

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Eric J. Hansen for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education presented on October 7, 2009.

Title: Moving From Good-to-Great: How One Community College Made the Transition

Abstract approved:

George H. Copa

The purpose of this study is to explore the applicability of Collins' (2001) *Good-to-Great* theory, as originally introduced for the business sector and as adapted for the social sector, to the ways a community college moved from being "good" to being "great." The following questions guided the research: (1) Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness? (2) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? (3) What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? (4) How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? The research design included an interpretive social science methodology and instrumental case study method at one college identified as having made the transition from good to great.

The findings demonstrated that elements from all seven of the *Good-to-Great* themes posited by Collins were present at the good-to-great community college, yet there were some features of the themes that were not present. A continuum of applicability for Collins' themes was presented with the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme having the greatest and the Hedgehog Concept having the least applicability to the community college context. Beyond the themes presented in Collins' theory, three additional emergent themes contributed to the community college's transition from good to great, specifically: (a) Context Matters, (b) Enduring Leadership, and (c) Creating the Reality

We Need. Ascertaining the importance of Collins' themes and the emergent themes in relation to each other was found to be challenging and problematic as the interaction among all of the themes was seen as important. Alterations of all seven of Collins' themes were proposed including: (a) Level 5 Leadership, (b) Both Who...And What, (c) Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith, (d) The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles, (e) A Culture of Disciplined Experimentation, (f) Technology Accelerators, and (g) The Flywheel and the Doom Loop. The study concludes that, with increasing demand and accountability confronting community colleges in the face of reducing resources, the insights gained through the findings of a good-to-great college may provide helpful lessons for other community college leaders to consider when developing their own strategies for improving organizational effectiveness.

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Moving From Good-to-Great: How One Community College Made the Transition

by
Eric J. Hansen

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Education

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Eric J. Hansen, Author

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my wife, Angela, and my daughter, Abigail, for their endless patience and support through this academic and personal journey. You have continuously given me the gifts of time, encouragement, and love.

“Good is the enemy of great.” – Jim Collins

Moving From Good-to-Great: How One Community College Made the Transition

CHAPTER 1: FOCUS AND SIGNIFICANCE

In 1994, Jim Collins, former Stanford University business professor, co-authored the book *Built-to-Last* (1994) where he identified the themes in select corporations that have been highly successful over time. His critics suggested the identified corporations have always been good and challenged Collins to produce evidence of corporations that had made the transition from being good to becoming great. Collins accepted the challenge and began a search for companies that overcame the trap of being just “good” and transformed to “great.” In his book, *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins identified 11 companies that met his criteria of good and great after an extensive research effort. Further investigation yielded seven themes that were identified to have contributed to the successful transition. Collins asserted that these themes can work to progress any organization from good to great, but is that the case? To what degree do the themes that characterize the private sector organizations’ transitions from good to great apply to the public sector educational setting of the community college?

Focus

In *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins made the case that being good is the enemy of being great. He claimed that there are few great schools, governments, or businesses because these entities have been lulled into accepting the status quo and settling for being good schools, governments, or businesses. Collins asked the questions, “Can a good company become a great company and if so, how? Or is the disease of ‘just being good’ incurable” (p. 3)? To answer these questions, Collins began an extensive and rigorous search for businesses that had transitioned from being good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. Collins found 11 companies that fit his criteria for good and great and he isolated seven themes that he believed contributed to the transition. He concluded that these themes can be applied to all organizations, public and private, regardless of mission.

Although lessons about improving educational organizations can and have been learned from the corporate sector for many years, there has been little critical analysis to

see if these themes are appropriate for and applicable to educational institutions (Weber, 2005). As business entities, the companies used in Collins' (2001) study had very different missions, structures, and definitions of both success and productivity than those in higher education. For example, the criteria of stock returns as a measure of effectiveness are neither applicable nor appropriate for an educational setting. The mission of the public community college does not typically include increasing contributions to the bottom line or generating the largest financial contribution to investors as a primary principle. In addition, the structural concepts of academic freedom and tenure found in the community college are not typically present in the business sector (Kezar, 2004). Although there are similarities between business and educational entities such as organizational hierarchies and management of people and resources, growing competition for users, and accountability to internal and external stakeholders, there are also some fundamental differences. Without critical analysis, Collins' work is being applied today in these educational institutions (Muntz, 2005). Additional research is warranted in order to fully understand the presented themes in a social sector context, and more particularly in higher education, and then apply them appropriately to realize a better future state of affairs.

Purpose

There is value for practitioners and scholars alike in critically evaluating Collins' (2001) assertion that his themes are universally applicable to all organizations including higher education institutions and specifically the community college. The purpose of my dissertation was to explore the applicability of Collins' theory, as originally introduced and as adapted for the social sector, to the ways institutions move from being good to being great in the higher education context, and more particularly to community colleges.

Research Questions

This study endeavored to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness? This research question was the primary question at the core of the purpose of my study. Answering the question provided an understanding of the degree to which the participants believed Collins' themes were relevant to the community college setting.

- 2) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? This question allowed for the exploration of additional themes not identified by Collins and possibly unique to the community college setting.
- 3) What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? This question was designed to gain an understanding of not only the presence of Collins' themes, but also the relative degree to which the participants felt they contributed to the transition from good to great.
- 4) How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? This question probed for how Collins' themes might be adapted to better fit the community college environment.

Significance

The significance of this study rests upon three points: (a) contribution to the literature, (b) impact on community colleges, and (c) my personal interests.

Contribution to Literature

Over the course of the past three decades, there has been a dramatic proliferation of popular business leadership and management books proposing techniques to improve organizational effectiveness. Credible practitioners including Covey (1989), Senge (1990), and Peters (1987) have promoted prescriptive principles and practices as universally applicable to organizations within and outside of the business sector. More specifically, as evidenced by the over 3 million copies of *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001) sold worldwide (Collins, n.d.), there is a significant population in the public and private sector that appears to respond to the theories developed by Collins (2001). Many educational leaders, have embraced these books and attempted to apply them to the educational setting (DeMary, 2005; Langley & Jacobs, 2005; Robinson, 1997; Stern, 2005). However, there has been little critical analysis to determine whether the suggested principles and practices are truly applicable or appropriate given an educational context.

In addition, there is a paucity of depth and breadth in the literature regarding themes that have led community colleges to transition from good to great. "Most of the research on institutional effectiveness has focused on four-year institutions. Yet, two-year institutions comprise the single largest institutional sector of American higher education" (Smart et al., 1997, p. 256). Most relevant literature on community college organizational

effectiveness is either narrowly focused on specific educational programs, strategies, leadership, or structures of an institution or has been based on the private sector criteria and potentially lacks the nuance of educational environment, structure, and processes present in community colleges.

Impact on the Community College

The American community college has been touted as a key element in educating the populous and invigorating the national economic engine (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007b; Potter, 2003). The nearly 1200 community and technical colleges in the United States enroll over 11.6 million students seeking a post-secondary education (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007a). Clearly, effective community colleges are important not only to the students who enroll, but also to the country as a whole. Yet, critics of the community college system have questioned whether the institutions are doing enough to fulfill their mission. They question whether the community colleges have lost their way in their apparent attempt to be all things to all people (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). Copa and Ammentorp (1997) suggest that institutions of higher education need to recognize that change is an inevitability that can either be feared or embraced. “As presently organized and delivered, higher education is no longer sustainable, technologically or pedagogically” (p. 1). With perceptions of inefficiencies and less than optimal results of organizations, external stakeholders, legislatures, accrediting bodies, community college boards, and community members have been demanding greater accountability and demonstration of effectiveness from community college leaders in their roles as stewards of a public trust (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007a; Bailey & Morest, 2004; Welker & Morgan, 1991).

Politically, pedagogically, structurally, and financially, community college leaders cannot continue to lead in the ways they did during the 20th century (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Copa & Ammentorp, 1997). Tomorrow’s community college leaders need to be able to “dance with change” if they are to transform their institutions to meet the challenges of a quickly evolving world in a sustainable manner (Copa & Ammentorp, 1997).

Meanwhile, demand for educational services provided by community and technical colleges continues to rise and the makeup of its students is ever-changing. At minimum, America is experiencing increases in the number of: (a) high school graduates expecting an affordable and accessible college education, (b) the Latino population, and (c) the average age of its citizens (College Board, 2007).

With the tuition gap between four-year institutions and community colleges widening, more students are looking to community and technical colleges for their educational needs (McClenney, 2005; Sampson, 2004). For public two-year institutions, credit-based demand has increased from 5.3 million students in 1995 to over 6.7 million in 2007; a 26% increase in just over a decade (National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics, Third Edition (2000) as cited in American Association of Community Colleges, 2007a; U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Predictions about the future for community colleges indicate demand for their services is increasing substantially.

To add to the pressure, community colleges have received significantly fewer resources from the state and federal governments (Sarasohn, 2007):

Community colleges are facing a great funding challenge in that state funding is not keeping pace with increasing costs due to inflation, an expected increase in high school graduation rates, and consequent college enrollment increases. In addition, the majority of states have a structural deficit in funding current services. Because of these factors, community colleges are faced with the tough decisions of cutting services or increasing tuition. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008)

These pressures of increased accountability and demand in the face of decreased resources are creating real stresses on the colleges' capacities to serve their students and communities well. However, the question is not whether community colleges are good. Law makers, industry and community leaders, educators, and students alike affirm the community college's contribution to the greater society (Boggs, 2004; Evelyn & Brainard, 2004). Indeed, there is not widespread evidence of systemic incompetence, malfeasance, or poor educational quality. However, these multiple challenges for the community college suggest there must be changes with increased focus to demonstrate tangible organizational effectiveness. Being "good" is no longer sufficient. Community

college leaders are at a crossroads on how to focus their efforts in providing increased efficiency and effectiveness regarding educational delivery (Evelyn, 2004, "State funding for community colleges: A 50-state survey", 2000). "Community colleges have in fact altered the landscape of American higher education. The question is, where to now? And how we are going to get there" (Deborah M. DiCroce, president of Tidewater Community College, in Virginia as cited by Evelyn, 2004, p. A28)?

Today's community college leaders need insight into possible themes that can help focus effort and yield improved organizational effectiveness of the community college. The ultimate benefit then is for community colleges to more effectively serve their students and community.

There is also a repeated call by the preeminent national community college associations for the identification of themes yielding organizational improvement (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007c). Authors site the increased complexity in the backgrounds, needs, and desires of students; the widespread leadership turnover anticipated for community colleges; the scarcity of traditional government funding; and the ever expanding missions across the country as rationale for improvement in organizational effectiveness.

Personal Interest

In my 21 years of work in higher education coupled with my Masters of Business Administration, I have been a long-time student of both organizational theory and practice continually searching for more effective processes or structures to improve organizational effectiveness in higher education. I found that many of the organizational theories and practices I learned in my business courses translate very well to academia. I found that Deming's principle of continuous improvement (Walton, 1986) fits very well with the educational concept of lifelong learning, Covey's (1989) and Senge's (1990) principles suggesting an initial focus on personal awareness and mastery also translate well to effectiveness of educational leaders in higher education.

However, I also discovered that in some cases the organizational and leadership theories and practices from the business sector do not translate well to the educational setting. I believed these particular theories and practices required greater scrutiny before

adopting them completely, if at all, to the educational environment. An example includes concepts of the one minute goals, one minute “praisings,” and one minute reprimands described in Blanchard’s (1982), *One Minute Manager*. Here Blanchard prescribes overly simplistic techniques to manage employees and to manipulate change that would likely be seen as parental and autocratic in an educational setting that emphasizes process oriented decision-making, shared governance, teamwork, and partnerships.

Although I had my own insights about when and where to apply these business principles in the educational setting, I wanted to transcend my personal beliefs by adopting a rigorous and scholarly process to better understand this applicability in regards to Collins’ theories. As a future community college leader and/or consultant, my intention was to hone my knowledge and analytical skills to gain greater understanding and insight into the themes that move a community college to greatness.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore the applicability of Collins’ (2001) theory, as originally introduced and as adapted for the social sector, to the ways institutions move from being good to being great to the higher education context, and more particularly to community colleges. Given the complexity of the community college missions, the increased pressures for accountability, and the increases in demand in the face of relatively shrinking resources, the community college environment is changing quickly. Established practices and processes do not appear to be sufficient for success in the future. In addition, there is a paucity of information in the literature around how community colleges can become great in terms of organizational effectiveness. As such, there appeared to be a need for exploring the topic of organizational effectiveness within the community college context. The insights gained from the case in this study may serve as a model for community college leaders at their home institutions as well as a model for my own development as a professional and scholar in the field of higher education. With these goals in mind, the questions this study centered around include: (a) Which of Collins’ themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness?, (b) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?, (c) What was the relative importance of Collins’ themes, among themselves and in relation to other

important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? and (d) How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of scholarly literature provided a context and frame of reference from which to conduct this study (Farmer & Rojewski, 2001; Pyrczak, 2003). The purpose of this literature review was to explore and evaluate Collins' (2001) Good-to-Great theory in the context of the greater body of literature and in the context of the community college setting. The guiding question to the literature review was: What does the literature indicate are the implications of Collins' Good-to-Great theory for the community college? Both the findings and the methods used in the cited literature influenced this research study in terms of focus and design.

Approach to Review of Literature

The primary data source in the review of the literature was the book, *Good-to-Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't* (Collins, 2001). With this book, a thorough exploration was conducted in order to be exposed to and understand Collins' study. The compact disc version of the book was also listened to as a way for the written words to be reinforced. The secondary data sources were Collins' website: <http://jimcollins.com> and his monograph: *Good-to-Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good-to-Great*.

In addition, the Oregon State University Library catalog, the Summit Catalog (Pacific Northwest research library holdings), and OCLC WorldCat (worldwide research library holdings) were utilized to search for literature on the use of *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001) in various settings as well as other literature on community colleges and organizational or institutional effectiveness. Specific databases used in the search for literature included: Academic Search Premier and ERIC by EBSCOhost, ERIC by FirstSearch, Social Science Citation Index, and Dissertation Abstracts. Google's web-based Scholar search was also utilized. Types of documents sought included peer reviewed journals, dissertations, books, popular magazines, and other periodicals. Priority was given to the literature written about *Good-to-Great*, community colleges, and organizational effectiveness. Also important was research that was written within the past ten years so as to reflect contemporary thinking around organizational effectiveness and to be on par with the timing of Collins' study. A variety of keyword searches were

utilized including higher education, community college, organizational effectiveness, and performance indicators. Research that had a limited scope of focus on one part of the community college organization or on leadership were not included as the purpose of my study was to understand organizational effectiveness for the community college as a whole.

Organization of Review of Literature

The review of literature is organized around three major sections relevant to this dissertation. First, a detailed review of the theory put forth in *Good-to-Great* by Collins (2001) is presented. As Collins' theory is central to the research questions, the purpose of this section is to: (a) provide an overview of the theoretical content or themes developed by Collins, and (b) set the context and framework for the themes examined in this research study. Second, the research methods used in *Good-to-Great* are reviewed. The purpose of this section is to: (a) provide an overview of the research process used by Collins, and (b) provide guidance for developing the research design utilized in this research study. This section includes the process used by Collins for both: (a) identifying the output indicator of organizational effectiveness in the private sector and, (b) identifying the inputs that ultimately emerged as themes. The final section is a review of methods used to identify overall effectiveness of the community college. The purpose of this section is to: (a) provide an overview of selected definitions and measures for the output indicators of overall effectiveness of the community college, and (b) provide guidance for this dissertation in exploring the indicators that could best be used in determining a community college that has transitioned from good to great.

Review of Collins' Good-to-Great Theory

The theoretical framework for my study was based on the ideas set forth in the book *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001). As the muse and model for this study, the purpose of this section of the review of literature is to provide a description of the theory put forth by Collins in *Good-to-Great*. The summary of a book is by its very nature a reductionistic process. As such, it is necessary to leave out the plethora of specific examples and instead to describe the most salient concepts and themes. The following section will: (a) provide an overview of the Good-to-Great theory as defined by Collins, (b) present critiques of

that theory, and (c) provide implications of Collins’ theory applied to the social sector (which is where the community college is located).

Overview of Collins’ Good-to-Great Theory

In this section of the literature review, the themes identified by Collins’ that led to his Good-to-Great theory are presented. The focus of this dissertation is to determine which of Collins’ themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. As such, a thorough understanding of the themes and related theory is essential.

