor of Subthemes
1) Resources and funding are needed to support e-learning.	1A) Faculty professional development is a critical part of e-learning.	RQ1	*Faculty preparedness* *"Required to complete a formal class"* *Quality Matters*
	1B) Oversight of e-learning should be the responsibility of a specified unit.	RQ1	*Centralized/Decentralized* *Doing more with less* *System-wide resources*
	1C) There are challenges other than funding that impact e-learning.	RQ1, RQ3	*Human and fiscal resources* *"No specific policies"* *System-wide requirements (program approval)* *Competitive market* *On-campus vs. Online* *Faculty buy-in*
2) A planning process should be in place to address e-learning across the campus.	2A) There is an unawareness of a campus-wide strategic plan for e-learning.	RQ1, RQ3	*No strategic plan for e-learning* *University strategic plan* *E-learning discussed in university strategic planning* *"Not sure what our strategic plan is"*
	2B) Faculty should be included in decisions for expansion and growth.	RQ1, RQ2	*Online programs initiated without director of online education* *Top down approach* *System directives/funding* *"If we are really serious about it, then we need to have a plan and measure"*
	2C) Quality assurance in e-learning should be standardized.	RQ1	*Quality Matters* *Faculty training*

Table 4 (continued)

Themes	Subthemes	Research Question Addressed	Brief Descriptor of Subthemes
	3A) Faculty mindset and fear impact e-learning.	RQ2	*Faculty perceptions* *Inferior to face-to-face instruction* *Faculty support* *Incentives for online*
3) Faculty have varying opinions of e-learning.	3B) Faculty preparedness impacts faculty involvement.	RQ2	*Uncomfortable with technology* *Top-down decisions* *No uniform preparatory* *Mandatory training*
	3C) Shared governance is important in the planning and sustainability of e-learning.	RQ1, RQ2	*"I feel included in the process at the department level."*

learning, (2) oversight of e-learning should be the responsibility of a specified unit, and (3) there are challenges other than funding that impact e-learning. Within the context of this theme, participants articulated how the resources available to support e-learning growth and development are distributed and assist with faculty preparation and involvement. Participants also discussed the need for implementing policies versus procedures or practices to guide and ensure continuity.

The second major theme of the study, a planning process should be in place to address e-learning across the campus, focuses on the following subthemes: (1) there is an unawareness of a campus-wide strategic plan for e-learning, (2) faculty should be included in decisions for expansion and growth, and (3) quality assurance in e-learning should be standardized. In relation to this theme, participants discussed their knowledge of an institutional plan for e-learning and how that impacts their work and the growth of fully online programs and services. They also shared insight on the support and oversight of e-learning at their respective institution.

The final major theme of the study, faculty have varying opinions of e-learning, encompasses the following subthemes: (1) faculty mindset and fear impact e-learning; (2) Faculty preparedness impacts faculty involvement, and (3) shared governance is important in the planning and sustainability of e-learning. Participants noted being involved in e-learning decisions at the department level. However, they expressed this was not the case at the broader university level. In terms of faculty preparedness, participant responses ranged from no uniform process to university mandates for faculty training.

Table 4 outlines a detailed description of each theme and the associated subthemes. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, each theme and relevant subthemes will be examined

through the presentation of first person passages from the participant interviews. As suggested by the data, although some of the subthemes occurred infrequently among the participants, they were affirmed by the respective participants as essential components of the success and sustainability of e-learning.

Resources and Funding to Support e-Learning

The participants reported their perceptions of how funding is allocated to support the various aspects of e-learning and how those resources impact development, implementation, and delivery of online courses. Contributing factors to how funding allocations feedback into the e-learning structure were impacted by internal and external motivators. There was a consensus from the study participants that senior leadership has the discretion to invest in e-learning to best meet the needs of their institution. These subthemes are explored in detail in the subsequent sections.

Faculty Professional Development is a Critical Part of e-Learning

The subtheme of professional development in this study is composed of the experiences, attitudes and perspectives participants have regarding institutional organization, training and support for faculty to develop, deliver, and assess course content for online delivery. To differing extents, the participants depicted how their institution had established an on-campus entity to provide professional development opportunities for faculty to create and teach in the online environment.

According to Sae-Khow (2014), faculty training and support has an essential to effective e-learning operation. During the interview process, participants discussed how their institution prepares faculty to teach online. Participant B2 noted her institution provides a number of workshops and access to technology applications in support of e-learning preparation. She

expressed the importance of access to training and resources for faculty designing online courses for the first time. As she reported, these resources are easily accessible for faculty:

> Outside of the workshops, the website has links to the resources available. On the e-learning website, they have a lot of tools and techniques that faculty can use – eBasics series, designing your online course, accessibility, and all of that is on the website which is another resource faculty.

At Blanch University, there are two offices that provide training for faculty. One office works primarily with faculty teaching in a traditional face-to-face format; whereas the other office focuses solely on preparing faculty to teaching in an e-learning environment. In reviewing documents available from the university's website, the training is voluntary and offered in a cohort format, group sessions, or individual consultations. Additional documentation provided by Participant B2 included an outline of the topics covered, which included: (1) Applying the Quality Matters Rubric, (2) e-Learning Efficiency: Work Smart, Not Hard, (3) Best Online Teaching Practices, (4) Is Your Online Course Accessible for All, (5) Closed Captioning Training; (6) Backward Design & Modular Structure, (7) Minimizing Online Cheating, (8) and eBasics: Transitioning to Online Instruction. Although training at Blanch University is voluntary, the office responsible for e-learning training reported an average of 12-18 faculty participants at the workshops offered during the fall 2019 semester. Participant explained how faculty in her unit have been trained:

> It's definitely voluntary because some of my faculty have gone the whole route of going through [the training] and doing all and getting their blessing and looking at their Blackboard thing, and some of them haven't done it at all. Now, I would prefer that they

all do that, but I don't know with the other constraints how I can force them to do it unless I start penalizing.

Other study participants described a more formal, mandatory training requirement for faculty teaching online courses. For example, Participants A1 and A2 noted faculty at their institution are required to complete an in-house training module before teaching an online course. Participant A1 discussed how the training evolved over time and the process faculty follow:

This training was developed incrementally over the years. In the beginning, the training was limited, but now every faculty who teaches an e-learning course at [Amber University] is required to complete a formal class on best practices for design, development, and delivery. To complete the course, the faculty member must fully develop a course from beginning to end, and the course is thoroughly evaluated by an e-learning specialist. Awards are given to those who complete exceptional courses during this process.

The syllabus for the online faculty certification training obtained from Amber University describes the institution's mandatory process. The training is structured into three modules and faculty are required to complete each module before they are permitted to move on to the next module. Based on the learning objectives, upon successful completion of the training faculty will be able to: (1) identify and apply the Quality Matters standards, (2) summarize key best practices for online course design, teaching and learning, (3) apply basic skills within the learning management system, and (4) incorporate essential Quality Matters standards in an online course.

Oversight of e-Learning Should be the Responsibility of a Specified Unit

In the current study, participants articulated their perceptions of how the management of e-learning impacts development and implementation. Research conducted by Legon and Garrett

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(2017) focused on the management of e-learning in U.S. institutions. Their research found that institutions were moving to consolidate e-learning related activities and responsibilities "under the leadership of a single institutional officer" (Legon & Garrett, 2017, p. 5). Based on their findings, this involved centralizing support functions while academic planning and curriculum remained the responsibility of the academic unit or decentralized. While many of the interpretations, from this study, resulted from the experiences of the study participants, some of the feedback was in response to how they perceived the involvement of senior administration. The following sections illustrate how each participant's experience has impacted their involvement with e-learning.

Centralized versus decentralized. The organization and management model around e-learning is often referred to as either centralized or decentralized (Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018, 2019). This includes the management of sources, distribution of revenue, course development, compensation, and engagement of external vendors. During the interview process, study participants were specifically asked if they perceived the structure on their campus to be centralized or decentralized. They provided mixed responses in regard to the management of e-learning and whether it is centralized or decentralized on their respective campus. For example, participants at Amber University cited both centralized and decentralized as the model for managing and supporting professional development on their campus. As noted by Participant A4:

> The model is hybrid. Reporting is centralized but the implementation is decentralized. Departments are ultimately responsible for responding to requests…not all departments are the same so it is often difficult to centralize services.

Participant B1 described the process as "seeming" to be "decentralized because of all the hands involved in the budgeting process." Other study participants explained what they perceived as a centralized process on their campus, noting having a university entity such as an Office e-Learning or an Office of Faculty Professional Development in place. Findings from the interviews and a review of information on the university websites revealed these offices were primarily focused on faculty training, support and course development, rather than control of the curriculum or management of the infrastructure or budget.

Only one study participant, Participant C1, noted his institution did not have a dedicated unit responsible for managing e-learning resources. In contrast, study participants at Amber University detailed their perceptions of a centralized versus decentralized model for managing e-learning activities at their institution. There was a consensus with participants from Amber University that the Office of Faculty Professional Development is the central unit that provides support and resources. However, the existence of a specific unit does not justify the centralization of e-learning. A true centralized model for e-learning would include instructional and administrative functions such as program development, instruction, faculty, budgeting, marketing, recruiting, advising, federal and accreditation requirements (Fredericksen, 2017; Legon & Garrett, 2017). Participants from Amber University perceived their university model to be both centralized and decentralized. Participant A1 described the structure as:

> Both centralized and decentralized. We have an [office] which provides centralized
> standards and expectations, including making sure that we meet national standards and
> best practices so that our courses can be offered in other states. However, the department
> faculty and chairs are responsible for determining the scheduling and selection of which

programs and courses will be offered online. The faculty determine which programs and

classes are best for the online format and when they are needed.

This sentiment was shared by Participant A4. She referred to the structure as "hybrid." She

added "reporting is centralized but the implementation is decentralized." As it relates to the

implementation of e-learning, she explained "departments are ultimately responsible for

responding to requests from the director of e-learning, but not all departments are the same so it

is often difficult to centralize services." Study participants at Blanch University consistently

defined the structure at their institution as centralized, stating a central office of e-learning as the

primary source for training, support, funding, and resources. Findings revealed participants

perceived a centralized model to be beneficial to supporting faculty. However, it is worth noting

that the findings did not reveal a structured centralized model. Each of the study sites operated

with distributed management of e-learning. Specifically, the academic units controlled

curriculum and program management, as well as faculty, while many of the support functions

fell under the direction of an office designated to assist the university with faculty preparedness,

best practices and marketing.

Doing more with less. In her interview, Participant A4 discussed how funds are being

used to support an instructional designer position and some faculty training on technology

applications. She expressed concern that her institution has made e-learning a priority without

having adequate funding to implement "large-scale technology changes" needed to sustain fully

online degree programs. She went on to share how smaller institutions often have growing pains

when trying to respond to internal and external pressures in an effort to compete with larger

institutions or those institutions that have sufficient funding. According to Participant A4, faculty

are forced to do more with less:

Faculty utilize a lot of free services to support online teaching and learning. How can institutions begin to think about online learning on a larger scale versus compact to move from being more creative with less?

Participant B1 voiced frustration at the perceived structure for allocating resources. She noted her understanding was that resources are allocated from the chancellor to the "e-learning administrators," who then decide how funds are dispersed. However, her frustration stemmed from her experiences of funding changing from year to year. She noted e-learning should be a priority for the administration and funds administered properly if faculty are expected to buy in to developing courses and teaching online.

I think the model has been to allow various colleges to control some of the monies allotted. The chancellor has a lot of say about how the e-learning program grows (monetarily). I think that a forward-thinking administration would put the demand on growing e-learning and would allocate the monies to see that vision come to pass. The Chancellor should allow the administrators who head e-learning to allocate the funds appropriately.

System-wide resources. Two of the study participants shared that they believe being member of a state university system positively impacts the institution's ability to engage in e-learning activities. Participant C1 discussed how student enrollment affects funding for e-learning from the system level. He stated in his role as a senior administrator, he was very familiar with how the system funded e-learning and that financial resources to support e-learning initiatives were limited.

Student credit hour generation influences resource allocation as does student enrollment and retention rates within a degree program. Each institution has local autonomy to structure how funding allocations feed back into the e-learning structure.

Participant A3 and C1 specifically noted collaboration and "group purchases" as benefits of being part of a university system. They discussed how the system engages the campuses to identify e-learning resources and vendors to enter into agreements to drive down the overall cost of e-learning tools. As noted in the interviews, this cost saving is especially beneficial to smaller institutions. Specifically, Participant C1 stated:

[The statewide system office] does a good job of supporting institutions by pooling resources and by having institutions come together collaboratively to engage in a "group purchase" of e-learning tools that may drive down the overall cost of resources that might otherwise cost significantly more from a vendor if a single institution purchased the resource.

Similarly, Participant A3 noted, "system-wide initiatives assist in the development and delivery of e-learning. Existing resources are taken into account when implementing new programs."

Challenges Other Than Funding That Impact e-Learning

The subtheme of challenges impacting e-learning centers on participants' experiences with implementing fully online degree programs or teaching online courses. Emanating from the interviews, participants recounted what they see as challenges on their respective campus, such as human and fiscal resources, support personnel, program approval, competition in the field of e-learning and online courses versus traditional face-to-face instruction.

Human and fiscal resources. While reflecting on his role as a senior academic administrator, Participant C1 indicated that the most significant challenge his campus faces is the

budget to support e-learning endeavors. He discussed the need for instructional designers to support faculty and personnel to support student services.

> E-learning requires appropriate ongoing supports for students, and online degree programs necessitate that students in this environment have access to support personnel who specialize in addressing inquiries unique to their instructional space. The institution must have a budget to support these types of challenges.

Each of the participants from Amber University were under the same opinion that the lack of funding to support e-learning creates challenges with implementation and sustainability. For example, participant A2 specifically discussed the difficulties in supporting "standardization and innovation without funding." Her concerns centered around the need to provide a consistent online experience for students across all online courses. She also mentioned having the ability to develop and offer "core curriculum" courses online, as opposed to only major courses.

> Without university standards for technology and innovation, it becomes difficult to deliver a common experience to online students. When students enter an online program or register for an online, they should know what to expect, what technology is needed, where to find information in the course shell, how to submit assignments, and how to access campus services – just to name a few. If [Amber University] can implement policies around online course standards, then this would be greatly help faculty with their course design and delivery of student outcomes.

Another challenge addressed by participants was funding to support faculty stipends for increased workload due to course development and teaching in an e-learning environment. Several study participants identified the need to incentivize faculty for the additional time required to engage in e-learning. Participant B2 explained that "as our campus moves more

courses online, we [department chairs] have to find ways to ensure faculty receive compensation or course releases."

On-campus versus online. The adoption of online courses presents multiple institutional considerations as the delivery method affects students, faculty and the institution (de & Zanca, 2018). Five of the study participants acknowledged that one of the challenges in implementing e-learning programs is resources to support both traditional face-to-face and fully online courses. For example, Participate C1 indicated that the institution must have a budget to support the challenges with specialized personnel and instructional space, specifically stating, "human resources are just as important as technology infrastructure and in order to be successful in the e-learning space, we must invest in the staff to support faculty and technological needs." Participant B3 provided a different perspective, noting that "e-learning is where we need to be in higher education today." He went on to point out that applications for fully online degrees in his department are outpacing on-campus applications. The primary challenge identified by Participant B3 is the process of getting new fully online degree programs approved in a timely manner: "There are a number of approvals needed before an online program be launched. Sometimes this process can take longer than expected, especially when approvals are needed at the state level as well as from accrediting agencies." Yet another perspective on the struggle of on-campus versus online programs was provided by Participant B1. She described the challenge as a "war of sorts" over the demand for e-learning and the need for faculty to teach face-to-face classes. She stated the university "has to make a commitment to both sides and allow faculty to have more choice in how they want to teach. If enough support is provided for both face-to-face and e-learning classes, the university would not have so many problems getting placements for both sides."

Although resources and faculty assignments were identified as challenges when dealing with on-campus and online courses, student success was also mentioned as a challenge. For example, Participant B2 discussed her concern regarding the type of courses that lend themselves to online delivery. She indicated that one of the biggest challenges for an institution is determining which courses should be offered fully online: "I don't think every class should be online if we are thinking about student success." The concern with this study participant was having a directive from administration that "everything should be online." According to Participant B2, there are courses and programs that are "better taught online" and can meet the needs of "non-traditional students, especially the ones that are working, and a lot of our students work." She also pointed out that she feels her institution does not push faculty enough to put courses online since university policy does not exist to develop "all the courses that are appropriate to better serve students." Participant B2 emphatically noted that the university plays a role in ensuring students are successful in online courses. Through her experience teaching online, she feels it is important for students to:

> …understand what it means when they take a class online, what the time commitment is, what the time management looks like, and how to be successful at it. My thing is always, how can we make our students successful; help prepare them to be successful for e-learning? How can we as an institution do that?

Faculty buy-in. The faculty are critical in the building of quality online learning programs (Seaman, 2009). Participants indicated that a common challenge in moving e-learning initiatives is getting faculty buy-in and participation in online course development and delivery. Five of the study participants referenced faculty as being essential to the success of e-learning initiatives. For example, Participant A2 commented that his involvement in "the many phases of

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e-learning" provides "motivation to continuously improve and stay on top of updates in the field." In addition, Participant A1 discussed how his direct involvement has allowed him to be better informed and knowledgeable of e-learning:

> I feel that I have been very involved in the process as a faculty member, a chair and a Dean. I probably have a better understanding than most faculty and administrators at [Amber University] in terms of the challenges, the rewards, and the goals of our online programs. Making sure faculty understand the process and the purpose of offering online classes is essential to its success. Too often, faculty do not have a clear understanding of these things. However, I believe excluding faculty from the recent decision-making by administrators in terms of providing academic support for online students has been a major error and a serious reversal of previous practices in this process.

Participant B3 shared his experience with transitioning faculty to e-learning. He specifically noted that not all faculty are interested in teaching online and if that is the case, they are "probably not going to be very good" at teaching in an online environment. He stressed the importance of recruiting faculty with experience and the willingness to teach online when vacant positions become available. According to this participant, "there is a lot of competition in the online space, so you must have good professors or students will not stay with your program." Another challenge that surfaced during the interviews was the issue of which courses are conducive to online delivery and the commitment of faculty to develop effective strategies to deliver complex content. As Participant A1 shared, "teaching online is more demanding and challenging for faculty." There was a consensus across the study participants that a considerable amount of time is needed to prepare an online course. Study participants from Amber University noted they have observed an increase in faculty buy-in over the last year due to new leadership

and support at the Provost level. Specifically, participants noted during the interviews that the newly appointed Provost has "pledged" support of e-learning campus wide.

A Planning Process Should be in Place to Address e-Learning Across the Campus

During the course of the interviews, study participants discussed the importance of planning and assessment to achieve success in the area of e-learning. Participants further described their experience with planning and assessing e-learning initiatives at their respective institution. The data illustrated the main concerns for study participants as the following subthemes: being unaware of campus-wide strategic planning for e-learning, expansion and growth built around e-learning, and assessment of institutional need and readiness for e-learning.

Unawareness of a Campus-Wide Strategic Plan for e-Learning

As e-learning continues to increasingly become a mainstream activity in higher education in the United States, institutions are integrating online learning quality assurance into various facets of the institution (Legon & Garrett, 2019). According to Bullen (2013), in order for institutions to respond appropriately to the changing landscape of higher education, effective planning for e-learning is essential. However, he points out that many institutions are still "reacting to issues as they emerge rather than taking the time to plan for the future" (Bullen, 2013, p. 44). Mintzberg (1994) argues "the most successful strategies are visions, not plans" (p. 107). In order to realize substantial strategic change, it is not necessary to rearrange the current structure but rather create new strategies, products, or structures (Mintzberg, 1994). During the interview process, participants in this study were specifically asked about the strategic planning process for e-learning at their respective institutions. They shared their thoughts and perceptions on the planning process for e-learning, and the conversation centered around the need for

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inclusive planning to address the needs of the campus and the role each unit would play in the sustainability of e-learning.