To provide a context for his work in *Good-to-Great*, Collins (2001) began by referring to his analysis in his earlier book, *Built-to-Last* (Collins & Porras, 1994). In *Built-to-Last*, Collins and Porras studied 18 visionary companies that were a minimum of 40 years old and had thrived during their average lifespan of 92 years. They compared the creative thinking companies to those that had modest success during the same time period. The authors developed their Built-to-Last theory based on nine identified themes that were common in enduring great companies which they labeled: (a) Clock Building, Not Time Telling, (b) No “Tyranny of the OR,” (c) More Than Profits, (d) Preserve the Core/Stimulate Progress, (e) Big Hairy Audacious Goals, (f) Cult-like Cultures, (g) Try a Lot of Stuff and Keep What Works, (h) Home Grown Management, and (i) Good Enough Never Is. A brief working definition of each theme is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Working Definitions of Built-to-Last Themes

Built-to-Last Themes	Working Definitions
Theme 1 – Clock Building, Not Time Telling	Build capacity for the organization to be successful beyond the leadership of any one individual or team.
Theme 2 – No “Tyranny of the OR” (Embrace the “Genius of the AND”)	Focus on finding creative opportunities that allow for inclusive “both/and” options. Do not limit thinking to dichotomous “either/or” options.
Theme 3 – More Than Profits	Focus on values, ideals, principles, and people for the organization and the profits will come.

Built-to-Last Themes	Working Definitions
Theme 4 – Preserve the Core / Stimulate Progress	Maintain consistent core values and ideologies, and develop dynamic strategic and operating practices.
Theme 5 – Big Hairy Audacious Goals	Stimulate focused progress by developing clear and compelling goals/missions.
Theme 6 – Cult-like Cultures	Create focused organizational cultures by creating high standards, clear focus, and strictly screen employees to meet those standards.
Theme 7 – Try a Lot of Stuff and Keep What Works	Develop the opportunity for purposeful evolution by encouraging experimentation.
Theme 8 – Home Grown Management	Preserve the core ideology over time by promoting leadership from within the organization.
Theme 9 – Good Enough Never Is	Constantly strive for continuous improvement.

Since the theory of *Built-to-Last* is not the focus of this research study, the nine themes will not be elaborated any further here.

Although arguably insightful to leadership of various organizations, a significant critique of the theory and related themes expounded in *Built-to-Last* (Collins & Porras, 1994) highlighted the fact that the identified visionary businesses had always been great from their inception (Collins, 2001). They had remarkable founders that nurtured them from the beginning of their existence. Collins was challenged with the idea that his findings may not be particularly helpful for the majority of businesses which do not start out as exceptional organizations from their inception. The critical next question was: What themes, if any, would leaders need to cultivate to help transition their businesses from being good to becoming “great?”

In *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins attempted to respond to the question raised by his critics. He began the book with the assertion that good is the enemy of great. He posited there is a lack of great schools, governments, and businesses because society has

settled for good schools, governments, and businesses. Collins then asked the questions, “Can a good company become a great company and if so, how? Or is the disease of ‘just being good’ incurable” (p. 3)?

To answer these new questions, Collins (2001) developed an in-depth research process identifying 11 companies that transitioned from good to great. As result of the research effort, Collins’ proposed a theory of organizational change that contains seven distinct themes that were evident in all of the 11 good-to-great companies. Collins labeled them: (a) Level 5 Leadership, (b) First Who...Then What, (c) Confront the Brutal Facts, (d) The Hedgehog Concept, (e) A Culture of Discipline, (f) Technology Accelerators, and (g) The Flywheel and the Doom Loop (p. 12). These themes are more fully described below. At the end of each of Collins’ chapters, he included a summarized list of key points and unexpected findings from his research. I solicited permission from Collins to reproduce the summary in its entirety, but was denied. Instead, I have provided my interpretation of some of the relevant concepts in the summary and encourage the reader to reference Collins’ descriptions directly in *Good-to-Great* (2001). At the end of the description of each theme, a summarized working definition of the theme is provided.

Level 5 Leadership

Collins (2001) and his team found what he called “Level 5 Leaders” (p. 21) common to all of the good-to-great companies. While all of the leaders of both the good-to-great and comparison companies embodied characteristics or leadership levels that Collins labeled: (a) highly capable individual, (b) contributing team member, (c) competent manager, and (d) effective leader as seen in the comparative businesses, the leaders of the good-to-great companies had two additional characteristics. Collins established that the leaders of the good-to-great companies were also humble and self-effacing instead of the stereotypical self-absorbed charismatic personalities of top leaders. He also found that although personally humble, they all had a quiet, yet strong, professional will; meaning their ambition was for the success of the company and not for themselves. These Level 5 Leaders all worked as stewards of the companies rather than being ego-driven, self-centered directors of activity. Figure 1 represents Collins’ leadership hierarchy model for the Level 5 Leadership theme.

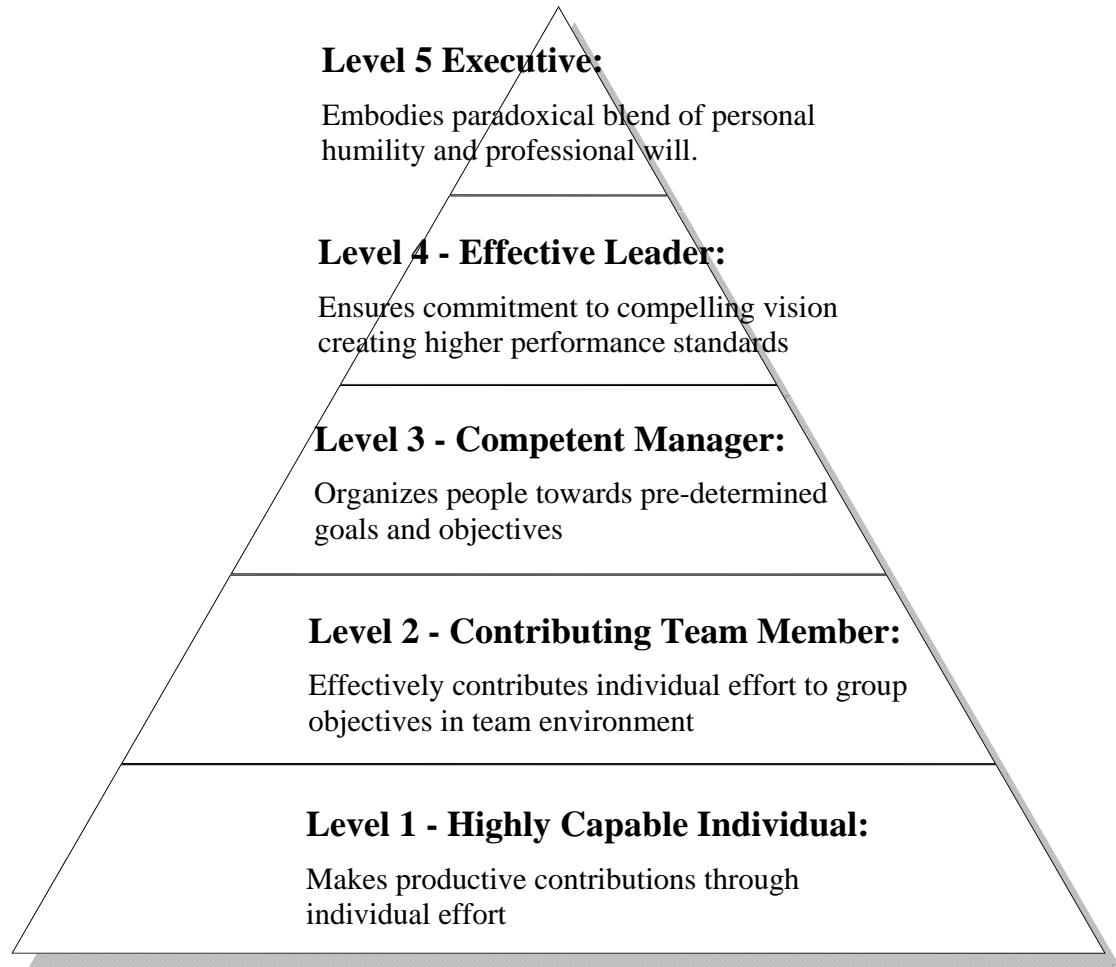


Figure 1. Collins' leadership hierarchy.

Below is summary of a few of the relevant concepts from Collins' chapter summary of Level 5 Leadership.

Level 5 Leaders:

- Have a mix of compelling personal humility and professional will.
- Are “fanatically driven” to do what is necessary in the organization to produce sustained positive results (Collins, 2001, p. 39-40).
- Care more about doing good work than looking good.
- Attribute the success of the organization to many factors, but do not identify themselves as a source of that success.
- Do not blame others for organizational failures and instead look at themselves to see what could have been done differently.
- Are not “dazzling, celebrity leaders” with enormous egos (Collins, 2001, p. 39-40).
- Tend to rise up from within the organization.

I encourage the reader to reference Collins' descriptions directly on pages 39 and 40 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme 1: Level 5 Leadership

Provide leadership that authentically embodies a mix of both personal humility and professional will focused on the company's success.

First Who...Then What

The second theme common in the good-to-great companies was the concept of "First Who...Then What" (p. 41). Collins (2001) asserted many companies spend their initial energy and focus determining their vision, mission, and goals and then find people to implement the plan. Collins suggested that instead of determining the proper direction for the company and then finding the right people, for the good-to-great companies, it was more important to identify the highly qualified and dedicated people first and then determine what direction they would follow or what they were going to do.

By their nature, the good people would develop good or great plans for strategy and action. Using the metaphor of a bus, Collins (2001) suggested that it is important to get the right people in the right seats on the bus and get the wrong people off the bus. "[T]hen we'll figure out how to take it someplace great" (p. 41). Below is summary of the relevant concepts from Collins' summary of the First Who...Then What chapter.

Good-to-Great companies:

- Determined the identification of the right people came before the determination of what to do including vision, strategy, and tactics.
- Maintained high standards for employees, but did not use layoffs and restructuring to improve organizational performance.
- Encouraged people to vigorously debate issues to develop the best solution and had the people support the decisions once made.
- Did not link executive compensation to improved organizational performance. "The purpose of compensation is not to "motivate" the right behaviors from the wrong people, but to get and keep the right people in the first place (Collins, 2001, p. 63-64).
- Emphasized character traits and innate capabilities when hiring employees rather than specific knowledge, background, or skills.

For a more complete description of key points and unexpected findings, readers are encouraged to reference Collins' descriptions directly on pages 63 and 64 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme 2: First Who...Then What

Hire the best people first. Then decide what the organization should focus on and where the organization should go.

Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith

The third theme Collins (2001) found in common in the good-to-great companies was the capacity for the people to have difficult conversations regarding the candid reality of their situation while not slipping into cycles of despair. Collins called this phenomenon the Stockdale Paradox based on the story of Admiral Jim Stockdale.

Admiral Stockdale was “the highest ranking United States military officer in the ‘Hanoi Hilton’ prisoner-of-war camp during the height of the Vietnam War” (Collins, 2001, p. 83). Once he learned of the story, Collins was interested in how Stockdale survived his eight years of captivity while others did not. In an interview with Collins, Admiral Stockdale indicated that unlike some of his fellow prisoners, he refused to become an optimist thereby denying the truth of his situation. Many of the optimists would look for milestones by which they would hope to be released only for their spirits to be dashed when the date came and went. In contrast, Stockdale confronted the fact that his reality was a difficult one but one that he could work through. Collins found that this mindset was also present in all of the good-to-great companies. Below is summary of the relevant concepts from Collins' summary of the Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith chapter.

Good-to-Great companies:

- Had the discipline to honestly seek and analyze the facts of their situation on a routine basis.
- Created a culture where people were encouraged to engage in decisions and tell the truth about the facts without being blamed.
- Addressed adversity directly and believed they would prevail which resulted in a stronger organization.
- Did not spend time motivating the employees. Instead, they found having the right people confront the brutal facts was self-motivating.

More complete description of key points and unexpected findings can be found on pages 88 and 89 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme: Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith

Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured. Even when the truth is negative, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.

The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles

Collins' (2001) team found that the good-to-great companies consistently had what they called the "Hedgehog Concept" (p. 90) borrowing from Berlin's story of *The Hedgehog and Fox* (1993). Based on a Greek parable, the fox is described as a cunning animal capable of many things while the hedgehog is a relatively simple animal capable of one big thing. The fox will regularly try to pounce on the hedgehog using its various skills, yet when in danger, the hedgehog simply curls up into a ball of spikes and the fox's intentions are thwarted. Collins used the hedgehog as a metaphor for the good-to-great companies who became skilled at adopting a simple and focused effort. This was contrasted with the good companies who attempted to be everything for everyone and trying every management fad that came along to motivate their employees or generate sales.

Collins (2001) found over time, the good-to-great companies came to an understanding of three converging concepts including: (a) an understanding of what they could and could not do best, (b) an understanding of what drove their economic engine, and (c) an understanding of their deep passion. When the companies focused on the center of the three converging concepts, they found their area for focus and success. Figure 1 represents Collins' Venn diagram of the Hedgehog Concept theme.

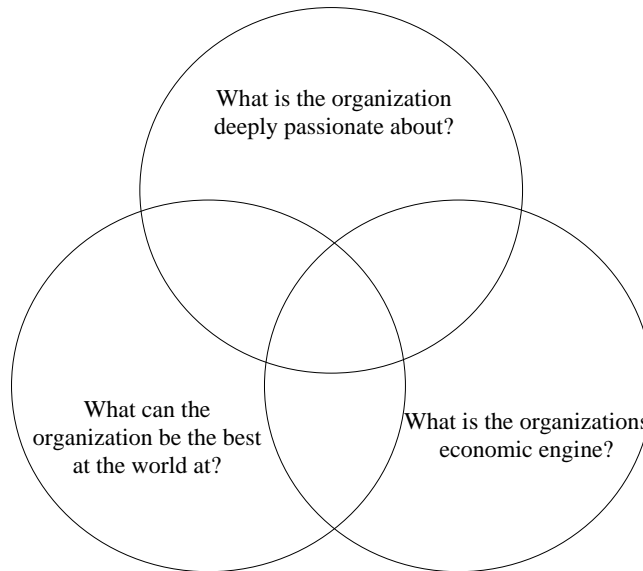


Figure 2. Collins' Hedgehog Concept theme.

Below is summary of the relevant concepts from Collins' summary of the Hedgehog chapter.

Good-to-Great companies:

- Where “more like hedgehogs-simple, dowdy creatures that know ‘one big thing’ and stick to it. The comparison companies are more like foxes-crafty, cunning creatures that know many things yet lack consistency” (Collins, 2001, p. 118-119).
- Had a deep understanding of where their organizational passion, ability to be the best, and economic engine intersect. This intersection provided their focus.
- Developed the understanding of the Hedgehog Concept did not happen immediately. It is an iterative process.
- Did not have to be in great industries to produce great sustained results.

More complete description of key points and unexpected findings can be found on pages 118 and 119 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme 4: The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles

Focus organizationally on one big concept. Specifically focus on the intersection of: (a) the organization's greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) what can financially support or excel the organizational efforts, and (c) the source of the greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.

A Culture of Discipline

Unlike the comparison companies, Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies were not overly bureaucratic organizations, but instead organizations that had self-disciplined people with sharp focus creating a culture of discipline. The employees of the good-to-great companies did not need to be motivated or disciplined by the organizational leadership to conduct their work. Collins also found that the good-to-great companies had a discipline of thought that meant they would not try to do everything or be everything to everyone, but instead be very careful about what opportunities they would engage in or let pass by. In addition, Collins found that the good-to-great companies created “stop doing lists” (p. 139) to help maintain their focused thought, energy, and effort on the highest priorities of the organization. Below is summary of the relevant concepts from Collins’ summary of the Culture of Discipline chapter.

Good-to-Great companies:

- Created a culture of self-disciplined people who consistently took “disciplined action, fanatically consistent with the three circles [of the Hedgehog Concept]” (Collins, 2001, p. 142-143).
- Did not create bureaucracies that limited progress.
- Had people who would adhere to a consistent organizational system based on an understanding of their respective freedom and responsibility.
- Appeared “boring and pedestrian looking in from the outside, but upon closer inspection, they're full of people who display extreme diligence and a stunning intensity” (Collins, 2001, p. 142-143).
- Understood that they did not need to take advantage of every opportunity especially if it did not fit within the focus of their Hedgehog Concept.
- Identified that determining what not to do was more important than determining what to do.