No strategic plan for e-learning. Several study participants indicated that their institution did not have a separate strategic plan to address e-learning or they were not aware of the institution's plan for e-learning. Participant C1 was clear that his institution had not developed a strategic plan for e-learning due to the low number of fully online degree programs currently offered. With the majority of the online programs at Copper University being offered within one school, the dean has the "responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the online degree programs." Study participants at Amber University shared different perspectives on their institution having a defined strategic plan for e-learning. For example, Participant A2 stated, "I'm not sure what our strategic plan is. We have an Office of Faculty Development that is responsible for overseeing online education innovation and quality." According to Participant A3, "The institutional plan focuses on strengthening academic quality, and e-learning is a big part of that plan. No separate plan exists at this time." He further explained that the plan was developed with "involvement from faculty, staff, and Board of Trustee members." It is the belief of Participant A4 that the role of the Provost is "pivotal in online learning." She expressed the importance of an "organic" strategic planning process from the "ground up." She shared:

> I think that we went from a place where the strategic planning was from the ground up if you will. It was very organic and in some ways it was having the idea and following the student and then, for the lack of a better way, putting the return on investment, so we were building – I think – from the student backwards into…Because a lot of our online programs happened before we had a director of online education. We are now trying to meet in the middle…trying to find out what happens when both the top and the bottom

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try to meet in the middle. I think we are at a transitional point…can we bring it all

together? Can we even begin to plan in some ways?

E-learning strategic plan. Representatives from Blanch University had a different

experience with strategic planning for e-learning. Each of the study participants noted that a plan

exists and even played a role in developing or implementing the strategic initiatives for e-

learning. It was stated by Participant B3 that being a part of the e-learning strategic planning

process was "highly beneficial and exciting." Although Participant B3 did not provide details on

the benefits of serving on the e-learning strategic planning committee, he did mention that the e-

learning strategic planning process took place at the same time the System required institutions

to identify key performance metrics which provided an opportunity to "align metrics with the

planning process." Participant A4 described her experience with the strategic plan at her

institution as "a way for the university to bring all the aspects [of e-learning] together." Faculty

representation on strategic planning committees seemed to be important to many of the study

participants. Participant B1 discussed how the e-learning plan has expanded with the last two

Chancellors, and she considers the current plan to be "more aggressive than it has been in

previous years." She also believes the current Chancellor is taking a more "hands-on approach to

growing the e-learning program." Participant B1 further discussed the role of deans and

department chairs in planning for e-learning. She noted, "Deans and chairs have a great deal to

say in what happens as well. Deans and chairs decide who will teach online courses, so they are

an important part of the execution of e-learning." Participant B2 shared that she served on the

academic affairs strategic planning committee and that "e-learning was part of that plan as well."

She discussed the importance of a strategic plan to attract new "customers" who "could become

our students or who are interested in online versus traditional classes." She also noted that the

strategic plan addresses quality assurance in online courses and training for faculty on the

Quality Matters Rubric. She highlighted the fact that faculty are provided an opportunity to

participate in workshops to "ensure they are prepared to teach online, because it is more than just

taking a face-to-face course and placing it [in the LMS]."

Faculty Should Be Included in Decisions for Expansion and Growth

Online enrollment continues to grow steadily in the United States, prompting colleges

and universities to respond in kind by launching additional online programs (Legon & Garrett,

2017). Many institutions now interweave e-learning in their strategic plans to address areas such

as enrollment growth, student completion, budgeting, and quality enhancement. Participants

shared their thoughts on how expansion and growth in the e-learning space is strategically

addressed at their respective campus. There was a consensus amongst the study participants that

faculty play a role in the development and implementation of e-learning at some level. The

participants expressed strong feelings about the importance of faculty being involved in planning

for e-learning growth. There were discussions on the various levels of approval needed from the

department, campus, system office, and accrediting agencies (if applicable). The findings

highlight faculty involvement at the department and campus levels. According to Participant B3,

"Faculty play a big role in this process, beginning with the development of a proposal to offer a

program online." He further notes outside of faculty support, there has to be support from the

administration in order for the program to be successful. One such example provided by the

participant was the alignment between faculty workload and administrative recognition of the

scholarship of teaching and learning. Specifically, he mentioned the need for administration to

acknowledge a faculty member's work with e-learning development and implementation in their

"annual evaluation so they can get credit and recognition for their work." Participant B1

expressed she "has very strong feelings about this issue." While she confirmed faculty have a say in the development and implementation phases, she was not pleased that faculty members in her department do not have any decision on who is assigned to teach online courses. In her opinion, she is opposed to adjunct faculty teaching e-learning courses.

> The deans often decide, ultimately, who will teach e-learning courses. The department chairs may assign faculty members, but the deans must approve. Chairs are under great pressure to make sure the university is supplying an ample number of face-to-face classes – particularly in the fall semester when enrollment is the highest. Administrators want the professors with the best pedagogy, experience, and classroom presence to teach face-to-face classes. They will then put senior faculty into these face-to-face classes and give the e-learning opportunities to adjunct faculty.

When engaging with e-learning, administrators have the responsibility of selecting and preparing faculty with the skill set to transfer subject-specific knowledge via online delivery (Martins & Nunes, 2016; Nunes & McPherson, 2003). Participant B1 further expressed her thoughts and frustration on faculty selection for teaching e-learning courses at her institution. She noted:

> E-learning, consequently, becomes the dumping ground for inexperienced faculty. Yet, it is the fastest growing segment at many universities and has the potential to affect as many or more students. Faculty often get no say in how they would like to teach. I have spent over a decade becoming an e-learning specialist. I want a say in what kind of courses I teach.

Participants at Amber University shared that their faculty are directly involved in the design and delivery of e-learning. For example, Participant A2 noted curriculum and technology decisions

are made by individual professors. He further explained that the "university administration encourages faculty to consider which programs to put into an online format." He also shared his experience as an academic dean and how he supported his faculty in making the decision to move into the online space:

> As the dean, I asked all my departments to consider the idea [of teaching online] and assisted the faculty in the process. I put more pressure on some programs where I thought it would be especially beneficial to their students and to the survival of their programs. However, the decision was up to the faculty. They were required to write the proposals to authorize the programs, so it was up to them to decide which programs and classes would be offered through e-learning. It was never forced on any program.

According to Participant A4, the "process is still organic, there is still the pressure of going first and others watching to see if it fails or prevails." He added that to faculty at his institution e-learning is "extremely faculty led" but faculty do not receive any "real incentives" so they are involved in e-learning because "they want to do it" and to "meet the needs of the department and students." The same sentiment was expressed by Participant A3. He expressed that academic departments and lead faculty within those departments "play a key role in the initiation and implementation" of e-learning. He also shared that without a university policy for e-learning, the Vice Chancellor for information technology and the Provost "provide funding and final decisions on implementation."

Quality Assurance in e-Learning Should Be Standardized

The adoption of quality standards for online faculty development, course design, and program design has become standard at many institutions (Legon & Garrett, 2018). Study participants expressed similar views of the assessment and quality assurance of e-learning at

their institution. A common theme from the interviews was that their institutions lacked a formal campus-wide assessment plan, but they agreed that the Quality Matters Program is used as the primary assessment tool for e-learning. Only one participant noted no assessment plan in place for e-learning at his campus. Although Participant C1 stated Copper University does not have a formal plan for assessing e-learning, a review of documents available on the institution's website notes they are members of Quality Matters. According to the Quality Matters website, the organization is a global leader in quality assurance of online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments. Quality Matters utilizes a rubric of course design standards and a peer-review process to provide guidance for improving the quality of courses, as well as to certify the quality of online courses across institutions.

During the interview session with Participant B1, she discussed her involvement with Quality Matters, noting she was part of a "rigorous process" to learn how to make her "e-learning classes the best they could be." She has e-learning courses that are Quality Matters certified, and she views this process as a "form of an assessment plan." Participant B2 explained that the assessment strategy for e-learning lies within the departments. In conjunction with Quality Matters, she stated the departments utilize the end of semester student ratings of instruction to identify "gaps and issues" in online courses. Her preference would be to have a "university play that drills down to the colleges and schools, and ultimately to the department level. This would ensure consistency across the university." Participants from Amber University discussed a more decentralized assessment process for e-learning. However, Participant A2 shared that the institution had a "big push" to use Quality Matters at one time, but "that seems to have been abandoned." Participant A1 noted quality assurance in e-learning is addressed through

"mandatory training and other support services." He went on to share that the faculty handbook provides information on the assessment procedures and support of e-learning courses.

Faculty Have Varying Opinions of e-Learning

The final major them emerging from the data pertained to faculty opinions of e-learning. Although e-learning provides students with flexibility and access, faculty can be intimidated or overwhelmed by the potential learning curve of combining discipline content and teaching strategies with technology and instructional design (de los Santos & Zanca, 2018; Taylor, 2002). In Seaman's 2009 survey of faculty experiences, attitudes, and beliefs toward online learning, he found that faculty with experience developing or teaching online courses have a much more positive view towards online instruction than those without such experience, and faculty with no online experience remain relatively negative about online learning outcomes.

Representations of the subthemes of fear, preparedness, and shared governance surfaced in a majority of the responses from each participant. The participants shared that they believe one of the biggest challenges impacting e-learning at their institution is faculty buy-in. The following sections will address this theme and related subthemes to provide a better understanding of how e-learning is perceived at the study sites.

Faculty Mindset and Fear Impact e-Learning

The most common challenge for implementing e-learning that existed in the data was faculty mindset and fear of teaching in an online environment. This subtheme manifested in the following ways: investment of time and effort in technology and pedagogical training and the belief that online instruction is subpar to face-to-face classroom instruction. Participants acknowledged the benefits of e-learning for students and the institution; however, they also highlighted the constraints related to being successful in the online space.

Investment of time and effort. Participants A1 and A4 attribute faculty fears of e-learning to the need to learn new strategies of delivering subject matter in which many faculty are already deemed "experts." According to Participant A4, "The biggest challenge is mindset and fear. A lot of faculty do not embrace online learning because they don't want to look bad because they are uncomfortable." As noted by Participant B2, many faculty members in her department understand why the department and university have made e-learning a strategic priority; however, there is concern about the amount of time needed to transform face-to-face courses into quality online courses. She noted:

> We have a lot of workshops and resources. We also have software to help with our e-learning preparation. Some faculty have participated in all the workshops, while others want to be left alone to just do what they have been doing all these years. I would prefer all of my faculty take advantage of the training available on-campus, but I don't know with the other constraints faculty have how I can force them to do it unless I start penalizing by including this on faculty evaluations. The university does not currently have a policy that mandates training, and I have not done that in my department either.

Online instruction subpar to face-to-face classroom instruction. The discussion of integrity and program credibility in e-learning was expressed by participants. Participant B1 explained that a number of faculty members, "mostly senior faculty" in her department, "still have negative views of e-learning." She added:

> They have antiquated notions about the weaknesses of e-learning pedagogy and the effort it takes to teach e-learning courses. Faculty who are traditionalist show a great deal of disdain and disrespect for e-learning. They speak as if e-learning is where inferior education takes places and inferior academicians teach.