More complete description of key points and unexpected findings can be found on pages 142 and 143 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme 5: A Culture of Discipline

Create a culture where self-disciplined employees adhere to a consistent system and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.

Technology Accelerators

Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies used technology as a tool to leverage their existing work instead of potentially distracting them from the focus of

their work. While the tendency during the dot.com boom of the 1990s was to move all marketing, sales, and business processes to the Internet, the good-to-great companies resisted the fad and first asked how the use of technology would benefit customers and the organization. Many of the good-to-great companies moved slowly and methodically to the Internet only after careful consideration. At the same time, many of the good-to-great companies were pioneers of new technology but only after they had determined an organizational need. The difference between the good companies and the good-to-great companies was “the application of carefully selected technologies” (p. 148). Below is summary of the relevant concepts from Collins’ summary of the Technology Accelerators chapter.

Good-to-Great companies:

- Avoided technological fads and instead waited to apply technology in an intentional way.
- Became pioneers of technological applications over time once they knew how to utilize it towards organizational goals.
- Leveraged technology to accelerate their progress, not to create it.
- Did not attribute technology as a major factor to their transition 80 percent of the time.
- Utilized a "crawl, walk, run...approach, even during times of rapid and radical technological change” (Collins, 2001, p. 162-163).

More complete description of key points and unexpected findings can be found on pages 162 and 163 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme 6: Technology Accelerators

Use technology only to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort in achieving the organizational goals.

The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

Finally, Collins (2001) concluded that none of the good-to-great companies created a single defining program or process to lead to their transition from good to great. Instead they developed programs and processes that accumulatively reinforced the mission and led to momentum over time which ultimately made the transition possible. In the comparison companies, Collins found the opposite phenomenon that he labeled “The Doom Loop” (p. 178). The companies had many instances of new programs with great fanfare to motivate the employees. They were constantly trying to find the latest activity

that would thrust them into greatness only to be disappointed once again. Many times their new efforts moved the organization in the completely opposite direction of their previous attempts. The chaotic and diffused effort left stakeholders feeling confused and yielded results that demonstrate some gains but were short lived and ultimately disappointing.

In contrast, for the good-to-great companies, Collins (2001) used the analogy of pushing a flywheel in a machine to describe the accumulative effect of a unified vision. Over time the momentum of the effort became easier to reinforce. Even so, the momentum was almost unperceivable by the leaders in the good-to-great companies. To those reporting their progress within the organizations, their processes seemed to simply be focused on continuous improvement, but they felt the work was largely unremarkable, organic, and ordinary.

Figures 3 and 4 represent Collins' representations of the Flywheel and the Doom Loop.

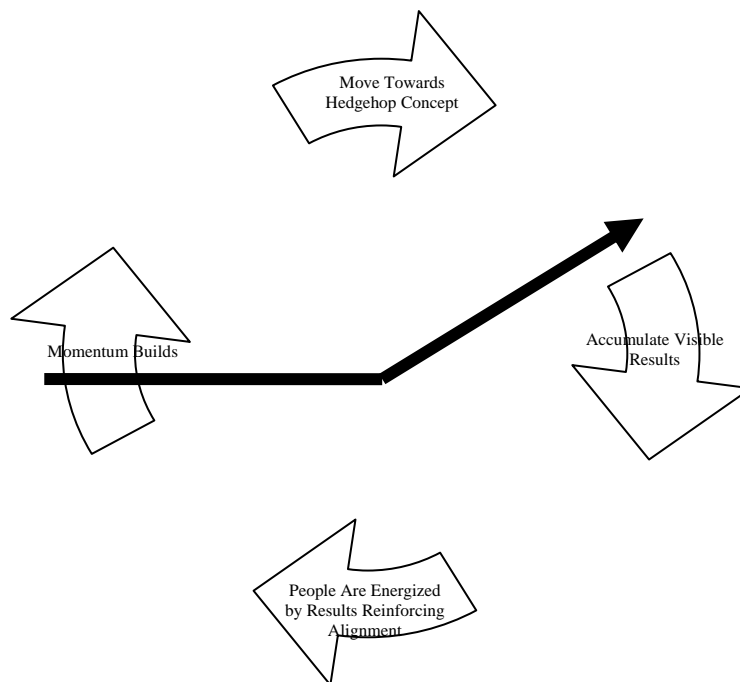


Figure 3. Collins' representation of the Flywheel model.

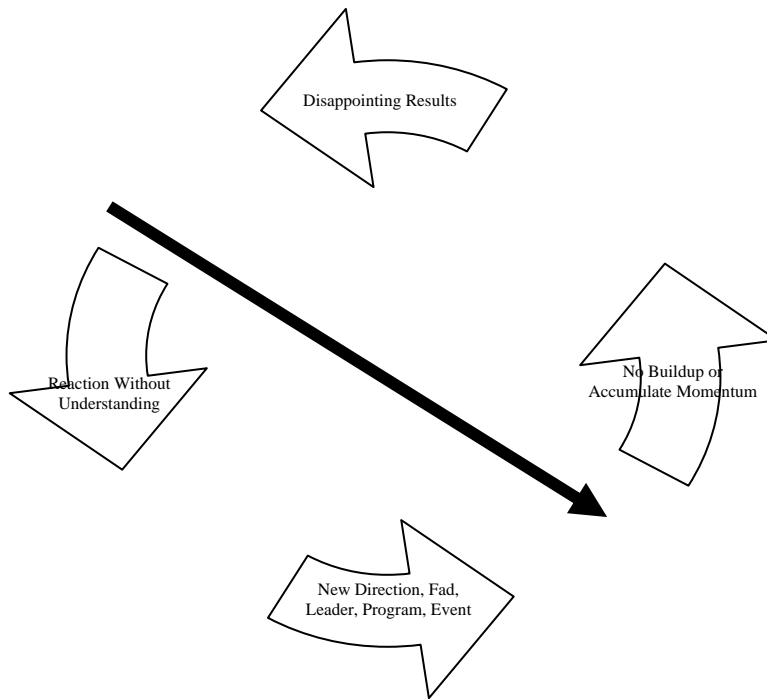


Figure 4. Collins’ representation of the Doom Loop model.

Below is summary of the relevant concepts from Collins’ summary of the Flywheel and the Doom Loop chapter.

Good-to-Great transformations:

- Took time to develop.
- Looked sudden and dramatic to outside observers, but looked deliberate and organic to those within the organization
- Did not result from singular action, programs, events, or leadership.
- Were like flywheels where they take a lot of effort to begin, but gained momentum over time by applying effort in alignment with common direction.
- Did not occur if there is not an understanding of the key elements of the Hedgehog Concept.
- Do not require substantial effort to create alignment with employees. If the principles of the Hedgehog were consistently applied, the motivation naturally occurred as a result of being a part of something successful.

More complete description of key points and unexpected findings can be found on pages 186 and 187 of *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Working Definition of Theme 7: The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

Focus on long term success by consistently employing the previous six themes yielding greater momentum over time.

Summary

In summary, it is clear that the identified companies’ progress from good to great was not based on a singular moment of incredible insight or luck. Instead Collins’ (2001) theory argues that it was the synergy of all seven of these themes that together created the momentum that allowed for transformation. Collins described the companies as consistently being focused and coherently performing the hard work to move the organization forward and that the breakthrough of transformation was a function of the increasing momentum of the organization. As I interviewed participants who were present during the good-to-great transition of the community college selected for this study, I explored which of Collins’ themes, if any, were present. I also attempted to remain open to the possibilities that other themes would emerge through the course of the interviews. Table 2 provides a summary of Collins’ theory by providing all seven themes with associated working definitions.

Table 2

Summary of Good-to-Great Theory with Associated Themes and Working Definitions

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Provide leadership that authentically embodies a mix of both personal humility and professional will focused on the company’s success.
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Hire the best people first. Then decide what the organization should focus on and where the organization should go.
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured. Even when the truth is negative, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Focus organizationally on one big concept. Specifically focus on the intersection of: (a) the organization’s greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) what can financially support or excel the organizational efforts, and (c) the source of the greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Create a culture where self-disciplined employees adhere to a consistent system and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Use technology only to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort in achieving the organizational goals.
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Focus on long term success by consistently focusing on the previous six themes yielding greater momentum over time.

Critique of Collins' Good-to-Great Theory

To gain a more holistic perspective of any theory, it can be insightful to seek out the thinking and comments of those who have studied and provided a critique of the theory both in terms of strengths and limitations. This section provides: (a) an overview of the popularity of Collins' Good-to-Great theory, (b) a summary of the major strengths of Collins' theory, and (c) a summary of the major limitations of his theory.

Popularity of Collins' Good-to-Great Theory

Good-to-Great has sold more than 3 million copies since it was published in 2001 (Collins, n.d.). Business Week and Amazon.com named *Good-to-Great* one of the best books in 2001 (Amazon.com, n.d.). In 2008, *Good-to-Great* remained as the third top selling business book of USA Today ("Money best sellers", 2008).

Based on its popularity, leaders from various professions have utilized Collins' findings to illuminate the themes needed to achieve organizational effectiveness. These included authors from business (Finnie & Abraham, 2002; Molyneaux, 2003; Rogers & Smith, 2004, "Whom should we talk to?" 2006), medicine (Berkowitz, 2005; Souba, 2003; Spengler, 2003), government (Thomas, 2003), religion (Bausch, 2006), athletics (Simpson, 2003), and education (Patterson *et al.*, 2003; Stern, 2005).

Reviewers have identified *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001) as an important reading recommended for all business and organizational collections (Drezen, 2001; Dugan, 2006; Edwards, n.d.; Farris, 2006; Holstein, 2001; Muntz, 2005). The themes that

emerged in Collins' theory were cited as a template for how other organizations could move from good to great.

It was clear from this review that, based on its popularity and wide-spread application, *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001) had at a minimum tapped into an important issue. While this evidenced a significant identified need by many leaders and managers from the public, private, and social sectors to better understand how to improve their organizational effectiveness, there remained a gap in the literature regarding whether Collins' Good-to-Great theory makes sense given the community college context. Namely, is the Good-to-Great theory relevant and appropriate for community colleges.

Major Strengths of Collins' Good-to-Great Theory

The reviewers often cited the common sense nature of Collins' findings as evidence of its applicability (Fillingham, 2003; Muntz, 2005; Nelson, 2003). They also cited that the wholesale adoption of the themes was not necessary to make a positive impact an organization. "Its principles ring true and even if you don't work in a setting where they will be adopted [organization]-wide, they can be applied to some extent even within a particular office or department" (Muntz, 2005, p. 27). *Publishers Weekly* (Holstein, 2001) stated that, "Many of Collins' perspectives on running a business are amazingly simple and commonsense. This is not to suggest, however, that executives at all levels wouldn't benefit from reading this book" (p. 78).

The major strength then is the relatively simple concepts of the Good-to-Great theory and the apparent intuitive applicability of the themes to all organizations. It is clear that themes are resonating with many leaders at face value and presumably without critical analysis. This is evidenced by the leaders from sectors other than public corporations that are almost eager to apply the Good-to-Great themes to their organizations without the same level of rigor applied to the companies studied (Holstein, 2001). Exploring the themes that were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great provided the opportunity to compare and contrast the themes developed by Collins in order to understand what best fits the community college context.

Major Limitations of Collins' Good-to-Great Theory

Not all reviewers commended Collins' Good-to-Great theory. Some criticized the construct of the book as too simplistic (May, n.d.; Nelson, 2003).

Collins asks an interesting question. [T]he answer is almost disappointing in its simplicity: Great companies become great by staying focused: focused on their products, their customers and their businesses. They aspire to higher levels of excellence, are never content to become complacent and are passionate about their products. They have leadership that is not ego-driven, and have organizational cultures that embrace constant change. That's the book. (Wharton Review as cited by May, n.d.)

Other critics believed Collins' specific findings were simply wrong. Referring to the concept of Level 5 Leadership, Tom Peters asked, "Wouldn't you like to think that a quiet leader will lead you to the promised land? I think it's total utter bull, because I consider this a time of chaos" (Reingold, 2003, p. 89). There was also concern with the general premise that timeless principles can actually be identified. Rosenzweig (2007) believed that valid research about cause and effect cannot be conducted after the fact. Rosenzweig also believed that much of Collins' work was flawed and impacted by what he called the Halo Effect. The halo effect was defined as "a tendency to make inferences about specific traits on the basis of a general impression" (p. 50). Rosenzweig (2006a) claimed that Collins' pursuit of timeless principles that yielded good-to-great organizations is naïve and his findings were over simplifications that do not exist in complex organizations. Other critics believed Collins' findings may hold some value for other sectors, but expressed caution in applying the Good-to-Great themes in settings other than the corporate context (Fillingham, 2003).

The review of the literature on limitations of Collins' theory suggested that there are two major criticisms. The first was that the theory is wrong. Whether due to overly simplistic analysis of the evidence, the inaccurate perceptions of study participants, or due to epistemological disagreements, the critics argued the emergent seven themes do not in reality explain how the good-to-great companies went from good to great. Although it is true that directly linking the cause of the seven themes to the effect of transitioning organizations is problematic, Collins (2001) did appear to demonstrate a positive correlation between the presence of the seven themes and the success of the companies in terms of stock values. The halo effect was a phenomenon that had the

potential of being present in my study as I asked key players about their recollection regarding how their community college transitioned from good to great. The potential was real for inaccurate memories or inclusion of items that had nothing or very little to do with the transition. I attempted to mitigate any application of the halo effect in the analysis of my research by member checking with multiple participants and by verifying assertions with other data sources. From my epistemological perspective, there was still value in the participants sharing their perceived understanding of what contributed to their community college transitioning from good to great. The second limitation was that caution should be utilized when applying Collins' theory to sectors beyond the corporate ones studied without critical analysis. As the community college setting is different from the corporate sector, implementation of the themes may have very different impacts on organizational effectiveness. It was the exploration of this latter limitation that was central to the purpose of my study and guiding research questions.

Summary

In summary, this section focused on the critique of Collins' Good-to-Great theory by reviewing its popularity and the strengths and limitations as discussed by various authors. There appeared to be ample evidence that suggested managers and leaders from many sectors of society were interested in the topic of organizational improvement and the steps needed to achieve it. Those critiques that affirmed Collins' theory of *Good-to-Great* cited its simplicity in concept and its common sense yet counterintuitive approach. Although these were potentially attractive traits, it appeared that some authors saw the themes as a panacea for organizational effectiveness applicable to any setting. The blanket application of the theory and themes needs to be applied with some caution beyond the corporate organizations studied. This was a gap that my research attempted to begin to address. It is of consequence to explore the themes that were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great and compare and contrast the themes developed by Collins to understand what aspects of his theory best fits the community college context.

Implications of Collins' Good-to-Great Theory for the Social Sector

This section of the literature review addresses implications of Collins' Good-to-Great theory for the social sector. As my study was intended to explore the themes

present for a community college that transitioned from good to great, and not a publicly held corporation, reviewing the literature relating to the implications of Collins' theory to the social sector offered an equivalent context. The following section has been organized by providing: (a) Collins' response to his critics regarding the application of the *Good-to-Great* (2001) for the social sector, and (b) the specific adaptation of the Good-to-Great themes for the social sector.

Collins' Response to Critics of Good-to-Great Theory Applied to the Social Sector

Since publishing *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins has consulted with many companies, spoken to audiences, and written articles presenting derivative concepts. Collins has also developed online resources including tools for organizations to facilitate dialogue around the themes found in *Good-to-Great* and to develop their own good-to-great organizations. Several years after it was first published, Collins continued to promote the lessons learned in *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2005b, n.d.). Although arguably a cornerstone of Collins work, he continued to shape his thinking in applying the theory of his first book to other arenas including a monograph titled, *Good-to-Great and the Social Sectors* (Collins, 2005a).

In *Good-to-Great and the Social Sectors* (2005a), Collins responded to the critique that the theory espoused in *Good-to-Great* (2001) was based solely on large companies in the private sector. Collins (2005a) intended that this second monograph focus on the adaptation of the theory to the social sector and that it be used as a supplement to the initial work. He acknowledged that he was not an expert in the social sectors but argued that since approximately one third or more of his readers were from the social sector and because he enjoyed learning, he felt it was appropriate to create the monograph.

Collins (2005a) suggested that contrary to what some may think, he did not believe the social sector should strive to think or act like businesses if they want to become great. He argued that the themes he found in the good-to-great companies transcend the corporate world and serve as general organizational "greatness" themes not uniquely business contexts.