The same sentiment was expressed by Participant A2. He stressed his disappointment in the thinking of his colleagues around the topic of e-learning:

> I've been surprised to learn that there are quite a few faculty (across the assistant, associate, and full levels) that are resistant and believe it to be a sub-par pedagogical approach. That's demoralizing, as I've experienced the opposite as an online instructor. Many of my best critical thinkers are online, non-traditional students.

Faculty Preparedness Impacts Faculty Involvement

The research shows faculty support and training are essential to successful e-learning initiatives (de los Santos & Zanca, 2018; Sae-Khow, 2014; Tillman, 2009). Study participants shared how their institution provides training opportunities to prepare faculty to develop quality courses, as well as strategies to deliver course content in an e-learning format. Participants described faculty preparedness as an indicator of success and described the training process at their institution as either mandatory or voluntary, as well as incentives provided for course development at their campuses.

The importance of training faculty to develop and deliver course content in an online environment was shared across participants. Although faculty professional development was discussed as a subtheme of resources and funding, the consistent mention of faculty preparedness as a challenge related to faculty opinions of e-learning makes it worth addressing in this section. Participant C1 indicated one of the challenges at his institution is the faculty support needed to successfully transition to e-learning.

> There are a number of challenges, but the most significant is our budget to support faculty development. Transitioning courses and ultimately degree programs to an e-learning environment requires an appropriate infrastructure (e.g., instructional designers)

to support faculty with the development of age- and developmental appropriate courses. Additionally, e-learning requires appropriate ongoing supports for faculty and students, and online degree programs necessitate that faculty and students in this environment have access to support personnel who specialize in addressing inquiries unique to their instructional space. The institution must have a budget to support these types of challenges.

He further explained that at his institution there is "no uniform preparatory process for faculty who teach e-learning courses primarily because the institution does not have a large inventory of online degree program offerings." However, Copper University does offer "voluntary e-learning workshops for faculty" who deliver e-learning courses. Participant B3 also described the training opportunities at his institution as voluntary. He explained:

The training, and if they want to learn, they can learn and can get help as they're going through and doing it. They've got all the QM training they could ever have. If they don't do it, it's because they didn't want to do it. It's no excuse. There are people that we said it was mandatory for but they tend never to become what we want them to be. If you don't want to do it, you're just not going to do it and you don't want them either.

Participant B1 described the training process as being mandatory. During her interview, she shared a new process for training that is aligned with an incentive for course development. She stated:

There are mandatory classes for people who want to teach in e-learning. The chairs of the departments mandate that their e-learning faculty take these courses…the process is made known to potential e-learning professors/instructors before they are assigned courses. The

process is well organized and flexible in the format in which it is given so faculty do not have valid excuses for missing it.

Each of the study participants at Amber University described the faculty training and development process as mandatory at their institution. Participant A1 stated the institution "mandates that every faculty who teaches any e-learning course complete the [training] course for that specific type of e-learning course." Participants A2 and A3 provided more detail on the mandatory training, describing the process as "online training with quizzes." Further clarification of the process was provided by Participant A3:

> The mandatory online and hybrid training course is required before faculty can teach online. The online portion is four weeks in length, and then are an additional two weeks required in a hybrid format. The training is led by an instructional designer, and faculty receive a certificate upon completion of the training. If they so wish, faculty can submit their course for Quality Matters certification upon successful completion of the training. The deans receive a report of faculty who complete the training and QM review, which helps them determine who can be assigned to teach online.

Shared Governance is Important in the Planning and Sustainability of e-Learning

During the interviews, each participant discussed their involvement in the e-learning process. The sentiment amongst participants at Amber University is that there is a shared-governance process, specifically with respect to e-learning initiatives. According to Participant A1:

> Historically, it has been through a shared-governance process. The administration sets goals with the support and contribution of the faculty, and the faculty are the ones who initiate and develop the online programs and determine which courses and programs will

be offered online or as a hybrid. Despite recent set-backs, I hope that this process continues as a shared-governance process.

The data for this study show participants from Amber University feel strong about inclusive process for e-learning. They discussed a practice of faculty involvement in e-learning decisions from various levels – faculty senate and departmental. Participant A2 shared:

I feel included in the process at the department level. Also, the faculty senate is typically involved in decisions that affect the whole university. As a result, I feel motivated to continuously improve and stay on top of updates in the field [of e-learning].

Participants noted the experience and knowledge of e-learning that can be provided to administration as they embark on e-learning initiatives. In describing his experience, Participant A1 noted:

Since I was involved in the launching of online courses and programs…, I feel that I have been very involved in the process as a faculty member, a chair and a Dean. I probably have a better understanding than most faculty and administrators in terms of the challenges, the rewards, and the goals of our online programs. Making sure faculty understand the process and the purpose of offering online classes is essential to its success. Too often, faculty do not have a clear understanding of these things.

The same opinion of faculty participation at Amber University was expressed by Participant A3, "inclusion allows me to purposely identify processes, procedures, technology, and provide adequate assessment and support." As a senior academic administration, Participant C1 explained his position with including faculty in the process of planning e-learning as "essential." He added that "faculty are responsible for the curriculum," and the responsibility of "developing

and teaching e-learning courses is a core part of the process." He also expounded on his experience with e-learning as a faculty member:

> My personal experience with e-learning is fairly strong primarily because of my previous experience with distance learning at my prior institution. My academic unit was a leader on campus forging a pathway forward in the e-learning space. I have prior experiences in designing, delivering, assessing, and evaluating e-learning courses, and I have nearly 50 hours of professional development experience in the e-learning space over 15 years of online teaching.

Chapter Summary

Understanding the perspectives faculty and administrators have on e-learning is an integral component in the success and sustainability of e-learning initiatives at colleges and universities. This chapter highlighted the three salient themes and nine subthemes from interviews conducted with eight individuals across three institutions. The three major themes were: (1) Resources and Funding, (2) Strategic Direction and Planning, and (3) Faculty Opinions of e-Learning. The study findings provide a model for implementation and sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs and suggest that successful implementation is shaped by a variety of factors.

Study participants expressed the importance of resource allocation for e-learning initiatives over the amount of time and effort required to develop and implement e-learning. Many participants also shared that faculty opinions of e-learning affect the institution's ability to effectively implement e-learning and meet student learning outcomes. Participants also expressed the challenges their institutions face with e-learning. For example, most participants agreed that a university strategic plan for e-learning is needed to ensure buy-in from all

stakeholders. In addition, university policies – versus practices – would be needed to guarantee shared governance, as well as provide consistency across academic disciplines.

Participants also stressed the importance of preparing faculty to develop and deliver quality e-learning courses and programs through internal and external pedagogical and technology training opportunities. Furthermore, participants indicated that advocating for e-learning is an important strategy to institutional growth and expansion. It was noted that e-learning is a way to address low-enrolled courses and programs, reach new student markets, and to provide access to higher education to a variety of populations. They shared a common belief that instructors must be willing to seek and participate in professional development opportunities and those that do not put forth the effort will probably not be effective teachers in the e-learning environment. It was also noted that faculty workloads at HBCUs tend to be heavy, so incentives are important to faculty.

Findings from this study did not reveal significant differences across the three institutions. The one difference that stood out was that Copper University has eight degree programs offered via an e-learning format; however, responses from participant C1 revealed the institution does not have any formal oversight for e-learning. He noted the academic deans are currently responsible for the development, implementation, and management of e-learning programs in their areas. This differed from the information provided by participants at the other two research sites. One consistent finding was the availability of faculty training to support online course development. Findings from the interviews and information available on university websites revealed training schedules as well as descriptions of the training sessions offered. Blanch University and Amber University were similar in their administration of e-learning. According the data collected from interviews, their organizational structure provided a level of

standardization for e-learning and allowed faculty to easily access resources to support their involvement in e-learning initiatives.

Finally, participants at each of the research sites emphasized the importance of having an office or unit responsible for overseeing e-learning and carrying out strategic goals and objectives set by the university. Although the study participants seemed to identify the office of faculty development or e-learning as the unit to oversee e-learning, study findings showed these offices were mainly responsible for training and technology applications to support e-learning. A majority of the data gleaned from interviews illustrated effective ways in which faculty members engaged with these units to ensure course quality, training, and resources. Participants also stressed the importance of collaboration within and outside their departments to meet student needs with instruction and services for those who may never step foot on the campus. The perception from participants seemed to be that the central control of e-learning - planning, management of budgets, marketing, and governance – resides with leadership at the chancellor or provost level.

In the next chapter I will discuss the research findings in relation to the current body of literature. I will also provide practical implications and recommendations for future research regarding implementation and sustainability of e-learning. The recommendations in this study are of particular interest for administrators at historically Black colleges and universities.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Since the late 1990s, e-learning has evolved from a novel approach to education to the mainstream modality, with approximately one out of three students in U.S. higher education having taken at least one online course (Seaman et al., 2018). According the 2019 *Changing Landscape of Online Education - CHLOE 3: Behind the Numbers* report, virtually all U.S. higher education institutions, across all sectors, have some online activity and online enrollments continue to grow every year (Legon & Garrett, 2019).

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the relationship between academic leadership and faculty involvement affect the development, implementation, and sustainability of e-learning programs at HBCUs. More specifically, three research questions guided this study:

1. How does the organizational structure and operations impact the development and sustainability of e-learning at each of these HBCUs?

2. What role do faculty play in the development of e-learning?

3. What internal and external factors motivate HBCUs to embark on the development of an e-learning program?

Findings of the study related to the following major themes, which facilitated understanding participants' knowledge of and experiences with e-learning in higher education: (1) Resources and funding are needed to support e-learning, (2) A planning process should be in place to address e-learning across the campus, and (3) Faculty have varying opinions of e-learning. Based on the findings represented by the three salient themes, I present the following discussion, conclusions, and recommendations pertaining to a deeper understanding of administrative and

faculty roles and responsibilities, organizational structure, and infrastructure to support e-learning.

Chapter One of this study offered an overview of e-learning and its impact on higher education over the past 20 years. Chapter Two presented a discussion of the existing literature pertaining to the evolution of e-learning at colleges and universities, with specific emphasis placed on the strategic focus on e-learning initiatives by institutional leaders and other campus stakeholders. Chapter Three illustrated the conceptual framework for the study as it relates to the holistic ability of an institution to deliver e-learning, by identifying five major process areas – delivery, planning, definition, management, and optimization. Chapter Four provided an extensive outline of the research process as well as the findings of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to explore in more detail the study's principal findings and discuss their implications for HBCUs. The final chapter of this study is organized into six sections, beginning with the review of the study approach, then leading into a synopsis of the study findings and the leading results of the study. The third and fourth sections of the chapter highlight the delimitations and limitations of the study as well as the study implications and recommendations for future research. The final two sections of this chapter discuss implications recommendations related to higher education and theory and concluding analyses.

Study Approach

Many HBCUs lag in the delivery of e-learning courses and programs in comparison to larger Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) (McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013; Moore, 2008; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003). Existing research suggests this could be a result of limited financial resources, limited staff to support e-learning, and lack of an organizational structure to sustain e-learning (Beasley, 2010; Evans-Bell, 2015; Mumuney-Tillghman, 2003; Snipes et al., 2006;

Stuart & Yep, 2012). As a result, these institutions may be missing the opportunity to provide greater access to higher education to a population of students who are unable to attend college due to personal or professional obligations. Despite the limitations that may exist, leaders at HBCUs are charged with exploring how to best implement and sustain e-learning initiatives in order to remain competitive in the higher education market, as well as meet the needs of their student groups. In an effort to understand how some HBCUs are able to implement and sustain e-learning programs, an investigation into the strategic focus and inclusivity of faculty was vital.

Discovering how these institutions are able to implement e-learning could provide higher education administrators with a chance to understand the factors that contribute positively toward the sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs. Additionally, this study could provide an opportunity for HBCUs to reevaluate policies, procedures, and resource allocations to ensure they supply a foundation for e-learning growth and development. Furthermore, this study could provide an avenue to encourage dialogue between administrators and faculty with regard to the creation of successful e-learning programs that will meet the needs of today's student.

This study utilized a collective case study to examine and illustrate different perspectives on how the relationship between academic leadership and faculty involvement affects the development, implementation, and sustainability of e-learning initiatives at three public HBCUs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight study participants from three campuses. A 16-question interview protocol framed the interview process. This protocol was developed specifically to elicit descriptive data related to the participants' knowledge and experience with e-learning at their respective institution (see Appendix B). It covered areas such as (1) the events at their institution that led to and support offering online instruction, (2) the institutional setting that supports development, faculty, and students, and (3) the appropriate personnel charged with

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providing support and leadership for e-learning initiatives. The interviews were conducted either in-person or via two-way video web conferencing. They averaged in length from 38 to 63 minutes. Study participants were afforded the opportunity to openly share their experiences.

Study Sites

The selection of institutions for this collective case study followed the purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell, 2014). The three HBCUs selected are part of a multi-campus university system in the southeast region of the United States. The criteria for site selection included: (1) designation as a historically Black institution, (2) constituent member of the Southeastern University System; (3) online degree program offerings at the undergraduate and graduate levels; (4) total student enrollment between 5,100 and 8,200; and (5) more than 10% of total student credit hours from online enrollments.

Study Participants

The selection of participants for this collective case study followed the purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell, 2014). Participants were selected based on their ability to generate in-depth information on the organizational structure of their institution and their experience with developing, implementing, or managing e-learning programs. Through exploring the perceptions of campus administrators and faculty, this study was able to better understand how inclusivity of stakeholders contributes to the sustainability of e-learning programs at HBCUs. Faculty participation was a key component to this study. Identified faculty participants ranged from various professorial levels to early adopters of e-learning to academic administrators.

Results of the Study

The faculty and administrators who participated in this study shared their knowledge and experiences related to e-learning initiatives and the organizational context in which e-learning is

administered at their campuses. The resulting study findings illustrated participant perceptions of the current state of e-learning and requirements for sustainability. These perceptions were aligned with existing literature on e-learning leadership, organizational structure, and institutional support. Participants articulated their difficulties with institutional policies specific to e-learning, debunking the perception that online learning is subpar to face-to-face instruction, human and fiscal resources, strategic planning, and their perceived administration of e-learning. Distance education research asserts the association between leadership and sustainable e-learning programs (Fredericksen, 2017; Legon & Garrett, 2019; Nworie, 2012). Fredericksen (2017) emphasized the significance of online learning to colleges and universities and the importance of transformational leadership as a "catalyst for organizational change" (p. 10) in higher education. He stressed the potential impact of transformational leadership on e-learning initiatives, allowing the leader to engage stakeholders, create a vision, and inspire innovation and change. In his research of online leaders in higher education, Fredericksen (2017) suggests that Burns's (2003) lens on the idea of transforming would be most helpful for institutions:

> It is to cause a metamorphosis in form or structure, a change in the very condition or nature of a thing, a change into another substance, a radical change in outward form or inner character, as when a frog is transformed into a prince or a carriage maker into an auto factory. It is change of this breadth and depth that is fostered by transformational leadership. (p. 24)

Existing research attests that collaboration with the campus community and stakeholders is a critical component in launching and sustaining e-learning initiatives (Fredericksen, 2017; Jameson, 2013; Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018, 2019; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003; Sae-Khow, 2014). Nevertheless, there is currently a gap in the literature regarding the leadership role of

faculty in the process of initiating e-learning at the campus level. The existing literature on

colleges and universities entering the e-learning space is centered around faculty as subject

matter experts, technology to support e-learning, and faculty professional development. In an

attempt to better understand their campus experiences, participants were asked a series of

questions regarding their involvement in e-learning, their perception of the institutions' vision

and administration of e-learning, how they perceive resources are allocated to support e-learning,

perceived challenges, faculty development, and policies regarding e-learning development and

implementation.

Resources and Funding Are Needed to Support e-Learning

Operational budgets and institutional support are critical components to the success of e-

learning initiatives. Institutions should place importance on e-learning operations continually

(Lockhart & Lacy, 2002; Sae-Khow, 2014). The data from the current study validated this

assumption and indicated that, the study participants perceived institutional support contributed

to the success of e-learning at their respective institution. During the interview process,

participants described how funding for e-learning course design and delivery is allocated. Many

participants noted funding decisions reside at the Chancellor's level and trickle down to the units

actively involved in e-learning. This section provides an overview of the findings related to the

first research question that sought to explore the perceptions of faculty and administrators on

how the organizational structure and operations impact the development and sustainability of e-

learning.

Faculty professional development is a crucial part of e-learning. Institutional

approaches to online course development are diverse, but the most common arrangement is

faculty as the developer with some level of instructional design support (Legon & Garrett, 2019).

Findings support higher education research regarding the importance of training and support for e-learning faculty (McClellan, 2016; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003; Salmon, 2005; Seaman, 2009). Participants agreed a considerable amount of time and effort is required to develop an e-learning course and is typically added to the current workload. In their research on faculty adoption of e-learning in higher education, Martins and Nunes (2016) examined faculty resistance to e-learning. Their research suggests faculty should be equipped with an "enhanced set of skills and attributes that transcends the transference of subject-specific knowledge, to successfully meet the possibilities open by online delivery, namely, the development of high-order cognitive skills related to negotiation of meaning, meta-cognition and life-long learning" (Martins & Nunes, 2016, p. 301). McPherson and Nunes (2004) argue, the faculty's role in e-learning requires the ability to provide leadership and guidance to individual learning needs and organize course content so learning objectives are aligned with methods, assessment, and expected outcomes.

Faculty participants perceived the tasks associated with e-learning brought a new set of responsibilities, requiring the monitoring and moderating of student activity in the e-learning environment. This finding is substantiated in the studies of Shin (2002) who argues that a reason faculty struggle with adopting e-learning is "transactional presence – the connected and continuous availability of academics to students' requests" (p. 132). When asked to describe their perception of faculty training and development efforts with regards to their campus, all study participants perceived a high sense of importance with adequate support systems in place. Participants shared the faculty development models at their institution, which varied from voluntary to mandatory. Participants from Amber University described a more formal training process that requires the completion of an online training module prior to being authorized to teach online. At Blanch University, the process was less formal. While participants noted a

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process managed by a central office, they perceived the process to be less formal and more on a voluntary basis. Participant C1 noted "no uniform preparatory process for faculty who teach e-learning courses primarily because the institution does not have a large inventory of online degree program offerings." However, he mentioned the institution offers "voluntary e-learning workshops for faculty who deliver courses in this modality via a professional development series."

Oversight of e-learning should be the responsibility of a specified unit. A debate in the field of e-learning is whether this delivery mode calls for institutions to create special arrangements for leadership and staff roles and faculty conditions (Legon & Garrett, 2018). Additional research conducted by Legon and Garrett (2017) also suggests as e-learning activity continues to grow at colleges and universities, many institutions are concerned with achieving stability and reliability in their e-learning endeavors, making it an "established institutional function" (p. 5). They further note e-learning is increasingly becoming part of the strategic planning process in an effort to address institutional issues such as enrollment growth, student completion, and quality enhancement in course development and delivery. Findings from this study support this research. All of the study participants discussed the need for stable management of e-learning. However, each of the participants noted varying levels of e-learning management on their campus. Participants described the management structure as either centralized, decentralized or a combination of both. These findings support the existing research that shows an emergence of a permanent administrative position to oversee the functions and responsibilities of e-learning since 2008 (Legon & Garrett, 2019).

During the interview process, participants defined their perceptions of management controls for e-learning. As mentioned in Chapter Four, all of the study participants from Amber

University shared they perceive the model at their institution to be hybrid, having both centralized and decentralized administration of e-learning. Participant A3 specifically noted, "the [office] provides support and resources to help faculty. I consider the model to be decentralized, departments decide on courses and resources outside the university or the office." Participant A2 added:

> Mostly centralized, but our department has an online undergraduate curriculum committee that would probably be best described as decentralized. I'm not sure how many departments have similar committees. We have an [office] that is responsible for overseeing online education innovation and quality.

Legon and Garrett (2017) found the most common operational model amongst the institutions surveyed in their research is one that encompasses centralized services along with decentralized academics. They note this type of operational model provides departmental autonomy but may put the institution at risk of providing a lack of consistency in their e-learning efforts. Existing research highlights the need for a leadership position that can bring together the functions and responsibilities of e-learning (Fredericksen, 2017; Jameson, 2013; Legon & Garrett, 2017). Fredericksen (2017) has helped define this position as the "chief online education officer (COEO) or the chief online officer (COO)." This position would be at the center of institutional planning and decision-making related to e-learning course and program operations (see Figure 4).