That's what our work is about: building a framework of greatness, articulating timeless principles that explain why some become great and others do not. We derived these principles from a rigorous matched pair research method, comparing companies that became great with companies that did not. Our work is not fundamentally about business: it is about what separates great from good. (p. 2)

Collins (2005a) posited that the themes developed in his Good-to-Great theory transcend the corporate context and are applicable to any organization, yet the level of rigor cited as a strength for his original conclusions has not been applied to any other context. For my study, Collins' assumption of universal applicability to all organizations was explored via the community college setting.

Specific Adaptation of the Good-to-Great Themes for the Social Sector

Collins (2005a) indicated that in his communications with leaders and managers from different organizations, he noticed some reoccurring questions regarding the thematic findings, the application of his theory, and the inherent differences between the corporate sector and the social sector. These included: (a) how to get things accomplished with a diffused power structure, (b) how to get the right people "on the bus" with the unique constraints of the social sector, (c) how to rethink the economic engine when there is no profit motive, (d) how to build the momentum of the organization by building the brand, and (e) how to build a pocket of greatness. The purpose of the following section is to provide a summary of Collins' thinking organized by these five questions. Where applicable, at the end of the summary of each question, the related theme from *Good-to-Great* was provided along with the previously presented working definition and an adaptation of the working definition for the social sector.

Question one - how to get things done with a diffused power structure

Collins (2005a) acknowledged that many leadership positions in the social sector are diffused in direct decision power and ability to get things done. They must utilize more collaborative methods. Collins quoted Frances Hesselbein, CEO of the Girl Scouts of the USA, as saying, "[Y]ou always have power if you just know where to find it. There is the power of inclusion, and the power of language, and the power of shared interests, and the power of coalition. Power is all around you to draw upon, but it is rarely raw, rarely visible" (p. 10).

Collins (2005a) posited there are two types of leadership that he referred to as executive and legislative. The executive leadership has enough “concentrated structural power to simply make the right decisions” (Collins, n.d.). The legislative leadership theory acknowledges that no one person has the ability to make changes. Instead, the leadership is accomplished through persuading and convincing others, and identifying shared interests. Collins went on to hypothesize that the most effective leaders will likely demonstrate a blend of both executive and legislative leadership skills. “[T]hey will have the knack of knowing when to play their executive chips, and when not to” (p. 12).

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Provide leadership that authentically embodies a mix of both personal humility and professional will focused on the company’s success.	Leadership is accomplished more through persuasion, convincing others, and identification of shared interests (e.g., “legislative” leadership) than making directives (e.g., “executive” leadership).

Question two - how to get the right people on the bus with constraints of the social sector

Collins (2005a) acknowledged that the ability to hire and fire the correct staff is much more difficult in the social sectors than in the business sector. The solution offered is to not worry about those who are already there, but become more vigilant in the selection of skilled and motivated new staff members. He suggested creating rigorous selection processes, tapping into people’s intrinsic motivations, and creating a culture of high expectations where employees establish their value to stay in the organization during their trial period or be let go.

Collins (2005a) suggested three lessons for social sector managers with regard to his bus metaphor: (a) managers can create pockets of greatness given their immediate span of control without having executive powers, (b) managers should focus first on who they have selected for the organization before deciding on what to do, and (c) managers should rigorously utilize any early-assessment mechanism available to them in accomplishing the former points.

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Hire the best people first. Then decide what the organization should focus on and where the organization should go.	Focus on: (a) immediate span of control without having executive powers, (b) creating high standards in hiring practices when openings occur, and (c) rigorously utilizing early-assessment mechanisms available to keep the best people and terminate or separate from those who do not meet the high expectations.

Question three - how to rethink the economic engine when there is no profit motive

In *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins' Hedgehog Concept was described as the intersection of three concepts: (a) what is the company deeply passionate about, (b) what can the company be the best in the world at, and (c) what best drives the company's economic engine. In the social sector, Collins (2005a) found great resistance to using the economic engine as a motivating goal. He instead broadened the goal to identifying the resource engine giving additional weight to other types of resources utilized to accomplish the social sector mission. Collins defines the resource engine to include the three components of time, money, and brand. Time is defined by how well managers attract talented people to support the mission given limited financial incentives. Money is defined by the cash flow needed to continue the work. Brand is defined as the ability to "cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters" (p. 18).

Collins (2005a) posited that by exchanging the concept of the economic engine with the resource engine, the Hedgehog Concept again applied to the social sector. As the allure of additional financial resources is tempting, Collins suggested that the social sector must be vigilant to stay focused and resist the tendency to stray from their passion and key abilities simply in hopes of gaining additional resources.

A great social sector organization must have the discipline to say, "No thank you" to resources that drive it away from the middle of its three circles. Those who have the discipline to attract and channel resources directed solely at their

Hedgehog Concept, and to reject resources that drive them away from the center of their three circles, will be of greater service to the world. (p. 23)

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Focus organizationally on one major concept that is at the intersection of: (a) the greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) what can financially support or excel the efforts, and (c) the source of their greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.	Instead of focusing on an economic engine based financial outputs, the social sector should broaden the concept to a resource engine (e.g., time, money, and brand) utilized to accomplish the social sector mission. Time is defined by how well managers attract talented people to support the mission given limited financial incentives. Money is defined by the cash flow needed to continue the work. Brand is defined as the ability to “cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters” (p. 18).

Question four - how to build the momentum of the organization by building the brand

In his original work, Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies did not have a specific program or project that led to their transition. Instead they started with groups of dedicated employees focusing on specific areas that created small successes. In the business sector, Collins posited, the momentum required to create a great organization is developed over time with persistent, hard, and focused work that results in financial successes. Since money in the corporate sector is both an input and an output, over time, additional financial successes attracts additional resources and commitment from staff. Collins (2005a) suggested that since money is only an input in the social sector, funding is often based more on pet projects and programs and less on organizational effectiveness. As a result, the social sector needs to find something other than financial rewards as the output indicator of greatness.

Collins (2005a) suggested that their brand or reputation may be the output that managers in the social sector should focus on. Social sector agencies like the Red Cross and Harvard University receive significant contributions of money largely due to the

brand reputation they have created over time. Collins posited that the successful social sector organizations develop their brand reputation by building “upon tangible results and emotional share of the heart – so that potential supporters believe not only in your mission, but in your capacity to deliver on that mission” (p. 25).

From this focus on brand reputation, momentum of organizational effectiveness can build.

By focusing on your Hedgehog Concept, you build results. Those results, in turn, attract resources and commitment, which you use to build a strong organization. That strong organization then delivers even better results, which attracts greater resources and commitment, which builds a stronger organization, which enables even better results. People want to feel the excitement of being involved in something that just flat out works. When they begin to see tangible results – when they can feel the flywheel beginning to build speed – that’s when most people line up to throw their shoulders against the wheel and push. (p. 24)

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Focus on long term success by consistently focusing on the previous six themes thereby yielding greater momentum over time.	Momentum is measured by reputation or brand of the organization instead of financial outputs.

Question five - how to build a pocket of greatness

In Collins’ (2005a) communication with the social sector leaders, he was constantly reminded that there are significant system limitations that many times control the destiny of an organization. He challenged this thinking by inviting those same leaders to identify an organization in their industry that has overcome the system issues and would be considered a model for others. He then asked, “[H]ow do we explain the fact that some ...organizations made a breakthrough, while others facing similar (if not identical) systemic constraints did not?” (p. 29). He concluded by writing, “Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline” (p. 31).

Summary

The purpose of this section was to provide a summary of Collins' thinking regarding the application of his themes to the social sector and the inherent differences between the corporate sector and the social sectors. In this section of the review, Collins' specific adaptation of the *Good-to-Great* (2001) themes were explored. It was clear that Collins (2005a) acknowledged the social sector as a different context from the corporate sector. It was also clear that Collins believed that the adaptations of the Good-to-Great themes needed for the social sector were substantively minor with slight modifications needed in identifying good to great in social organizations. Given a change in semantics, Collins believed the themes related to those good to great social sector organizations would be fully consistent with his original findings.

The results of the review of the literature suggested that Collins (2005a) believed that the principles of the Good-to-Great theory transcends organizational context, but that there were a few noteworthy differences between the corporate sector and social sector that impact how the themes were defined. In most cases, Collins made the case that the application of the Good-to-Great themes could be readily transferred from corporate sector to the social sector without consideration of organizational context. However, in other cases, Collins suggested subtle nuances and adaptations of his themes were appropriate. Specifically, Collins identified areas of leadership authority, management of employees, the mission of the organizations, and indicators of organizational success as areas where there were noteworthy differences between the corporate and social sectors; enough so that Collins adapted the language of his original themes to fit the social sector. Table 3 provides a summary for the adaptation of working definitions of Collins' themes in the social sector. The differences identified by Collins between the corporate sector and the social sector are italicized for clarity.

Although no critiques of Collins' theory regarding application to the social sector could be found, it would be logical that the champions and critics of Collins' theory for corporations would find similar strengths and limitations in his theory for the social sector. Specifically, the strengths would include a simplicity in concept and a common sense quality that is appealing. Limitations would include the continuation of the pursuit

of principled themes, the existence of the halo effect, and the erroneous conclusions based on limited or faulty data.

The review of the literature provided implications for the design of this dissertation in how the Good-to-Great themes and resulting theory could be adapted to the social sector. Specifically, the review identified differences in leadership authority, management of employees, the mission of the organizations, and indicators of organizational success between the corporate and social sectors. There was room in the literature for a study that attempted to use these adaptations as a guide for identifying the good to great community college and a lens for exploring the degree to which Collins’ themes emerge in the social sector context of the community college.

Table 3

Summary for Adaptation of Working Definitions in the Social Sector for Good-to-Great Themes

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Provide leadership that authentically embodies a mix of both personal humility and professional will focused on the company’s success.	<i>Leadership is accomplished more through persuasion, convincing others, and identification of shared interests (e.g., “legislative” leadership) than making directives (e.g., “executive” leadership).</i>
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Hire the best people first. Then decide what the organization should focus on and where the organization should go.	<i>Focus on: (a) immediate span of control without having executive powers, (b) creating high standards in hiring practices when openings occur, and (c) rigorously utilizing early-assessment mechanisms available to keep the best people and fire those who do not meet the high expectations.</i>
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured. Even when the truth is negative, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.	No adaption for the social sector.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Focus organizationally on one big concept. Specifically the intersection of: (a) their greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) what can financially support or excel their efforts, and (c) the source of their greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.	<i>Instead of focusing on an economic engine based financial outputs, the social sector should broadened the concept to a resource engine that focuses on resources (e.g., time, money, and brand) utilized to accomplish the social sector mission. Time is defined by how well managers attract talented people to support the mission given limited financial incentives. Money is defined by the cash flow needed to continue the work. Brand is defined as the ability to “cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters” (p. 18).</i>
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Create a culture where self-disciplined employees adhere to a consistent system and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.	No adaption for the social sector.
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Use technology only to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort in achieving the organizational goals.	No adaption for the social sector.
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Focus on long term success by consistently employing the previous six themes yielding greater momentum over time.	<i>Momentum is measured by reputation or brand of organization instead of financial outputs.</i>

Summary of Literature Review of Collins’ Good-to-Great Theory

This first section of the literature review presented an overview of Collins’ Good-to-Great theory, a critique of that theory, and implications for application (or transfer) of this theory to the social sector. This study’s primary research question asked which of Collins’ themes, if any, were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. The secondary research questions explored the importance of, and potential need to alter, Collins’ themes for the community college assuming they are even present. They also explored whether other

themes emerged that were not raised by Collins. In order to answer these research questions, an in-depth review of the relevant literature was necessary to provide a contextual framework for this dissertation. The purpose of this summary was to synthesize the review of literature regarding the Good-to-Great theory as it relates to this study's focus (e.g., purpose and research questions) and my study design. The summary was organized into two major sections addressing each of these purposes.

As a result of the review, several considerations relevant to this study arose. First, the literature suggested that based on the popularity of *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001) by leaders in many sectors, including the community college, there was a keen interest in identifying themes that could contribute to the improvement of the organizations. The current interest and application of *Good-to-Great* in the social sector provided support for this study. Second, it was clear that Collins believed that the Good-to-Great theory transcended a given organizational context even though his original conclusions come solely from his study of the corporate sector. Although plausible, this assertion has yet to be explored through intentional study. This too provided rationale for conducting the research study with a community college.

The review of Collins' theory also provided implications for the design of this dissertation. First, it provided a firm grounding in the seven themes that emerged in Collins' study and formed his resulting theory. This included a number of concepts and definitions associated with the seven themes. These themes, including concepts and definitions and resulting theory, provided both a context and a language from which the research questions were answered. Second, the review of literature provided direction for this study by providing a guide through the practical differences between the corporate sector studied and the social sector. Specifically the literature showed how Collins (2001, 2005a) would maintain the concepts utilized in *Good-to-Great*, but change some of the specifics to identify the indicator of organizational effectiveness as well as by defining some of the themes for the social sector. Third, the review of the Good-to-Great theory introduced the critique of the potential halo effect that can occur when asking individuals to reflect on past performance. There was a potential for the halo effect in this study as I was asking participants to rely on their memory of their past accomplishments. Again, I attempted to mitigate any application of the halo effect in the analysis of the research by

member checking. However, even if the halo effect was present, there was value in the participants sharing their perceived understanding of what contributed to their community college transitioning from good to great. Finally, the literature suggested that the simplicity and common sense nature of Collins' theory and the related themes were seen as both a strength and limitation in terms of comprehension, applicability, and validity. It is certainly true that caution should be considered when attempting to describe the nuance and complexities of a human organization in simple terms. However, it was my intention to use Collins' writing style as a model for making the analysis of this study accessible to community college practitioners.

Review of Good-to-Great Methods

The methods used by Collins in *Good-to-Great* (2001) were framed by two major questions. The first was how is good or great determined in terms of organizational effectiveness or outputs? Secondly, once the first question was answered, how were the common themes present in the good-to-great companies identified? As such, this section of the literature review examines the research methods utilized in *Good-to-Great* framed by these two questions. This dissertation explored which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. With the intention of being relevant and comparable to the initial research, it was important to model Collins' methods as closely as possible so that credible comparisons could be made and conclusions drawn. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the structural research process used by Collins, and to provide guidance and insight that informed the research design utilized in this research study. This section will be organized by presenting: (a) an overview of the methods used to identify the good-to-great companies in terms of organizational effectiveness or outputs, and (b) an overview of the methods used to identify the themes or inputs found in the good-to-great companies.

Overview of Methods Used to Identify Good-to-Great Companies

Before being able to explore the themes common to the good-to-great companies, Collins (2001) first had to: (a) develop definitions for good and great, (b) determine how to select good-to-great companies, and (c) determine what data he would use to meet his criteria. The following section will be organized by: (a) presenting Collins' methods for

identifying the good-to-great companies, (b) presenting a critique of the strengths and limitations of methods used to identify his sample, and (c) present implications of applying Collins' methods for identifying good-to-great companies to organizations in the social sector.

Identifying Good-to-Great Companies

The purpose of this section is to better understand Collins' methods for defining the companies in his sample which informed the design of my research study. The following section are organized by: (a) Collins' definitions for good-to-great companies, (b) the criteria used in selecting the sites representing the good and great sample, and (c) the data used to measure each of the criteria in identifying the good-to-great companies.

Definitions of good-to-great companies

In *Built-to-Last* (1994), Collins and Porras studied select corporations that had been highly successful over time to understand the common themes that contributed to that success. Their critics suggested that the identified corporations had always been good from their inception and challenged the authors to produce evidence of corporations that had made the transition from being good to becoming great. In response to the critics of *Built-to-Last*, Collins (2001) asked the questions, "Can a good company become a great company and if so, how? Or is the disease of 'just being good' incurable" (p. 3)? In *Good-to-Great*, Collins used the terms good and great as the nomenclature for specific output indicators of organizational effectiveness.

For the definition of good to great, Collins (2001) ultimately identified companies that: (a) showed average or below industry average stock returns for a period of time of at least 15 years, (b) had a sharp transition, and then (c) showed average stock returns of at least three times the industry norm for a period of time no less than 15 years. The good-to-great companies selected for Collins' study had an average "cumulative stock return of 6.9 times the general market in the fifteen years following their transition" (p. 3).

Eleven direct comparison companies in the same industries were also selected. These were classified as good-but-not-great companies that did not make the transition to great as did the good-to-great companies. The comparison companies were identified to compare and contrast the findings of the good-to-great companies. For these comparable

companies, good organizational effectiveness was defined as maintaining average or below average stock returns during the same 30 year period. Table 4 provides a working definition of good and great.

Table 4
Working Definition of Good-to-Great Companies

Term	Good-to-Great Definitions	Working Definitions
Good Companies	Average or below industry average stock returns for a period of time of at least 15 years	Average or below average performance compared to industry over time
Transition Point		
Good-to-Great Companies	Average stock returns of at least three times the industry norm for a period of time no less than 15 years	Above average performance compared to industry over time

Site selection

The rationale and process used for selecting the good to great sample in Collins’ (2001) study illuminated the methods used for the purpose of this study. This section of the literature review describes the method Collins employed to select the companies he focused on.

Rationale used to justify good to great criteria

To satisfy his core definitions of good and great, Collins (2001) originally considered several indicators including impact on society and employee welfare, but finally determined that stock returns would be the most accessible, consistent, and objective indicator of a great company in terms of organizational effectiveness. The rationale for selecting average or below average stock returns for the good-to-great companies was to address the critics of *Built-to-Last* (1994) who indicated that the companies highlighted in that study had always been great. In *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins’ wanted to identify companies that initially had not been great, had made a transition, and then became great compared to their peers. The rationale for performance

after the transition of three times the market was that it “exceeded the performance of most widely acknowledged great companies” (p. 6).

To determine the good-to-great companies, the additional criterion of time span was important to ensure that any themes found would not solely yield quick fixes but instead would suggest sustained results.

We picked fifteen years because it would transcend one-hit wonders and lucky breaks (you can’t just be lucky for fifteen years) and would exceed the average tenure of most chief executive officers helping us to separate great companies from companies that just happened to have a single great leader. (p. 6)

Table 5 summarizes the relevant criteria for selecting the indicators of good and great.

Table 5

Summary of Relevant Criteria for Selecting the Indicators of Good and Great

Indicator	Relevant Criteria for Indicator Selection
Cumulative Stock Returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent measure over time • Accessible information • Objective • Related to mission

Process and data used for criteria for selecting good-to-great companies

Once the rationale was developed and the criteria were selected, Collins (2001) needed to narrow the focus of his study from all companies that had ever been traded on the stock market to a manageable list of companies that could be analyzed. Collins assembled a team of 21 researchers to investigate the 1,435 companies that were named in the Fortune 500 lists since 1965, when the list came into existence, until 1995. The Fortune 500 companies were selected because they met two of the accessibility of information criteria established by Collins including: (a) being large institutions that were “established ongoing [companies] during the time of transition,” and (b) being publicly traded companies which allowed for access to stock return data and “more rigorous screening and analysis” than privately held companies (p. 221). Collins’ team then used data from Fortune Magazine’s *Rates-of-Return Study* and the University of Chicago

Center for Research in Security Prices (CRSP) to narrow down the number of potential companies from 1,435 to 126 based on a pattern of above-average stock returns preceded by average or below average stock returns. The intention was to select only those companies that had made a transition from good to great. The list was narrowed from 126 to 19 by evaluating the stock returns that met the selection criteria compared to the general stock market. Finally, the 19 companies were narrowed to 11 by comparing their stock returns to their specific industries. Those that did not show the transition pattern relative to their specific industry were cut. Table 6 is a summary of the process and data utilized to select the good-to-great companies.

Table 6

Summary of the Process and Data Utilized to Select the Good-to-Great Companies

Number of Potential Companies	Resource to Narrow	Process to Narrow Selection	Rationale Utilized for Process
All Companies to 1,435	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortune 500 List from 1965 to 1995 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies that made the list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large institutions that were established ongoing companies during the time of transition Publicly traded companies allowed for access to stock return data
1,435 to 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates-of-Return Study (RORS) - <i>Fortune Magazine</i> Center for Research in Security Prices (CRSP) - University of Chicago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies that had above average stock returns preceded by average or below average stock returns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking a point of transition from good to great

Number of Potential Companies	Resource to Narrow	Process to Narrow Selection	Rationale Utilized for Process
126 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RORS • CRSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies whose stock returns met the selection criteria of good to great (see Table 4) compared to the general stock market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of stock returns to general market allowed for evaluation of relative performance over time.
19 to 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RORS • CRSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies whose stock returns met the selection criteria of good to great (see Table 4) compared to their specific industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of stock returns to specific industry allowed for evaluation of relative performance over time. • Mitigated against companies whose entire industry had transitioned in stock returns compared to general market.

The findings from this section describing the methods for identifying good-to-great companies were helpful for this study. First, it identified what good and great meant in the context of Collins’ (2001) study and how they were derived. For this dissertation, the use of stock returns specifically, or financial performance more generally, was not appropriate given the educational mission of the community college. However, there were likely other indicators that more closely aligned with the mission of the community college. Second, criteria for the definitions of good and great for this study were modeled after Collins’ definitions of good and great in that the information regarding the community colleges should be accessible, consistent, and to the degree possible, objective. Finally, the criteria that Collins used for selecting the good-to-great companies

regarding average or below average performance, a transition point, and above average performance was also used to inform this study once good and great were defined for this dissertation. I sought to find a community college that performed at or below the average compared to other community colleges in the same state over a period of time, had a transition point, and performed above the average compared to other community colleges in the same state over a period of time.

Critique of Methods Used to Identify Collins' Good-to-Great Companies

The purpose of the critique of the methods used to identify Collins' good-to-great companies is to provide additional insight into the strengths and limitations of Collins' methods and can illuminate areas to address in this study. This section is organized by: (a) the major strengths of Collins' methods used to identify the good-to-great companies, and (b) the major limitations of Collins' methods used to identify the good-to-great companies. At the end of each section, a summary of the respective critique will be provided.

Major strengths of Collins' methods used to identify the good-to-great companies

For some authors, Collins' methods were praised as one of the most comprehensive approaches to popular business literature. However, no specific strengths regarding Collins' methods to identify the good-to-great companies could be found. Instead, various authors cited the general feature regarding the rigor of criteria as a major strength (Drezen, 2001; Dugan, 2006; Fillingham, 2003; Geller, 2006; Good to great, 2001; Harding & Dunn, 2003; Muntz, 2005; Nelson, 2003; Thomas, 2003).

An additional strength of Collins' (2001) general methods was that they involved more than simply the musings of a current or former CEO unlike many popular business books. Collins brought a level of intentionality to his study that set it apart from most other business books on the market. The evidence of wide-spread use of the book and the relative paucity of comments regarding the methods might lead one to believe the strengths are self evident. Based on Collins' methods, the strength that provided the most insight for this research study was the rigor of criteria used to select the good-to-great companies. Like Collins, I intended to utilize criterion that was: (a) considered a consistent measure over time, (b) was publically accessible information, (c) was

considered objective, and (d) was related to the mission of the organization. Table 7 provides a summary of the strengths of Collins’ methods used to identify the good-to-great companies.

Table 7

Major Strength of Collins’ Methods Used to Identify the Good-to-Great Companies

Strength of Collins’ Methods Used to Identify the Good-to-Great Companies	Examples of Criteria
Rigor of criteria for good to great selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 15 years of average or below average stock returns • A transition point • Average stock returns of at least three times the industry norm for a period of time no less than 15 years

Major limitations of Collins’ methods used to identify the good-to-great companies

Some authors believed Collins’ (2001) use of stock returns was too limiting as an indicator of good and great (Holstein, 2001; Rohm, 2004). “Such a standard doesn’t consider how a company could have changed society or the world, how it benefited customers, how it conquered international markets, or how it treated customers” (Holstein, 2001, para. 20). Table 8 provides a summary of major limitations of Collins’ methods for identifying good-to-great companies.

Table 8

Summary of Major Limitations of Methods for Identifying Good-to-Great Companies

Limitations of Methods for Identifying Good-to-Great Companies
Stock returns give a limited perspective of the organizational effectiveness of a company. Collins did not consider how the companies changed society or the world, how it benefited customers, how it conquered international markets, or how it treated customers.

The focus of this section of the literature review was to critique the strengths and limitations of Collins’ (2001) methods used to identify the good-to-great companies or the output. The review highlighted the fact that Collins could have used a plethora of

different, and perhaps better, criteria to determine the good-to-great companies. Collins acknowledged that he briefly considered issues such as impact on society and employee welfare, but finally determined that stock returns would be the most accessible, consistent, and objective indicator of a great company in terms of organizational effectiveness. In social science research, it is clear that no single definition of good and great will be perfect; however the use of stock returns utilized by Collins met his criteria which arguably had some basis in logic and credibility. As I desired to utilize Collins' approach and criteria to determine the good to great community college, I recognized that I did not have the extensive number of resources available to me that Collins' enjoyed in terms of research staff, funding, and time to conduct my study. As such, I needed to limit the scope of my dissertation to a manageable study and thus added the criteria of "do-ability" to the selection process. Do-ability refers to the ability of the researcher to provide a given depth and breadth of scope in relation to the resources available.

Implications of Collins' Methods Used to Identify Good-to-Great Companies in the Social Sector

In *Good-to-Great and the Social Sectors*, Collins (2005a) recognized that the social sector context is different than the public corporate context, but asserted that the themes found in *Good-to-Great* were universal. The purpose of this section of the literature review is to describe Collins' thinking regarding how the methods used to identify good-to-great companies could be applied to the social sector. This section is organized based on: (a) Collins' process for understanding the social sector, and (b) Collins' adaptation of his methods to identify good to great organizations in the social sector.

Collins' process for understanding the social sector

In *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins began his research by defining the organizational effectiveness or outcome of the good-to-great companies using cumulative stock returns over time. He then conducted an in-depth process to understand the themes that emerged in the good-to-great companies. In *Good-to-Great and the Social Sectors* (2005a), Collins acknowledged that an in-depth research process similar to that conducted in *Good-to-Great* would be ideal with social sector organizations, but he indicated that this process would take a decade to complete. In the meantime, Collins

offered an interim step of soliciting “critical feedback, structured interviews, and laboratory work” (p. 3) from more than 100 non-business leaders. No further description of Collins’ methods with the social sector was presented.

Collins’ adaptation of methods to identify good-to-great organizations in the social sector

When considering the methods used in *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins was reminded by his colleagues from the social sector that social sector organizations do not have stocks as a way to measure success (Collins, 2005a). He was asked to respond to how the social sector organizations could calibrate success without business metrics. Collins (2005a) posited that all organizational leaders must first look to the outputs of the activity instead of merely the inputs to define overall organizational effectiveness. He suggested that the outputs of success for all organizations should demonstrate the ability of the organization to: (a) deliver superior performance, (b) make a distinctive impact, and (c) achieve lasting endurance. “For a business, financial returns are a perfectly legitimate measure of performance. For a social sector organization, however, performance must be assessed relative to mission, not financial returns” (Collins, 2005a, p. 5). Collins (2005a) added:

It doesn’t really matter whether you can quantify your results. What matters is that you rigorously assemble evidence – quantitative or qualitative – to track your progress. If the evidence is primarily qualitative, think like a trial lawyer assembling the combined body of evidence. If the evidence is primarily quantitative, then think of yourself as a laboratory scientist assembling and assessing the data. (p. 7)

As an example, Collins (2005a) referred to how The Cleveland Orchestra determined their level of performance including: (a) number of standing ovations, (b) expansion of the range and types of musical pieces, (c) invitations to prestigious festivals, (d) demand for tickets, (e) degree to which other orchestras mimic The Cleveland Orchestra’s programming, (f) degree composers solicit the orchestra to debut their pieces, and (g) investments made to the orchestra’s endowment.

Collins (2005a) suggested that all indicators of success are inherently flawed, whether qualitative or quantitative. “What matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a consistent and intelligent method for assessing your output results, and

then tracking your trajectory with rigor” (2005a, p. 8). Collins acknowledged that his analysis of the social sector lacked the rigor created in the original *Good-to-Great* (2001) work. His intention was to create such a research project in the future.

In this section of the literature review, Collins’ (2005a) perspective on the adaptation of his methods for identifying good-to-great organizations in the social sector was explored. He stated that the concepts of *Good-to-Great* (2001) transcend the business sector and are applicable to all other types of organizations. His modified criteria for determining the output indicator(s) for organizational effectiveness include: (a) delivering superior performance, (b) making a distinctive impact, and (c) achieving lasting endurance. Ironically, it is the criteria of making a distinct impact that Collins critics say, and Collins’ acknowledges, he did not consider when utilizing stock returns as the primary indicator of good and great. Table 9 outlines how Collins’ applied his new definitions of great to the social sector.

Table 9

Summary of Possible Adaptation of Good-to-Great Definitions for the Social Sector Organizations

Good-to-Great Themes for Social Sector	Definitions of Good-to-Great Companies	Possible Working Definitions of Good-to-Great Themes for Social Sector
<p><u>Superior Performance</u> In business, performance is defined by financial returns and achievement of corporate purpose. In the social sectors, performance is defined by results and efficiency in delivering on the social mission.</p>	<p>Minimum of three times the cumulative stock values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emotional response of target audience, customers, and clients ▪ Depth and breadth of ability to perform ▪ Increase in demand of services ▪ Invitations to perform or explain performance

Good-to-Great Themes for Social Sector	Definitions of Good-to-Great Companies	Possible Working Definitions of Good-to-Great Themes for Social Sector
<p><u>Distinctive Impact</u></p> <p>The organization makes such a unique contribution to the communities it touches and does its work with such unadulterated excellence that if it were to disappear, it would leave a hole that could not be easily filled by any other institution on the planet.</p>	<p>Not considered in original Good-to-Great study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program modeled by others in field ▪ Reputation of performance ▪ Expertise sought out by others
<p><u>Lasting Endurance</u></p> <p>The organization can deliver exceptional results over a long period of time, beyond any single leader, great idea, market cycle, or well-funded program. When hit with setbacks, it bounces back even stronger than before.</p>	<p>15 year period of sustained performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excellence sustained over generations of leaders ▪ Continuous investments made by stakeholders

Summary

This section of the literature reviewed the methods used by Collins in *Good-to-Great* (2001) to determine how good to great was determined in terms of organizational effectiveness. The primary research question asked which of Collins’ themes, if any, were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. In order to identify the themes, first an understanding of the good to great transition needed to be established. The purpose of this summary is to synthesize the review of literature regarding the methods used to identify the good-to-great organizations as it relates to this dissertation focus and my study design. The summary will be organized into two major sections addressing each of these purposes.

As a result of the review, several considerations relevant to this dissertation arose. First, the literature suggested that even with the focus of organizational effectiveness as a

parameter, the terms good and great are highly susceptible to broad individual interpretation. As such, it is important to understand how Collins defined these terms so that context, consistency, and credibility could be established. Second, the literature again indicated conceptual alignment, but some practical differences between the corporate sector studied in *Good-to-Great* (2001) and Collins' thoughts about the applicability to the social sector. Though the general Good-to-Great concepts may still have been present during the transition from good to great for a community college, the specific indicators of organizational effectiveness are likely different from the corporate sector given the different context.

The review of Collins' (2001) methods for determining good-to-great organizations provided implications for the design of this dissertation. First, Collins could have used a number of criteria to determine the indicator for the good-to-great companies. However, Collins recognized that all indicators have strengths and limitations and no individual definition of good and great would be perfect. As such, the criteria for selecting the indicator for good to great required some basis in logic and credibility. In *Good-to-Great* (2001), Collins' used stock returns and compared them to industry averages during a 15 year period prior to a transition and then for an additional 15 year after the transition. For the social sector, Collins (2005a) suggested using indicators such as demand for services, reputation of excellence, and duration of success sustained over generations of leaders to determine the good-to-great organizations. To transcend specific sector definitions, Collins suggested good to great indicators seek superior performance, make a distinctive impact, and have lasting endurance. Although a possibly compelling criteria, the criterion of distinctive impact was a new concept introduced by Collins in his thinking regarding the social sector. It was not considered in Collins' good to great study and therefore was not utilized in this research design.

In addition to the criteria being logistical and credible, the review of literature revealed that Collins (2001) settled on stock returns as the indicator of organizational effectiveness based on the criteria of accessibility, consistency, and relative objectivity. To remain consistent with Collins' study, the indicator of organizational effectiveness for this dissertation needed to be selected using these same criteria.

Finally, as I considered utilizing Collins' (2001) approach to determining the good to great community college, I added the criteria "do-ability" to the design. Again, do-ability refers to the ability of the researcher to provide a given depth and breadth of scope in relation to the resources available. As I did not have the resources of time, people, and money that Collins enjoyed, the scope of my study design had to be limited.