Challenges other than funding that impact e-learning. Innovation is often used to describe e-learning in higher education; however, this term has become more complex and now includes areas of higher education such as student access and success, cost, and quality (Legon & Garrett, 2017; McCarthy & Samors, 2009). Findings from this study support the current body of

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research on the wide-ranging issues that impact e-learning initiatives in higher education (Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018, 2019; Tillman, 2009). The data show resources, personnel, program approval, and competition as the challenges that concerned participants the most. Tillman (2009) suggests several challenges and barriers to e-learning, such as faculty roles and responsibilities, use of technology, professional prestige, and lack of monetary support.

The existent body of research suggests the decision makers for e-learning to be administrators – Chancellor, Provost, Dean, Department Chair, Directors of Distance Education (Mitchell, 2013; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003; Nunes & McPherson, 2003; Nworie, 2012; Tillman, 2009). However, there is additional research that shows this model is shifting to keep pace with the rapidly changing landscape of e-learning in higher education (Fredericksen, 2017; Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018, 2019). As a result of this trend, the role of the faculty member now extends beyond that of the subject matter expert due to the necessity of having the faculty voice present from the first phase of planning through implementation and assessment. Study participants shared this sentiment as they described their involvement in e-learning at their respective campus. All of the study participants expressed being included in the e-learning planning process. Participant B1 explained her rationale for moving to teaching e-learning courses. She specifically noted she transitioned to a different mode of teaching because she was "getting burned out being assigned the same course load and the same format for so long." Participant A1 shared his involvement in the e-learning process as a "faculty member, a chair, and a Dean." Furthermore, Participant A3 stated inclusion in the process "allows me to purposely identify processes, procedures, technology, and provide adequate assessment and support." According to the research conducted by James, Ferrell, Kelly, Walker and Ryan (2006), transformational

leadership is important to the success of e-learning allowing institutions to recognize both formal and informal leadership, allowing faculty to have a voice in the planning and implementation.

A Planning Process Should be in Place to Address e-Learning Across the Campus

Planning effectively for e-learning is essential to the success and sustainability of these initiatives (Bullen, 2013; Fredericksen, 2017; Salmon, 2005). Research suggests colleges and universities have good "intentions and plans to achieve economic and quality benefits from the introduction of e-learning" (Salmon, 2005, p. 204). According to Collis and van der Wende (2002), higher education institutions are motivated into engaging in e-learning by its economic potential and the competitive and demanding marketplaces. Study participants varied on their responses regarding the existence of a strategic plan for e-learning at their campuses. Many participants recalled their institution engaging in the strategic planning process, but not specifically for e-learning. Participant C1 noted his institution does not have a strategic plan for e-learning but the deans of the academic units oversee e-learning courses and degree programs. The responses from participants at Amber University indicated strategic planning takes place on the campus, but the focus is on strengthening academic quality. Participant A3 further noted "e-learning is a big part of that plan, but there is no separate plan [for e-learning] at this time."

Salmon (2005) highlights the importance of planning for e-learning due to the up-front investment and costs. He further notes that during the planning process, institutions need to make predictions about which courses and programs are worth funding and decide what resources to divert to e-learning. When developing and implementing an e-learning strategy, institutions should consider their institutional strengths and include the campus community and other stakeholders in the planning process. Plans should be updated frequently to monitor progression and adapt to changes in higher education as well as the field of e-learning.

Many institutions have adopted quality standards for online faculty development, course design and program design (Legon & Garrett, 2017). The research conducted by Legon and Garrett (2019) revealed 85% of the respondents indicated a quality assurance process was in place for the following areas as it relates to e-learning: online course design, program design, faculty development, support services, and student outcomes. They conclude the greatest influence on the adoption of quality assurance for e-learning comes from external organizations, such as accrediting bodies and federal regulations. All of the study participants noted the existence of standards for e-learning to ensure quality in course design and delivery. Participants from Blanch University specifically discussed the use of the Quality Matters Rubric in online course design. Participant B1 stated all of her classes have successfully completed the Quality Matters Course Review process. She further noted, "the QM process acts as a form of assessment plan/process and helps to establish continuity in assessment and teaching pedagogy."

It is worth noting that quality assurance for e-learning should go beyond course and program design (Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018, 2019). Institutions must begin to ensure quality in support services for students and faculty. An inclusive quality assurance program will need a commitment of resources for increased staffing, mandatory review processes, and faculty incentives in order to be successful.

Faculty Have Varying Opinions of e-Learning

Often, the barrier of resistance to e-learning by faculty is based on trust (Martins & Nunes, 2016). Research conducted by Martins and Nunes (2016) suggests faculty need to trust the institution has a commitment to ensure e-learning outcomes are effectively communicated to the campus community. They further note acceptability of e-learning can be increased by sharing and emphasizing the benefits to faculty. Study participants reported e-learning to be personally

rewarding and done with limited resources. They also shared that lack of faculty buy-in is a barrier to expanding e-learning at their institution.

Faculty preparedness impacts faculty involvement. Throughout the interviews, study participants noted some of their colleagues were fearful of teaching an e-learning course due to time requirements. These requirements were described as the amount of time needed to learn new strategies and methodologies, time for course design, and the perceived time for faculty to promote student engagement. Furthermore, study participants noted their colleagues had a fear of learning new technology applications and of not being able to fully implement or utilize them in an online course. Current literature indicates that a clear strategy and on-going training are required prior to faculty engaging in e-learning activities (Jameson, 2013; Seaman, 2009).

Teaching online can be more challenging than face-to-face teaching due to the increased time demands in online teaching (Lorenzetti, 2004) and other activities related to online facilitation. According to Martins and Nunes (2016), there are faculty who recognize e-learning as personally rewarding but also have perceived discrepancies between personal and institutional rewards for engaging in e-learning. For example, the most common discrepancy derived from their research is that which exists between university rewards for teaching and scholarly activity. Participant B3 noted his institution provides a "little stipend to develop a course and of course we pay them to teach it." He further explained that once the course is developed, the course shell can be used within the department for others who are scheduled to teach the course.

Shared governance is important in the planning and sustainability of e-learning. As discussed in Chapter Four, study participants shared they have an identified role in the e-learning process. Legon and Garrett (2019) found that a large percentage of institutions of higher education in the United States have standing committees or councils dedicated to e-learning

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issues. Of the institutions they surveyed, 60% of institutions reported such committees. They attribute the presence of these committees to the impact e-learning has on "overall enrollment, revenue, and/or institutional mission" (Legon & Garrett, 2019, p. 30). Participant B2 discussed the need for more faculty involvement in her school and department. She stated at the campus level there seems to be "adequate participation by faculty." As e-learning continues to become interwoven into the everyday fabric of colleges and universities, there is an increased need for shared governance. This should expand beyond faculty and administrators to include representatives from both student affairs and business affairs. This shared governance can be in the form of advisory committees or councils and should have a clear relationship with the individual in the leadership role to oversee e-learning initiatives.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to note the various limitations of this study as practitioners connect the study findings to a larger context. First, I was only able to secure interviews with eight participants from the three research sites. Secondly, the inclusion of three HBCUs narrowed the scope of the study. As e-learning continues to grow in terms of significance to an institution's overall enrollment, production in the e-learning field varies according to institutional types – from Research I to Comprehensive institutions.

There were eight study participants, including four from Amber University, three from Blanch University, and one from Copper University. I attempted via email and phone to secure interviews with all of the individuals identified for participation. I utilized snowball sampling by contacting alternate individuals, at Copper University, based on recommendations from department chairs and distance education coordinators; however, those attempts were not successful. Although there was only one participant from Copper University, I felt it was

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important to keep this information-rich informant because of his position at the institution and the context he provided on e-learning. In addition, he has sixteen years of experience in higher education, at HBCUs, in various roles – faculty, department chair and dean. He also taught e-learning courses for five years at his previous institution.

Another issue that emerged from the execution of the study was the challenge of sending request for participation emails during the latter part of a spring semester and into the summer semester. Typically, this a busy time for faculty and administrators and emails may have been overlooked by recipients. The difficulty in obtaining responses resulted in the small sample of eight participants and may lead to the findings to being less useful to other institutions. Despite the use of probing questions asked, some participants provided responses that offered limited insight due to the brevity and context of their response.

Finally, in addition to the aforementioned limitations, as primary investigator, I currently serve as Director for the Division of Extended Studies at one of the research sites. Although I am not the immediate supervisor of the participants, I have direct oversight of e-learning initiatives at this institution and am involved in the development, implementation, delivery, and assessment of e-learning programs and course offerings. As this can be considered a limitation of researcher bias, the inclusion of faculty members and administrators from this institution enhanced the study. Due to the e-learning initiatives currently established and the plans for new fully online degree programs, their insight and experiences intensified the context of the study.

Implications for Higher Education

By investigating faculty and administrators' perceptions of e-learning initiatives, the findings of this research study provide important implications for policy and practice in e-learning at HBCUs. The results from this study can aid faculty and other higher education

administrators in their initiatives to build sustainable e-learning programs to meet institutional

goals around enrollment growth, reaching new student markets, instructional innovation, student

engagement, and student and faculty retention. Practitioners and policymakers can also utilize

these findings to enhance faculty experiences in the field of e-learning.

Organizational Structure

Research suggests online higher education has entered the mainstream (Fredericksen,

2017). Given this, there is a need for institutions to monitor organizational strategies as they

become increasingly dependent on e-learning enrollments and revenues (Allen & Seaman, 2011;

Fredericksen, 2017; Legon & Garrett, 2017). According to Legon and Garrett (2017), a small

number of risk takers will realize transformative change in the field of e-learning. Their research

further suggests that the management of online-related activities is being consolidated under the

leadership of a single institutional officer. They have given this position the title of "chief online

officer" (Legon & Garrett, 2017, p. 10).

Data from this study support existing literature regarding the importance of establishing a

structure in which an individual has the responsibility of leading e-learning to ensure it is

interwoven into the various facets of the institution. Participant responses varied on who at their

institution was responsible for developing and implement the vision for e-learning. Responses

ranged from the Chancellor or Provost, to the distance education or e-learning director. During

her interview, Participant B2 shared that her perception is the e-learning vision is set by the

chancellor and then managed by the e-learning administrators.