Overview of Methods Used to Identify Good-to-Great Themes

Once Collins (2001) determined how to define good and great and how to select good-to-great companies, he needed to develop a process for identifying why the selected companies went from good to great. The following section will be organized by: (a) presenting Collins' methods for identifying the themes common to the good-to-great companies, (b) presenting a critique of the strengths and limitations of methods used to identify the themes in his sample, and (c) present implications of the methods used to identify the Good-to-Great themes for the social sector.

Identifying Themes for the Good-to-Great Companies

Collins (2001) found 11 companies that fit his criteria of good to great and began the search for as much evidence as possible to better understand what inputs or conditions led to the transitions. He called these unknown inputs, the "black box" (p. 9) which later emerged as the seven themes making up Collins' Good-to-Great theory. The purpose of this section is to better understand the methods used for identifying the themes that emerged to create Collins' Good-to-Great theory. These methods informed the design of my study as I explored how a community college transitioned from good to great. The following section will be organized by: (a) the data used to identify Collins' Good-to-Great themes, (b) the process utilized to collect the data, and (c) Collins' process of analyzing the data to develop the seven themes.

Collins' data needs

To gain evidence for the insight needed to understand the makeup of the black box, Collins (2001) needed to collect data that could provide evidence of how and why the transition of the good-to-great companies took place. In addition, Collins identified 11 comparison corporations that were in the same industry as the good-to-great companies, but instead had average stock returns during the same period of time. He labeled these

companies “direct comparison” companies. Collins also identified six companies that made the transition, but did not meet the criteria of sustained performance over the fifteen years period following the transition. He labeled these companies “unsustained comparison” companies. He posited that comparing the good-to-great companies with these other two types of companies could assist in culling themes that were common to both types of organizations and determining the unique themes of the good-to-great businesses that led to their transformative change. For all the companies, Collins sought data on acquisitions, executive compensation, business strategy, corporate culture, layoffs, leadership styles, financial ratios, and management turnovers. Table 10 provides a summary of the data needs for Collins’ study.

Table 10

Summary of Data Needs for Collins’ Good-to-Great Theme Identification

Data Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisitions • Executive compensation • Business strategy • Corporate culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other companies • Key people to interview

Collins’ data collection process

For the good-to-great and comparison companies, Collins (2001) sought the needed data by collecting all of the articles, annual reports, and other public documents he could locate about the businesses dating back 50 years or more. Collins researched articles published in broad sources such as *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and the *Wall*

Street Journal as well as from selected articles from industry- or topic-specific sources. Collins also researched books about the industry or specific companies. He solicited materials directly from the companies including articles, speeches, annual reports, and internal publications. Collins used business and industry reference materials such as the *Biographical Dictionary of American Business Leaders*, the *International Directory of Company Histories*, and *Hoover’s Handbook of Companies*. With the good-to-great companies, Collins and his team also conducted interviews of several of the senior management and board members of the respective companies during the transition period. On average Collins and team interviewed about eight leaders from each of the organizations selected.

Collins’ (2001) research team then organized the data generating descriptive statistics, comparative ratios, and coding the documents into various categories such as strategy and leadership.

When all was said and done, the total project consumed 10.5 people years of effort. We read and systematically coded nearly 6,000 articles, generated more than 2,000 pages of interview transcripts, and created over 384 million bytes of computer data. (2001, p. 9)

Table 11 provides a summary of the data collection process and resources for Collins’ study.

Table 11
Summary of Data Collection Process and Resources for Identifying Collins’ Good-to-Great Themes

Data Collection Process	Resources
Internal and external documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books/articles • Annual reports • Reference materials • Internal publications
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management during transition • Board members during transition

The review of literature regarding Collins’ (2001) data collection process provided guidance for the design of this dissertation. I used Collins’ list of data needs and his process for acquiring that data as a model for the community college context. Some of the specific data and collection processes were modified given the different context. For example, the reference documents for publicly traded corporations were comparable to those for the social and education sector. Table 12 provides a summary of the data needs along with the process and resources utilized to collect the data for identification of Collins’ Good-to-Great themes.

Table 12

Summary of Data Needs and Collection Process and Resources to Identify Collins’ Good-to-Great Themes

Data Needs	Data Collection Process	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisitions • Executive compensation • Business strategy • Corporate culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books/articles • Annual reports • Reference materials • Internal publications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other companies • Key people to interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management during transition • Board members during transition

Collins’ data analysis process

The purpose of this section of the review is to describe the process Collins (2001) used to analyze the collected data that resulted in the Good-to-Great themes. The methods used to analyze the data were important to informing the processes used in this

dissertation. The following section will be organized by: (a) the data organization structure, and (b) the processes used to analyze the data which informed Collins' good to great identification of themes and resulting theory.

Data Organization Structure

To organize the data, Collins (2001) first created a "coding document" (p. 237) involving 11 categories including: (a) organizing arrangements; (b) social factors; (c) business strategy; (d) markets, competitors, and environment; (e) leadership; (f) products and services; (g) physical setting and location; (h) use of technology; (i) vision; (j) change/transition activities during transition era of corresponding good-to-great company - for direct comparisons only; (k) attempted transition era – for unsustainable comparisons only; and (l) post transition decline – again for unsustainable comparisons only. All relevant data was then tagged with one or more of these categories. Appendix A provides a detailed definition of each code label.

Collins (2001) then conducted analysis of the data for all of the good-to-great companies, the direct comparison companies, and the unsustainable comparison companies focusing on 10 major analysis themes including: (a) financial spreadsheet analysis, (b) acquisitions and divestitures, (c) industry performance analysis, (d) executive churn analysis, (e) CEO analysis, (f) executive compensation analysis, (g) role of layoffs, (h) corporate ownership analysis, (i) media hype analysis, and (j) technology analysis. Each of these analysis themes had a small team of researchers appointed to scrutinize the data and provide in-depth analysis.

Collins (2001) also conducted analysis on all the companies using 10 less formal themes including: (a) the use of bold moves, (b) evolutionary versus revolutionary corporate process, (c) executive class versus egalitarianism, (d) causes of decline in once-great comparison companies, (e) three-cycle analysis and fit with core values and purpose, (f) length of buildup period before breakthrough/transition, (g) timing of Hedgehog Concept with breakthrough/transition date, (h) core business versus Hedgehog analysis, (i) succession analysis and success rates of successors, and (j) role of leadership in the decline of once-great comparison companies. These themes were not pursued vigorously because they were not the major analysis themes.

While Collins (2001) provided a detailed description of the structure used to organize his data, the rationale for the specific coding and analyses was not always clear. The reader could certainly make some logical links for some areas such as financial analysis, but why some analyses were considered major and others minor was less clear. For example, why was media hype considered a major area of analysis compared to the role of leadership in the decline of once-great comparison companies? What was helpful for the design of my study was the broader concept of developing a coding document and analysis plan. I needed to provide a rationale for the decisions made for both. Table 13 provides a summary of the data analysis structure used by Collins to identify the themes in *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Table 13

Summary of Data Analysis Structure for Identification of Collins' Good-to-Great Themes

Data Analysis Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data needs • Data collection • Data codes • Major analysis focus areas • Minor analysis focus areas • Themes

Data Analysis Process

After review of the extensive numeric and narrative data, Collins (2001) created presentations of the individual companies including overviews of the findings, drawing potential conclusions, and asking questions. Collins created an iterative process where his team would systematically discuss, debate, and reflect upon the findings; create ideas; and then do the same again. At what Collins calls the “core” of his method was the process of contrasting the good-to-great companies with the good companies. In this analysis, Collins was able to determine those themes that were common between the good-to-great and the comparison companies and those that were different.

To develop the themes, Collins (2001) described the process as:

...an iterative process of looping back and forth, developing ideas and testing them against the data, revising the ideas, building a framework, seeing it break under the weight of evidence, and rebuilding it again. That process was repeated over and over, until everything hung together in a coherent framework of concepts. (p. 11)

Collins (2001) goes on to say, “We all have a strength or two in life, and I suppose mine is the ability to take a lump of unorganized information, see patterns, and extract order from the mess – to go from chaos to concept” (p. 11).

As revealed in the review of literature, Collins’ (2001) data analysis process again provided guidance to the dissertation. It was my intention that the themes that contributed to a community college moving from good to great would emerge from the data. As such, the analysis process used by Collins of developing an overview of the findings, drawing potential conclusions, and asking questions was directly applied. Given that in my study, I was a lone researcher (compared to the team of 21 researchers Collins assembled), I needed to make some adjustments to the analysis process. The systematic group discussion, debate, and reflection as described by Collins was not possible. However, the iterative process of developing ideas and testing those was accomplished utilizing methods such a member checking common to the intended research design. Table 14 provides a summary of the data analysis process utilized by Collins to identify the themes in Good-to-Great.

Table 14

Summary of Data Analysis Process for Identification of Collins’ Good-to-Great Themes

Data Analysis Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code data • Develop ideas based on data (discuss, debate, reflect) • Test against data • Data of all good-to-great companies • Data comparing good-to-great companies to direct and unsustained comparison companies • Revise ideas – Go back to • Build a coherent framework • Develop a theme

In summary, the review of the Collins' (2001) process provided a detailed description of the methods used to identify the themes. At the core of my study was the exploration of themes that contributed to a community college moving from good to great. Collins' methods informed the design of my study at the conceptual level and where possible and appropriate, the operational level. For example, the concept of data needs and processes to access the data were modeled by those utilized by Collins. Specific data needs, such as acquisitions, were not appropriate for community college setting.

The structure and process for analysis of the data was modeled as closely to Collins' (2001) research as possible. As stated previously, the scale of this research study compared to Collins' effort required that I make some adjustments to the analysis process. The systematic group discussion, debate, and reflection as described by Collins was scaled down with an iterative process that was informed by and in alignment with methods common to the intended research design.

Critique of Collins' Methods Used to Identify the Good-to-Great Themes

The purpose of the critique of Collins' (2001) methods used to identify the Good-to-Great themes is to provide additional insight into the strengths and limitations of his inductive methods which can illuminate areas to address in this study. This section will be organized by: (a) the major strengths of Collins' process used to identify the Good-to-Great themes, and (b) the major limitations of Collins' process used to identify the Good-to-Great themes. At the end of each section, a summary of the respective critique will be provided.

Major strengths of Collins' methods used to identify the good-to-great themes

As stated in the section of the literature review that focused on the major strengths of Collins' (2001) methods for identifying the good-to-great companies, little has been written regarding specific strengths of Collins' methods for identifying the themes of the good-to-great companies. Collins' methods have been praised as one of the most comprehensive research-based approaches to business literature. However, not much detail about the methods was added to the acknowledged strengths. Authors,

however, cited the volumes of data and the intentionality and duration of Collins' study as strengths to the credibility of the methods used to identify the Good-to-Great themes (Drezen, 2001; Dugan, 2006; Fillingham, 2003; Geller, 2006; Good to great, 2001; Harding & Dunn, 2003; Muntz, 2005; Nelson, 2003; Thomas, 2003). Fillingham (2003) asserted that *Good-to-Great* (2001) was "well-researched evidence from the management literature that can point the way towards what works and what does not" (p. 107). Harding and Dunn (2003) stated that *Good-to-Great* was not based on theory but on "in-depth research and analysis. This provides a high believability score to [Collins'] work" (p. 133). Table 15 provides a summary of the strengths of Collins' methods used to identify the good-to-great themes.

Table 15

Major Strengths of Collins' Methods Used to Identify Collins Good-to-Great Themes

Strengths of Collins' Methods Used to Identify the Good-to-Great Themes	Examples
Quantity of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,000 articles • More than 2,000 pages of interview transcripts • Over 384 million bytes of computer data
Resources devoted to study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 researchers • 10.5 people years of effort
Duration of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years

Major limitations of Collins' methods used to identify the good-to-great themes

The purpose of this section of the review is to explore the limitations of Collins' (2001) methods used to identify the Good-to-Great themes. By using inductive reasoning, Collins' description of what he called the "death march of financial analysis" (p. 5) used to determine the seven themes was less than impressive to some critics (Holstein, 2001; Rohm, 2004; Rosenzweig, 2007; Walker, 2006). Rosenzweig (2006b) wrote that what was purported by Collins as compelling and rigorous research was actually simply the promotion of voluminous quantities of various types of data with the intent to overwhelm and create a convincing case without the substance of quality data.

Rosenzweig (2007) and Holstein (2001) also suggested that the research method of determining what contributed to the transition from good to great after the fact was problematic in that it was impacted by the halo effect. The halo effect is the tendency to make specific evaluations based on a general impression (Rosenzweig, 2007). Specifically, Rosenzweig argued that the halo effect was in place when interviews of the executives were conducted from the good-to-great companies. “Interview questions of this nature, where managers are asked to look back and explain what happened, rarely produce valid data, since retrospective self-reporting is commonly biased by performance” (p. 119).

Collins claimed to explain why some companies made the leap [from good to great] while others didn't, but in fact he did nothing of the kind. *Good-to-Great* documented what was written and said about companies that had made the leap versus those that had not – which is completely different. At the start of the book Collins urges his readers to be honest, to “confront the brutal facts.” Well, here's a brutal fact we may wish to consider: If you start by selecting companies based on outcome, and then gather data by conducting retrospective interviews and collecting articles from the business press, you're not likely to discover what led some companies to become great. You'll mainly catch the glow from the halo effect. (Rosenzweig, 2007, p. 120)

Collins was also accused of using flawed pseudoscience in his research methods instead of true scientific rigor that has predictive qualities (Rosenzweig, 2006a). Rosenzweig exerted that unlike the science of physics where cause and effect can be determined through stringent experimental methods, Collins pursuit of timeless themes was folly.

And since even the best studies of business, ones that carefully follow stringent research methods, ones that make sure to avoid Halos and that control for rival variables and make sure not to confuse correlation with causality, can never achieve the precision and replicability of physics, then all claims of having isolated immutable laws of organizational performance are unfounded. (Rosenzweig, 2007, p. 126)

Rosenzweig (2007) criticized Collins' methods for identifying themes yielding the good-to-great companies even further by suggesting that even if the case could be made that thematic findings truly reflected contributing factors to the success of the good-to-great companies, cause and effect were not proven and the prescription of applying those themes could be risky. He cited Collins' finding of the good-to-great

companies being focused like hedgehogs. Rosenzweig asserted that the concept of focusing can be analogous to betting at a race track. If you take the top winners from a race day, you may find that they focused and took greater risks. Rosenzweig argued that just like the successful gambler, the good-to-great companies may just have been lucky. He suggested that if Collins had taken the 1,435 companies in total, determined who was a focused hedgehog company and who was a diversified fox company, he would likely have found that, overall, the fox companies performed better over time.

Collins (2001), however, believed that the additional criterion of fifteen years of superior performance would indicate that the good-to-great companies were not simply lucky. By focusing on fifteen years of cumulative stock returns at or below the stock market, having a identifiable transition point, and then having fifteen years of cumulative stock returns at a minimum of three times the stock market would “transcend the one-hit wonders and lucky breaks (you can’t just be lucky for years)” (p. 6).

In reviewing the literature regarding the limitations of Collins’ methods for identifying the Good-to-Great themes, critics cite potentially poor quality data, the likelihood of the halo effect, and the implications of not providing cause and effect evidence as the major limitations. I understand that all of the limitations cited above were possible and I tried to address them to the extent possible in the research design of my study. Table 16 provides a summary of the Major Limitations of Collins’ methods used for identifying the Good-to-Great themes.

Table 16

Summary of Major Limitations of Methods for Identifying Collins’ Good-to-Great Themes

Limitations of Methods for Identifying Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of data does not override need for quality of data • There is a strong potential for the halo effect to be present. The halo effect is the tendency to make specific evaluations based on a general impression • Social organizations do not lend themselves to the scientific rigor of cause and effect. Even if found to be valid, contributing factors may not guarantee great performance.

Implications of Collins' Methods Used to Identify the Good-to-Great Themes for the Social Sector

For the purposes of this study, implications of Collins' data collection and analysis methods used to identify the Good-to-Great themes will be described and critically analyzed for application to the context of the social sector. This section of the literature review will provide a brief description of Collins' perspective about the implications of his methods for the social sector as presented in *Good-to-Great and the Social Sectors* (2005a).

Collins (2001) acknowledged that there were systemic differences between the social sector context and the corporate context, but asserted that the themes found in *Good-to-Great* are not business themes; they are themes of good-and-great organizations. Again, Collins suggested that an in-depth matched-pair research process similar to that conducted in *Good-to-Great* would be ideal with social sector organizations, but he indicated that this process would take a decade to complete. In the meantime, Collins based his thinking on a process of soliciting "critical feedback, structured interviews, and laboratory work" (2001, p. 3) from more than 100 non-business leaders. Unlike *Good-to-Great*, specific details regarding Collins' methods in his monograph were vague. To illustrate his assertions, Collins' selected a few organizations from the social sector organizations that he felt met his adapted definitions of great to see if the themes presented in *Good-to-Great* were present. Collins' determined that he could recognize the Good-to-Great themes by example in talking to selected leaders. Specifically, Collins' highlighted stories about: (a) the police commissioner of the New York Police Department and his work to reduce crime, (b) the executive director of the Cleveland Orchestra and the orchestra's work to turn around an organization in decline, (c) the executive director of the Center for the Homeless in South Bend, Indiana and his organization's work to address homelessness, (d) the founder of Teach for America and her work to recruit ivy-league graduates to volunteer in underserved schools, and (e) a department chair of a suburban public high school in Boulder, Colorado and his effort to get the right teachers in his department. In each of the above examples, Collins' was able to identify the same themes from *Good-to-Great* with the social sector leaders regarding

their respective organizational effectiveness. Specific details of the methods for identifying the themes, however, were not discussed.

Summary

This section reviewed the methods used by Collins (2001) in *Good-to-Great* to determine themes present in the good-to-great companies. The literature provided great detail of the methods used to determine the themes in Collins' study with the corporate sector. Numerous authors praised Collins' work for the rigor citing the volumes of data and the intentionality and duration of my study as strengths to its credibility. The limitations cited included a focus on the quantity of data compared to the quality of data. Critics also suggest that the halo effect was likely present where, in reflection, leaders ascribed certain qualities or processes that may or may not have been present or had any impact on the organizational effectiveness. Finally, the critics argued that social organizations do not lend themselves to the scientific rigor of cause and effect. Even if found to be valid, contributing factors may not guarantee great performance. The literature suggested that Collins acknowledged that the social sector was different from the corporate section, but that these differences were likely insignificant when looking for the Good-to-Great themes. Even so, he agreed that this had not been fully vetted and that a study equally rigorous to that conducted for the corporate sector could and should be conducted with the social sector.

The purpose of my study was to determine which of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes, if any, were (a) present, and (b) important at a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. It also explored what other themes, if any, were important to the community college in the transition. As such, the literature described in this section had implications for the design of my study as it provided a guide for selection of the philosophical approach and the methods to be used to discover the relevant themes.

First, Collins' (2001) philosophical approach was clearly interpretive in nature utilizing a multiple case study approach to better understand the common and contrasting themes present in the 11 good-to-great companies. Using Collins' study as a guide for my study suggested an interpretative social science approach would be appropriate and

consistent. Interpretative social science is defined as the “systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 2003, p. 76).

Second, Collins’ (2001) methods also had implications for selecting participants, identifying data needs, and data collection and analysis processes. Table 17 provides a summary of the methods used to identify Collins’ Good-to-Great themes.

Table 17

Summary of Methods Used to Identify Collins’ Good-to-Great Themes

Research Design	Collins’ Good-to-Great Methods
Participants Selected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all of the senior management and board members (on average 8 per company)
Data Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisitions • Executive compensation • Business strategy • Corporate culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other companies • Key people to interview
Data Collection Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external documents • Interviews

Research Design	Collins' Good-to-Great Methods
Data Analysis Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data needs • Data collection • Data codes • Major analysis focus areas • Minor analysis focus areas • Themes
Data Analysis Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code data • Develop ideas based on data (discuss, debate, reflect) • Test against data • Data of all good-to-great companies • Data comparing good-to-great companies to direct and unsustained comparison companies • Revise ideas – Go back to • Build a coherent framework • Develop a theme
Checking for Soundness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information available

With regard to the design of my study, I attempted to duplicate the process and content utilized by Collins (2001) as closely as possible. Specifically, the selection of potential participants included identifying all senior managers and board members present prior to, during, and after the transition from good to great. The data needs were modeled after Collins with the exception of data on acquisitions as the concept was not relevant to the public community college setting. The data collection process was also modeled after Collins in the interview of relevant leaders and the attempt to collect internal and external documents. Finally, the data analysis structure and process was modeled after Collins' methods in *Good-to-Great* (2001).

Summary of Literature Review for Good-to-Great Methods

This second area of the literature reviewed focused on the methods used by Collins (2001) in *Good-to-Great*. The section was organized according to Collins' methods for identifying the good-to-great companies, and then Collins' methods for identifying the themes common to the good-to-great companies. As a result of the review, several features became apparent that were instructive to the design of my study. First, the definition of good and great used by Collins had its limitations. There are no perfect indicators for good and great; however, Collins' provided a set of criteria that were applied to my study. Second, as one of the few popular business books that used a comprehensive research process to ground the conclusions, the strengths of his research included so-called rigorous and detailed methods to understand the unique themes that contributed to the transformation of the companies from good to great. Collins also provided great detail with regard to the methods including documents analyzed, questions asked, and criteria used.

This section will summarize the methods used by Collins in his study. To determine the site selection Collins' (2001) suggested finding organizations that met the criteria of average or below average performance over a period of time, a transition point, and then superior performance that lasts over time. In regards to the selection of his participants, Collins chose to interview the senior managers and board members present during the time of the transition. Data needs were identified as: (a) acquisitions, (b) executive compensation, (c) business strategy, (d) corporate culture, (e) layoffs, (f) leadership styles, (f) financial ratios, (g) management turnovers, (h) perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness, (i) decision making processes, (j) comparisons to other companies, and (k) key people to interview. The data collection process was conducted through the acquisition of internal and external documents and interviews of key individuals. The data analysis structure was to identify data needs, data collection processes, data codes, conduct analysis on major and minor focus areas, and to develop themes. The data analysis process was an iterative one where: (a) data was coded, (b) ideas were developed based on the data, (c) the data was tested with all of the good-to-great companies and comparison companies, (d) ideas were revised and tested again, (e) a coherent framework was created, and finally, (f) a theme

was developed. Table 18 provides a summary of the Collins’ methods identified in *Good-to-Great*.

Table 18

Summary of Methods Identified in Collins’ Good-to-Great Study

Research Design	Collins’ Good-to-Great Methods
Site Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition point • Superior performance • Lasting endurance
Participant Selected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all of the senior management and board members
Data Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisitions • Executive compensation • Business strategy • Corporate culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other companies • Key people to interview
Data Collection Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external documents • Interviews
Data Analysis Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data needs • Data collection • Data codes • Major analysis focus areas • Minor analysis focus areas • Themes

Research Design	Collins' Good-to-Great Methods
Data Analysis Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code data • Develop ideas based on data (discuss, debate, reflect) • Test against data • Data of all good-to-great companies • Data comparing good-to-great companies to direct and unsustained comparison companies • Revise ideas – Go back to • Build a coherent framework • Develop a theme
Checking for Soundness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information available

Again, Collins' (2001) research approach, his methods for selecting the good-to-great companies, and his methods for identifying the themes were used as a guide for the dissertation.

Review of Indicators Used to Identify Overall Effectiveness of the Community College

In order to conduct the research for this dissertation, the concept of great in terms of organizational effectiveness needed to not only translate from the corporate sector to the social sector, but even more specifically from the social sector to the community college environment. The purpose of the third section of the review of literature is to explore selected contemporary definitions of great in terms of organizational effectiveness for community colleges and narrow the vast possibilities of indicators by utilizing Collins' (2001) methods as a guide. The intention is to suggest a handful of possible indicators of great for the community college and then evaluate the strengths and limitations of each in order to inform the selection of the institution that would be reviewed in my study. This section is organized by providing: (a) an overview of selected definitions of organizational effectiveness indicators in community colleges today, (b) introduction of possible indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college adapting the criteria and methods used in Collins' study, and (c) a critique of the

select organizational effectiveness indicators in community colleges in terms of strengths and limitations.

Selected Definitions of Organizational Effectiveness in Community Colleges

When attempting to understand what contributing themes are present in community colleges that have gone from good to great, it was important to go to the literature to identify what indicators are used to measure organizational effectiveness in the community college context. From an online search of the ERIC database using “community college” and “organizational effectiveness” as keywords, 813 articles were found. A search in the online Dissertation Abstract database utilizing the same keywords yielded 201 dissertations. A search using the WorldCat database yielded 46 books on the subject of community college effectiveness. As an in-depth review of each of these literature references could be the focus of a separate research study in itself, I elected to provide a brief review of only a select number of items from the related literature, focusing on quality of the literature rather than quantity. To limit the scope and to find the “best” literature on organizational effectiveness indicators, I narrowed the search to those books, articles, and reports written within the past ten years, those that provided a broad institutional perspective as opposed to a single program area focus, and those that focused beyond one institution. Ten years was selected as this encompasses the most recent dialogue on organizational effectiveness for the community college environment. Only the literature that included a broad institutional perspective was selected so as to ensure that potential indicators encompassed all or most of the missions of the community college and priorities within the mission would be considered. The additional criteria for the selected literature was that more than one institution was considered so as to gain perspective on effectiveness that would in turn translate well to many institutions; thus having more credibility with scholars and practitioners. This section of the review will be organized by: (a) a brief overview of the literature on indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community colleges, and (b) common themes of the select literature.

Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness for the Community College

The purpose of this section is to identify indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges as highlighted or proposed by the literature. The following report, article, and book meet the criteria described above as being literature that (a) had

been written within the past ten years, (b) provided a broad institutional perspective, and (c) considered more than one institution. The selected literature was organized according to the summary of the indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges found in each study reviewed. The three studies analyzed in this review are: (a) the Education Commission of the States (ECS) report on state funding for community colleges (2000), (b) the *National Community College Benchmark Project* (NCCBP) (Juhnke, 2006), (c) *Core Indicators of Community College Effectiveness* (Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007). The final portion of this section presents the results of an analysis of the common indicators of organizational effectiveness across the three selected studies.

Education Commission of the States report

The purpose of this section is to identify indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges found in a recent Education Commission of the States (ECS) report (2000). This section is organized by: (a) an overview of the report, (b) identification of indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college, (c) a critique of my study, and (d) implications for my study.

Given the diverse historical origins of many community colleges and their tie to local community needs, many state and federal government officials found it difficult to track the funding sources and patterns of the country's community colleges. In an increasingly competitive state funding environment, these officials worked with the ECS to develop a study focused on funding of community colleges in all 50 states. In 1999, the ECS sent a survey instrument to all state's community college offices. After review of initial findings by representatives from various states, it became clear that there had been very different interpretations of survey questions by the states. As such, a second modified survey was sent; responses were returned from all 50 states.

As issues of accountability for community colleges have become more prevalent in local, regional, state, and national discussions, many stakeholders are no longer satisfied with the options of providing incremental increases or focusing only on enrollments of institutions; they are increasingly focused on results. One of the questions the report asked was, "Have state policymakers gone beyond the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach to higher education policy to design appropriate and meaningful

performance indicators that reflect the unique mission of community colleges” (Education Commission of the States, 2000, p. 43). The authors found that 27 of the 50 states required specific indicators of effectiveness to be reported. The most popular indicators were licensure pass rates, persistence rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, and employment rates (Education Commission of the States, 2000). Table 19 provides a summary of the common indicators found in the ECS study.

Table 19

Common Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness from the Education Commission of the States Study

Common Indicator Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensure pass rates • Persistence rates • Graduation rates • Transfer rates • Employment rates

In critique of these findings, it was clear that a slight majority of state policy makers believed that licensure pass rates, persistence rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, and employment rates were appropriate indicators of organizational effectiveness; so much so that these rates should be used as accountability measures. The popularity of these indicators suggested that they transcend a specific community college’s unique mission and instead were broad based enough to be relevant to most community colleges and in most states. Missing from the report of the ECS findings was the suggestion of other, less popular, indicators of organizational effectiveness.

The findings of the ECS study had implications for my study as I was looking to the literature to help guide the decision for a possible indicator of organizational effectiveness. Based on the results of this study drawn from the 50 states, I added licensure pass rates, persistence rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, and employment rates to the list of potential indicators of organizational effectiveness to be considered for inclusion in my study. Further evaluation of the indicators will be conducted in a later section of this literature review.

National Community College Benchmark Project

The purpose of this section is to identify indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges as developed by the *National Community College Benchmark Project* (NCCBP) (Juhnke, 2006). This section is organized in the same way as was done for the ECS study above by: (a) an overview of the report, (b) identification of indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college, (c) a critique of my study, and (d) implications for my study.

As the need for comparison indicators of organizational effectiveness continues to grow from state, federal, and accreditation agencies, some community college leaders are calling for the development of national standards (Juhnke, 2006). In 2003, representatives from 11 community colleges and a representative from the League of Innovation in Community College met to propose national standards for benchmarking community college outcomes including identifying and defining benchmarks and their indicators, as well as prescribing processes for collecting and reporting the data. The group named the project, the National Community College Benchmark Project.

Benchmarks were proposed for six mission-related areas of: (a) student performance, (b) student satisfaction and engagement, (c) career preparation, (d) access and participation, (e) business-and-industry, and (f) organizational performance. Table 20 provides a summary of the missions and respective indicators.

Table 20

The National Community College Benchmark Project

Mission	Indicator Measures
Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion rates (the proportions of full- and part-time students who complete degrees or certificates or who transfer to a senior institution) ▪ Transfer-student performance (cumulative grade point average, average first-year credit hours, and second-year persistence rate at transfer institutions) ▪ Persistence rates (the proportion of credit students who persisted from one term to the next or from one fall to the next) ▪ Proportions of students who achieve their educational objective ▪ Retention and success rates for credit college-level courses ▪ Retention and success rates for credit developmental or remedial courses ▪ Retention and success rates of former credit developmental or remedial students in their first college-level courses ▪ Retention and success rates in four core academic skill areas ▪ Institution-wide grade distributions that indicate withdrawal, completion, and success rates and percentages of A and B grades ▪ Institution-wide credit distance-learning grade distributions that indicate withdrawal, completion, and success rates and percentages of A and B grades
Student Satisfaction and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summary items from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory ▪ Summary items from the ACT Student Opinion Survey ▪ Summary benchmarks from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement
Career Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportion of career-program completers who are either employed in a field related to their career program or pursuing additional education ▪ Proportion of employers who are satisfied with career-program completers' overall preparation

Mission	Indicator Measures
Access and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportion of minority students and employees ▪ Proportion of high school graduates from the college's services area who enroll at the institution ▪ Credit and non-credit students as a proportion of the service area population ▪ Participants in institution-sponsored cultural activities, public meetings, and sporting events as a proportion of the service area population
Business and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of students enrolled in business and contract training classes ▪ Number of companies served ▪ Business-and-industry costs and revenues
Organizational Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Average credit section size ▪ Student-to-faculty ratio ▪ Proportion of credit hours and sections taught by full-time faculty ▪ Proportion of total credit hours and sections that are administered at a distance ▪ Student-to-student services staff ratios ▪ Retirement and departure rates ▪ Grievance and harassment action rates ▪ Costs per credit hour and full-time-equivalent (FTE) student ▪ Development or training expenditures per FTE employee

Institutions who desired to participate in the benchmark project could subscribe with an application, an agreement to certain terms, and a payment of an annual fee of \$1000. The data submitted to the benchmark project was considered confidential and was accessible only to those subscribing member-institutions of the project. In 2004, the first year of the project, 110 community colleges participated. In 2007, the number had grown to 178 participating community colleges.

As was found in the ECS (2000) study, it is clear that there is a growing national interest in developing relevant indicators of organizational effectiveness. In the NCCBP (Juhnke, 2006) study, the process for selecting the indicators was developed, not by state

or federal officials, but by representatives from 11 community colleges and the League for Innovation in the Community Colleges. In this project, the representatives identified five common missions for the community college and 32 common indicators of organizational effectiveness. The collaborative and intentional process used in developing these indicators suggested that they transcend a specific community college's unique mission and instead are broad based enough to be relevant to all represented community colleges. The primary strength of the NCCBP, according to its authors, is the ability for community colleges to engage in a "process by which [they] can systematically collect data and make comparisons to peer institutions that can inform strategic decision making, improve quality, and demonstrate institutional effectiveness" (Juhnke, 2006, p. 72). Many participating institutions have used the criteria to demonstrate their organizational effectiveness in accreditation reviews and quality improvement planning. Another strength of the NCCBP study was its popularity given the volunteer nature of the participation from the community colleges. This was evident by the increasing number of colleges participating in the project – growing from 110 community colleges in 2004 to 178 in 2007. Limitations of the NCCBP included the voluntary nature of the project, the lack of transparency of benchmarked institutions, and the potential for different processes to be utilized to define the indicator measures. Specifically, only those community colleges that choose to participate could be used for comparison. Even with 178 community colleges participating, this was still a fraction of the nearly 1200 community colleges in operation in the United States. In addition, the community colleges who participated did not know who the specific institutions were with whom they were being compared. This limited the ability to learn additional details about why certain indicators may have been higher or lower than the evaluator's home institution. Finally, with any self disclosed indicator, there was a potential for different processes to be utilized to measure the indicators thereby skewing the results.