> Ultimately, the chancellor is responsible. He/she must be committed to this vision and
>
> must guard the vision throughout the various budgeting processes. He/she must protect
>
> the program and the vision. Then, once the chancellor has provided proper oversight, the

distance education administrators must do the logistical matters to develop and

implement the vision. They are the hands-on part of the process.

Based on study findings that indicated no clearly defined structure for managing e-learning at the

research sites, senior administrators should consider restructuring the organizational context to

unify the operational and organizational responsibilities under the leadership of a position

designated to specifically coordinate and direct e-learning efforts. Fredericksen (2017) suggests

the following units become the responsibility of the chief online officer: instructional design,

faculty development and training, course design and multimedia development, learning

management system, online learning policy development, and academic/educational technology.

This model could help senior leadership better understand how the e-learning movement

supports the institution's mission, as well as help plan future development and sustainability.

Faculty e-Learning Communities

Secondly, the study findings also highlighted the importance of faculty development

specifically for developing and teaching in the e-learning environment. While faculty

professional development is not a new concept and is offered at the sites included in this study,

participants expressed that the support needed to be successful with e-learning differs from the

traditional classroom and requires a more intentional effort to train and educate faculty on best

practices in e-learning which may dictate the success and sustainability of an online program.

Current research reinforces the positive impact learning communities have on faculty teaching

online courses (Esterhuizen, Blignaut & Ellis, 2013; Kapp-Heifner, 2018; Lippy & Zamora,

2012). With the exponential growth of e-learning, colleges and universities rely on full-time

faculty as well as adjuncts to develop and teach in this format. Online instruction differs from

face-to-face instruction and requires professional development specifically created for the online

environment (Storandt, Dossin, & Lacher, 2012) and may require higher professional development needs from pedagogy geared towards face-to-face instruction (Kapp-Heifner, 2018).

Data also indicated that faculty development was mainly utilized on a voluntary basis. Participants from Amber University reported a mandatory training process for faculty teaching in e-learning programs. As noted earlier, participants stated that training is offered in an "online format" and must be "completed prior to teaching any type of e-learning course" (source). Participants from Blanch University described the faculty development process as voluntary on their campus and Participant C1 stated his institution does not have a "formal professional development program for e-learning."

Based on the findings that suggest faculty recognize the positive impact of professional development and support when teaching in the e-learning environment, I recommend that HBCUs develop a faculty e-learning community in which faculty new to teaching online are paired with experienced faculty members. According to Owen (2014), learning communities are reflective, collaborative, and allow participants to work together over an extended period to share values and vision. In the context of these learning communities, experienced faculty can provide individualized advice on how to navigate the various aspects of teaching an online course and comply with quality assurances through the use of the Quality Matters Rubric for Higher Education – from course design to student engagement to assessment.

Ideally, an experienced faculty member would be paired with a new faculty member for an entire academic year. During this time, they would meet regularly to navigate course development and review. The chief online officer would arrange for the learning community members to meet at the beginning of the semester to layout expectations, available resources, and

best practices. A meeting of the full group should also occur at the end of the semester to follow-up on progress, discuss obstacles faculty may have encountered, and solicit recommendations from the faculty. Based on the research conducted by Kapp-Heifner (2018), I recommend compensating faculty for participation in the year-long e-learning faculty learning community. This stipend would serve as a means to recognize the amount of time and effort required to develop an online course in addition to the research and advising requirements of faculty at HBCUs. It would be awarded for attending trainings and upon successful course development completion.

Strategically Planning for e-Learning Adoption

Finally, data from this study emphasized the importance of institutions strategically planning for the implementation and sustainability of e-learning. Participant responses ranged from no strategic plan to specific plans within an academic department to University's strategic plan may include e-learning. Study participants acknowledged being included in some form of the e-learning process, either at the campus or department level. Research conducted by Martins and Nunes (2016) suggests barriers to e-learning stem from a problem of trust. In their research, the adoption of e-learning in higher education is described as a process that requires a strategic approach to organizational learning that enhances trust in the organization. They separated the process into three areas that reflectd perceived barriers to trust in e-learning by faculty: (1) trust to change, (2) trust to integrate, and (3) trust to institutionalize.

Developing a sustainable and impactful activity in higher education does not happen by chance. Leadership, vision and the connection of various strategies to respond to the emerging priorities of the institution are required (Hatzipanagos & Russell, 2014). According to Bullen (2013), e-learning cannot just be added to the institution's existing ways of operating, it must be

integrated into the core operations, aligned with institutional strategic plans, and new plans should be developed specifically for e-learning. In addition to faculty having overloaded teaching and administrative workloads, e-learning brings restraints such as increased time commitments (Carlson, Downs, & Repman, 2002; Orr, Weller, & Farrow, 2018), "lack of tenure considerations, lack of course releases and lack of training and support" (Cook, Ley, Crawford, & Warner, 2009, p. 151). Due to limited opportunities for receiving institutional rewards and incentives, faculty find it unappealing to consider e-learning adoption (Loureiro-Koechlin & Allan, 2010). In the context of adopting e-learning, I recommend HBCUs develop an e-learning plan, prior to engaging in any online activities or course offerings. The process should be inclusive of the campus community - faculty, department chairs, deans, senior administrators (academic affairs, student affairs, information technology), finance, library, and students. The planning process should take place at the institutional and academic departmental levels, since the process and needs will vary by discipline. Most importantly, all plans should align with the institutional vision and goals. Basic objectives of this type of planning should include:

- Vision for eLearning
  - Specify how the plan is aligned with the institution's mission and goals
  - Identify how the institution will be different upon successful implementation
  - Pinpoint opportunities for adjustments to the organizational structure
- Rationale for eLearning
  - Explain how eLearning contributes to the institution's plans and projections for enrollment growth

- Articulate the ways in which eLearning provides flexibility and access for students

  - Describe how innovative program offerings and structure can shorten the time to degree

- Core principles

  - Articulate the benefits of eLearning to academic programming

  - Explain how eLearning supports continuous, quality faculty development

  - Outline the costs associated with implementing and sustaining

- Strategic goals

  - Discuss what the institution aspires to achieve by implementing e-learning initiatives

- Measurable outcomes tied to the goals

  - Develop a quality assurance plan that evaluates the achievement of the stated objectives

  - Compose an instructional design initiative that promotes scalable quality course development

  - Identify how the institution can develop a network of student support services to assist eLearners

  - Vet technology applications that can be used to enhance eLearning processes, procedures, and learning environments

  - Research opportunities for faculty

  - Research opportunities for student growth and development

- Specific activities or tasks to achieve outcomes

- List the steps needed to achieve the stated outcomes

- Select campus partners that are needed to achieve the outcomes

Bullen (2013) notes "a flexible institutional strategic plan that recognizes the importance of eLearning is a necessary prerequisite to the successful implementation of eLearning" (p. ?). In addition, the plan should be an ongoing process for continuous input to keep pace with the rapidly changing and evolving landscape of e-learning.

Implications for Theory

In an attempt to reveal the roles that faculty play in the development and sustainability of e-learning at HBCUs, this study was framed using Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model (eMM). The findings of this research suggest institutions may improve their e-learning capability by addressing the five process areas identified by Marshall -— delivery, planning, definition, management, and optimization. Data offers considerable evidence for additional applications of Marshall's model within the context of e-learning sustainability at HBCUs.

Marshall's e-Learning Maturity Model

Marshall theorizes that institutions can use the model to assess their ability to sustain e-learning without focusing on technologies and pedagogies, but rather placing the focus on the institutional context and their capability to engage in high quality processes that can be sustained and built upon. He further suggests this presents significant opportunities for identifying and addressing areas of weakness in the provision of e-learning. The eMM also provides a mechanism for quality assurance by incorporating and reflecting national and institutional differences while allowing for a shared understanding of institutional capability to deliver and sustain effective e-learning opportunities (see Figure 5).
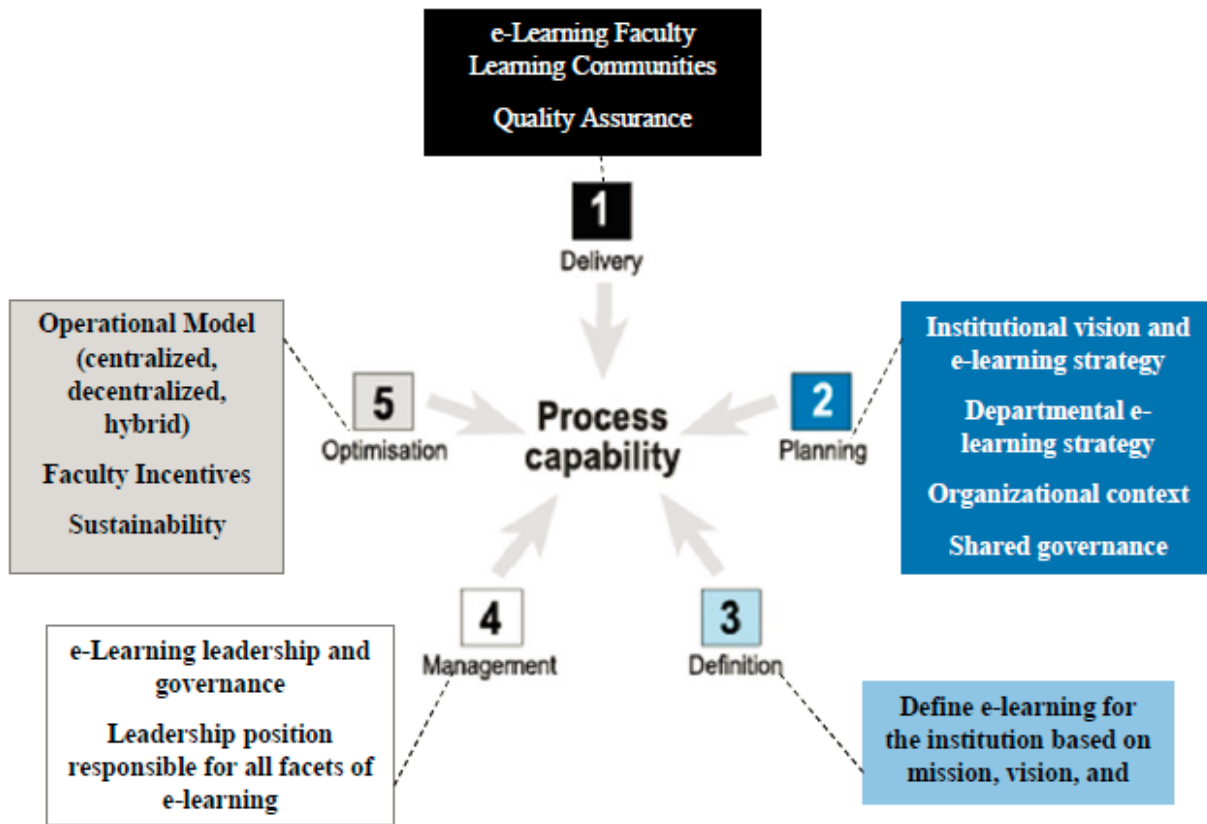
Figure 5. Overlay of Marshall's revised E-Learning Maturity Model.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study focused exclusively on the leadership and sustainability of e-learning initiatives at three public HBCUs in the southeastern region of the United States. The findings from this study provide a framework for additional research as it relates to building sustainable models for e-learning planning and implementation at HBCUs. I concede that the limited size of the study sample may not be descriptive of all HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions. Consequently, future research should also investigate e-learning initiatives at HBCUs with higher enrollments in other parts of the United States. This expansion would provide the opportunity to include a variety of viewpoints from faculty, administrators, and students in diverse circumstances.

The scope of this dissertation was grounded by Marshall's (2011) e-Learning Maturity Model to measure the capability of institutions to sustain e-learning and undertake systematic and targeted improvements. The model can assist institutions with assessing their ability to ensure e-learning design, development and deployment is meeting the needs of the faculty and students (Marshall, 2011). Similarly, the extant literature regarding organizational change and leadership acknowledges the need for institutions to rethink the management of e-learning and encourages organizational change to address this need (Frederickson, 2017; Legon & Garrett, 2017, 2018, 2019). In addition to examining the leadership role of faculty in e-learning, it would be beneficial to further investigate the views of senior leadership at HBCUs regarding the need and feasibility of creating a leadership position, such as a chief online officer. For example, future studies could broaden to include the effect this position would have on the organization context as well as the development, implementation and sustainability of e-learning programs at HBCUs.

Finally, the study findings introduced the significance of faculty training and development for online course design and delivery. Specifically, it may benefit future researches to investigate faculty and administrators' perceptions regarding the implementation of faculty e-learning communities at HBCUs, placing specific emphasis on the roles of experienced faculty and incentives that would not only be monetary, but would afford faculty the opportunity to include their work in the e-learning field as part of their annual evaluation and portfolio.

Conclusion

With the field of online education continuing to evolve and becoming a mainstream activity in higher education, approximately one out of three students in United States higher education is taking at least one online course and online enrollments continue to grow (Seaman et al., 2018). According to the study conducted by Legon and Garrett (2019), nearly all higher education institutions in the United States, across all sectors, have some online activity. This volume of activity in the e-learning field has resulted in increased attention on the topic by institutional leaders and campus stakeholders. As such, HBCUs have recognized the need to enter the field of e-learning or enhance current e-learning initiatives (McClellan, 2016; Mitchell, 2013; Moore, 2008; Mumuney-Tilghman, 2003).

Findings suggested that faculty and administrators at HBCUs recognize the importance of e-learning and support their institution in its endeavors. Particularly, participants noted overcoming challenges to develop and teach online courses. Faculty participants also indicated they are involved in the e-learning planning within their department, which helped them become champions of e-learning and encourage participation from their colleagues. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that their institutions are doing more with less in terms of providing faculty training, technology resources, and instructional design support on limited budgets. To

this end, they noted their involvement in e-learning stems from their love of teaching and learning innovative strategies to deliver educational content to as many students as possible.

In an attempt to enrich e-learning at HBCUs, higher education administrators should consider restructuring the organization to create a leadership position to champion their e-learning efforts. This change would allow key e-learning operational areas such as instructional design, faculty development and training, quality assurance, educational technology, and state authorization to be unified under one position in an effort to provide guidance on e-learning processes, policies and standards. This type of inspired leadership is vital to the success of HBCUs as they seek to build, enhance, scale, and sustain e-learning programs.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Kimberly McGhee
CC:
       David Siegel
Date: 10/23/2018
Re: UMCIRB 18-001829
       Examining the Relationship Between Academic and Faculty Leadership in the Developme
       Sustainability of E-Learning Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study an
form(s) is for the period of 10/23/2018 to 10/22/2019. The research study is eligible for review un
category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necess
eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving ris
participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a
review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator mu
all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used
participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents
study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Interview Consent Letter	Consent Forms
Kimberly McGhee Dissertation Proposal - FINAL.docx	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Kimberly_McGhee_Interview Protocol.docx	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Que:
Telephone Recruitment Script	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 [Biomedical] IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 [Behavioral/SS] IORG0000418

Notification of Continuing Review Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Kimberly McGhee
CC:

David Siegel
Date: 10/7/2019
Re: CR00008027
UMCIRB 18-001829
Examining the Relationship Between Academic and Faculty Leadership in the Development and Sustainability of E-Learning Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The continuing review of your expedited study was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 10/7/2019 to 10/6/2020. This research study is eligible for review under expedited category #7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Document	Description
Interview Consent Letter(0.01)	Consent Forms
Kimberly McGhee Dissertation Proposal - FINAL.docx(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Kimberly_McGhee_Interview Protocol.docx(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Telephone Recruitment Script(0.01)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Dear Participant,

I am a student at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership in Higher Education Administration program. I am asking you to take part in my research study entitled, "*Examining the Relationship Between Academic and Faculty Leadership in the Development and Sustainability of E-Learning Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.*"

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the impact faculty involvement has on the sustainability of e-learning programs at HBCUs. By doing this research, I hope to learn what role faculty play in the development of e-learning and how the organizational structure and operations of the institution affect e-learning. Your participation is completely voluntary.

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your current position and involvement with e-learning on your campus. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview session that will take no more than an hour of your time. You will be asked questions related to e-learning development and sustainability at your institution. An audio recording of the interview will be taken and a transcript produced. If you do not wish to be recorded, you have the right to request handwritten notes be taken during the interview. You will be provided a copy of the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors.

This research is overseen by the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at ECU. Therefore, some of the UMCIRB members or the UMCIRB staff may need to review your research data. However, the information you provided will not be linked to you. Therefore, your responses cannot be traced back to you by anyone.

If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of ORIC, at 252-744-1971.

You do not have to take part in this research, and you can stop at any time. If you decide you are willing to take part in this study, please respond to the communication and you will be contacted to schedule a date and time that best fits your schedule.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research.

Sincerely,

Kimberly McGhee
Principal Investigator

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date	
Time	
Location	
Interviewer	
Interviewee	
Email	

I.   Introductory Questions:

How long have you worked for the university?

Describe your current role in e-learning at the university?

How would you describe your general knowledge of and experiences with e-learning in the system?

II.   Purposes

Describe the institution's strategic plan for e-learning?

Probing Question1: How was it developed?

Probing Question 2: Who has the overall responsibility for implementation and monitoring?

What unit on campus has the responsibility for managing e-learning resources? Is the model

centralized or decentralized?

How is the decision made to implement e-learning in the curriculum?

Probing Question 1: What role do faculty play in this decision?

III.   Structures and Systems

What is your understanding of how resources are allocated for e-learning design, development

and delivery?

Are you aware of any institutional policies that explicitly address teaching and learning for e-

learning?

How does being a constituent member of a system impact e-learning efforts on your campus?

Probing Question 1: How does networking with other institutions in the system impact e-

learning at your institution?

Describe the e-learning assessment plan in place to achieve effectiveness, continuity and

sustainability of the assessment process?

What are the challenges currently impacting e-learning at your institution?   Probing Question 1: How are they being addressed?

IV. People
How does your inclusion in (or exclusion from) the planning process impact your experience with e-learning?
Describe how the institution prepares faculty to teach e-learning courses?   *Probing Question 1:* Is the process mandatory or voluntary?
Who is responsible for developing and implementing the University's e-learning vision?
Describe your perception of the institution's administration of e-learning?
Describe your perception of how faculty view of e-learning at your institution?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE EMAIL INVITATION

Hello _____

My name is Kimberly McGhee and I am a doctoral student at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership in Higher Education Administration program. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study entitled, "Examining the Relationship Between Academic and Faculty Leadership in the Development and Sustainability of E-Learning Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities."

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the impact faculty involvement has on the sustainability of e-learning programs at HBCUs. Insights from this study should provide information and guidance for HBCU administrators that could lead to a deeper understanding of administrative and faculty roles and responsibilities, organizational structure, and infrastructure to support the implementation and sustainability of e-learning. This research is an IRB approved study at East Carolina University.

You have been identified as someone who might have insights into this process and therefore could provide information that will be very helpful in answering the research questions for this study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will require 45 to 60 minutes of your time. Your identity will be kept confidential, and will be used only to compile subfolders of participant profiles by using pseudonyms. Your name will not be connected to your interview responses, but I will create codes for each response to maintain confidentiality. Audio recordings or any written responses will be destroyed after they are transcribed. If a follow-up interview is needed, that process should take no longer than 15 minutes.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. If you would like to participate, I will gladly schedule a date and time for the interview. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call or email me with your decision. As noted, your responses have the potential to provide valuable insights and information to improve the administrative processes, organizational structure, and decision-making around e-learning at HBCUs.

If you have any questions about this process or if you need to contact me about participation, I may be reached at (919) 270-3910 or mcgheek12@students.ecu.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE PHONE INVITATION

Hello [Mr./Mrs./Dr._____] -

My name is Kimberly McGhee and I am a doctoral student at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership in Higher Education Administration program. I am contacting you today to invite you to participate my research study. This is a study about *Examining the Relationship Between Academic and Faculty Leadership in the Development and Sustainability of E-Learning Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. You were identified because of your position and possible involvement with the e-learning/distance education.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview session that will last between 45-60 minutes. I plan to record the interview using a digital voice recorder. A transcript of the interview will be produced and you will be provided a copy to review to correct any factual errors. Upon completion of the dissertation, the data will be destroyed, electronic materials will be deleted and printed documents will be shredded.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. If you'd like to participate, we can schedule a date and time for the interview. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call or email me with your decision. Do you have any questions for me at this time? If you have any more questions about this process or if you need to contact me about participation, I may be reached at (919) 270-3910 or mcgheek12@students.ecu.edu. Thank you.