The NCCBP (Juhnke, 2006) study had implications for the dissertation as I was seeking evidence from the literature to guide the decision for a possible indicator or indicators of organizational effectiveness. As the 32 indicators of organizational effectiveness were developed by a collaboration of community college and League of Innovation representatives in the NCCBP (2006) report, I added all to the list of potential

indicators of organizational effectiveness to be considered in my study. Further evaluation of the indicators will be conducted in a later section of this literature review.

Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges

The purpose of this section is to continue to identify indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges. In this case the indicators were identified by the authors of the recent book, *Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges* (Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007). This section is organized in the same way as previous sections.

Alfred, Shults, and Seybert (2007) suggested that both program improvement and accountability to internal and external stakeholders had recently led to a heightened interest and need in measuring organizational performance. They cited the 1998 adoption of the Students-Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 into the Title IV of the Higher Education Act and the Spellings Commission report (2006) examining issues of access, affordability, accountability, quality, and innovation as evidence of this growing trend. Alfred et al. (2007) posited that community colleges needed to develop core indicators of performance that meet the need and expectations of multiple stakeholders. A core indicator was defined as: “a regularly produced measure that describes a specified condition or result that is central (or foundational) to the achievement of the college’s mission and to meeting the needs and interests of key stakeholders” (Alfred et al., 2007, p. 12). Alfred et al. posited that to select the core indicators they should “reflect and support sound assessment practice” (2007, p. 12). The authors recommended nine questions to use as criteria for selecting the core indicators of community college effectiveness. They included:

- 1) Is the indicator support by a comprehensive information system?
- 2) Is the indicator part of a commitment to track important data over time, thereby ensuring that effectiveness assessment is a continuous improvement process?
- 3) Is there a standard of comparison or a benchmark against which progress can be measured?
- 4) Is the reliability of the indicator regularly assessed? Are changes made when needed?

- 5) Is the indicator credible to college personnel who are in a position to change institutional behavior?
- 6) Can the indicator be readily understood by external decision makers? Is it salient and credible to them?
- 7) Does the indicator provide information that will help the institution to improve? Does it encourage the institution to value the right things and to take action?
- 8) Does the indicator reflect the perspectives and concerns of multiple constituencies?
- 9) Can data be obtained for the indicator at reasonable cost?

Utilizing the above criteria, Alfred et al suggested 16 core indicators that they believed assess the effectiveness of the community college given six missions. The six missions of the community college are: (a) student progress, (b) general education, (c) outreach, (d) workforce development, (e) contribution to the public good, and (f) transfer preparation. Alfred et al. did not suggest a priority among the missions given the different focal areas of various colleges. Each of these missions and their respective indicators are described below.

Student progress was defined as the actual achievement of the student as well as the students' perception of the institutions' contribution to that achievement. The indicators of student progress included: persistence and graduation rates as student goal attainment and student satisfaction rates. General education was defined as the ability to strengthen the students' general skills (i.e., reading and writing) as well as the broad analytical skills (i.e., critical thinking and problem solving) needed to succeed in an increasingly interdependent and diverse world. The indicators of general education included: success in subsequent and related course work, program learning outcomes and mastery of discipline, and demonstration of general education competencies. Outreach was defined as the relationship of the community college to meeting and even anticipating the needs of those in the local, regional, and global communities in a timely basis. The indicators of outreach included: regional market penetration rates and responsiveness to community needs. Workforce development was defined as the ability to be responsive to the dynamically changing conditions of the job market and demands from employers by providing initial and continued career education to the students. The indicators of workforce development included: licensure and certification pass rates,

placement rates, and client satisfaction with programs and services. Contribution to the public good was defined as the ways and means community colleges provide for the betterment of people and communities in dimensions such as access to better jobs, enhancement of earning potential, improvement of quality of life, and attraction and retention of business and industry. The single indicator of contribution to public good was value added to the community. The definition of transfer preparation was defined as the ability to prepare students to move to four-year institutions to gain bachelor’s degrees. The indicators of transfer preparation included: transfer rates and performance after transfer. Table 21 provides a summary of the missions and respective indicators.

Table 21

Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges

Mission	Indicator Measures
Student Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student goal attainment ▪ Persistence ▪ Graduation rates ▪ Student satisfaction
General Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Success in subsequent and related course work ▪ Program learning outcomes and mastery of discipline ▪ Demonstration of general education competencies
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional market penetration rates ▪ Responsiveness to community needs
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Placement rates ▪ Licensure and certification pass rates ▪ Employer satisfaction with graduates ▪ Client satisfaction with programs and services
Contribution to the public good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value added to the community
Transfer Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer rates ▪ Performance after transfer

Alfred et al. acknowledged that many community colleges lack the time, money, or staff to conduct a full assessment program and given the size, resources, and priorities

of an institution, some indicators would be of greater or lesser importance. As such, Alfred et al suggested a three-stage approach to implementing the assessment of organizational effectiveness based on criteria of difficulty or rigor associated with measuring the indicator(s), resources (e.g., fund, staff, and technology) needed to conduct the assessment, and capability or expertise of staff to carry out the institutional assessments. The three stages of the assessment model for organizational effectiveness are: (a) compulsory indicators, (b) indicators of engagement, and (c) indicators of macro impact. Figure 5 represents the three stage model including the respective indicators for each stage.

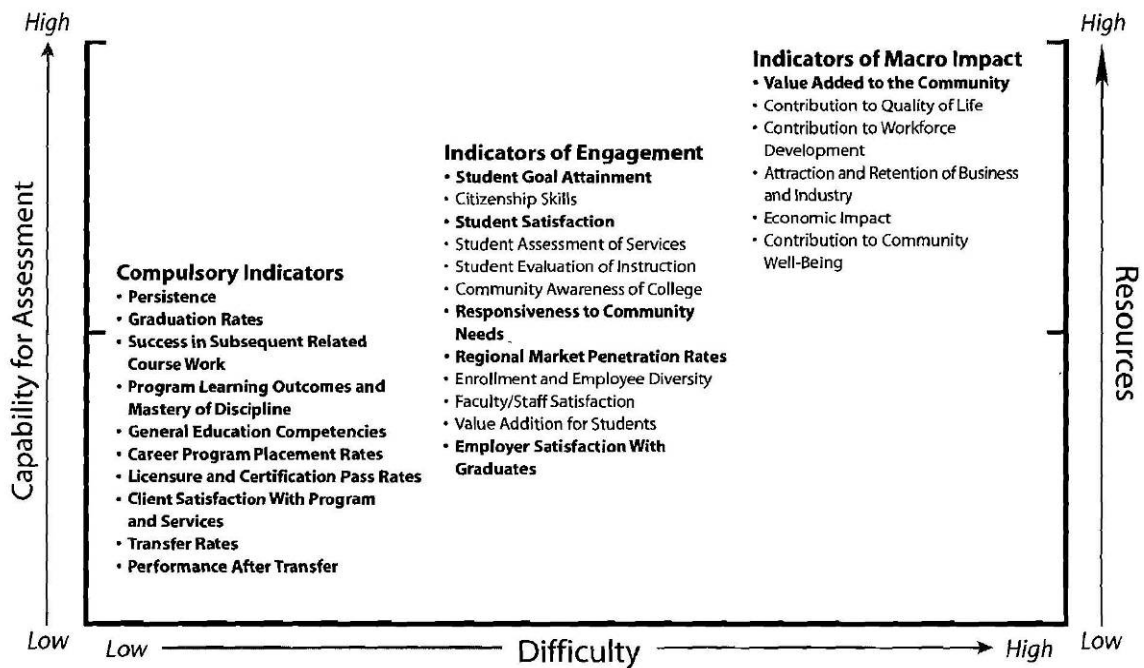


Figure 5. Stage model for assessing effectiveness, based on capacity (reproduced with permission from publisher).

The authors suggested that the most basic indicators for assessing organizational effectiveness were the compulsory indicators including such items such as: persistence, graduation rates, career program placement rates, general education competencies, and transfer rates.

These are indicators that must be measured in all instructions, regardless of capacity, because of situational realities and external mandates (accreditation,

federal and state reporting requirements, governing board bylaws, etc.). The difficulty associated with assessment in the compulsory category is low for some indicators and high for others, but assessment must be ongoing because these indicators are high on the radar screens of important stakeholders. Institutions with limited capacities for assessment will want to consider using these indicators as the foundation for their assessment program and making careful choices about what to measure beyond them. (Alfred *et al.*, 2007, p. 19)

The second stage suggested by Alfred et al. (2007) was the indicator of engagement. These indicators measure the stakeholders' involvement, satisfaction, and benefits received through their affiliation with the community college. They are important, but are more difficult to assess as they take more sophisticated forms of assessment to implement. The third stage for assessing organizational effectiveness was labeled indicators for macro impact. This stage is the most complex as it is intended to measure the least tangible impacts of the college in terms of the economy, quality of life, and contribution to the well-being of the community.

The fact that *Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges* (Alfred et al, 2007) is in its third edition since the book was first published in 1995 suggests that the need for indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges is both dynamic and relevant. In the two previous sections of this review, the perspective of indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges was from state policymakers for the ECS (2000) study and community college and League of Innovation representatives for the NCCBP (Juhnke, 2006) respectively; in this book, the perspective was that of scholars in the field of higher education. Alfred et al. (2007) provided a compelling case of why identification of indicators of organizational effectiveness is important. They suggested six missions for the community college with 16 common indicators of organizational effectiveness. As with the previous two sections, Alfred et al's (2007) indicators transcended specific community college missions and were broad based enough to be relevant to all represented community colleges. Strengths of *Core Indicators* (2007) included not only a rationale as to why indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges are important, but also the practical applicability of how to measure those indicators. This included the identification of criteria for selecting core indicators, the acknowledgement of the complexity for implementing a system for tracking indicators of organizational effectiveness, and a model for prioritizing core

indicators from compulsory indicators, to indicators of engagement, and finally to macro impact indicators. Alfred et al. went even further by giving specific examples of methods and frequency for measuring the respective indicators. One limitation was that Alfred et al. did not cite specific model institutions where their theories had been applied. Although measurement of the core indicators at different institutions would certainly necessitate adaptation, the identification of college exemplars could prove to be insightful for leaders of other community colleges.

Alfred et al.'s. (2007) book had implications for this dissertation as I was looking to the literature to guide the decision for a possible indicator of organizational effectiveness. I added the 16 core indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community colleges developed by Alfred et al. to the list of potential indicators for consideration in this dissertation. Further evaluation of the indicators will be conducted in the subsequent section of this literature review.

Common indicators across the three studies for organizational effectiveness of community colleges

The purpose of this section is to transcend individual studies and identify the common indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges as highlighted or proposed by the selected literature. This section is then a summary of the common themes and indicators from the selected literature.

Given the analysis of the ECS (2000) audit of the 50 states, the survey of 178 community colleges in the *National Community College Benchmark Project* (Juhnke, 2006), and the direction provided in the popular and recent book on this topic by Alfred et al. (2007), an analysis of all three yielded four common focus areas in terms of organizational effectiveness. These areas of focus are what I labeled: (a) student academic performance, (b) student satisfaction, (c) student workplace performance, and (d) employer satisfaction. The indicators of each focus area are outlined below:

- 1) Student Academic Performance
 - a) Student Goal Attainment
 - b) Completion Rates (e.g., graduation, certification)
 - c) Retention/Persistence Rates
 - d) Transfer Rates

- e) Persistence after Transfer Rates
- 2) Student Satisfaction
 - a) Student Satisfaction Rates
- 3) Student Workplace Performance
 - a) Licensure Pass Rates
 - b) Employment Rates
- 4) Employer Satisfaction
 - a) Employer Satisfaction Rates
- 5) Contribution to the Public Good
 - a) Regional Market Penetration Rates
 - b) Value Added to the Community
 - c) Contribution to Workforce Development

Table 22 provides a summary of the respective common indicators. Each of these indicators was considered in the design section of the dissertation as possible measures of overall organizational effectiveness of community colleges for the purposes of my research study.

Table 22

Summary of Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges

Most Popular Indicators In 50 States	National Community College Benchmark Indicators	Alfred, Shults, and Seybert Indicators	Common Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportions of students who achieve their educational objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student goal attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student goal attainment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rates (the proportions of full- and part-time students who complete degrees or certificates or who transfer to a senior institution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation rates • certification pass rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rates (e.g., graduation, certification)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence rates (the proportion of credit students who persisted from one term to the next or from one fall to the next) • Retention and success rates for credit college-level courses • Retention and success rates for credit developmental or remedial courses • Retention and success rates of former credit developmental or remedial students in their first college-level courses • Retention and success rates in four core academic skill areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence • Success in subsequent and related course work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention/persistence rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer-student performance (cumulative grade point average, average first-year credit hours, and second-year persistence rate at transfer institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer rates • Performance after transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer rates • Persistence after transfer rates •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary items from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory • Summary items from the ACT Student Opinion Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student satisfaction rates

Most Popular Indicators In 50 States	National Community College Benchmark Indicators	Alfred, Shults, and Seybert Indicators	Common Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Rates • Licensure Pass Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of career-program completers who are either employed in a field related to their career program or pursuing additional education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement rates • Licensure pass rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rates • Licensure pass rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of employers who are satisfied with career-program completers' overall preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer satisfaction with graduates • Client satisfaction with programs and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer satisfaction rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of minority students and employees • Proportion of high school graduates from the college's services area who enroll at the institution • Credit and non-credit students as a proportion of the service area population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional market penetration rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional market penetration rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in institution-sponsored cultural activities, public meetings, and sporting events as a proportion of the service area population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value added to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value added to the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of companies served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness to community needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to workforce development

Summary

In summary, this section of the literature review gave a brief overview of indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college found in the literature.

Utilizing the criteria qualifying reports, articles, and books that: (a) had been written within the past ten years, (b) provided a broad institutional perspective, and (c) focused beyond one institution, three studies were identified representing three perspectives of policymakers from the 50 states, representatives from 11 community colleges and the League of Innovation for Community Colleges, and academic scholars in the field of higher education.

The major findings of the review were: (a) indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges are growing in importance nationally due to a variety of internal and external reasons, (b) any indicators chosen should give consideration to relationships to the multiple missions of the community college, and (c) there are a number of possible indicators to choose from when measuring organizational effectiveness in the community college context. A summary and analysis of the all the indicators of organizational effectiveness across the three studies yielded 12 common indicators including: (a) student goal attainment, (b) completion rates (e.g., graduation, certification), (c) retention/persistence rates, (d) transfer rates, (e) persistence after transfer rates, (f) student satisfaction rates, (g) licensure pass rates, (h) employment rates, (i) employer satisfaction rates, (j) regional market penetration rates, (k) value added to the community, and (l) contribution to workforce development.

Given that the purpose of this dissertation was to determine which of Collins' (2001) themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness, and that Collins used a single measure of organizational effectiveness in his study, the next task for my study was to select one best indicator or set of indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges. The indicators identified in the reviewed literature were used as the list of possibilities to be considered for use in this dissertation.

Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness for the Community College

The purpose of this section is to narrow the possibilities of indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges down to a few that meet criteria similar to that used by Collins (2001) and that could be used for this dissertation. This section is organized by: (a) proposing indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college using Collins' criteria, and (b) identifying strengths and weakness of the indicator selected for this dissertation.

Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness for the Community College and Collins' Criteria

Collins' (2001) criteria for selecting the indicators of the good-to-great companies were accessibility, consistency, and objectivity of the information related to the mission of the organization. Organizational effectiveness over a span time was added as a

criterion to mitigate against identifying organizations simply being lucky. For the social sector, Collins (2005a) added the criterion of distinctive impact; however, this was not considered when studying the corporate organizations, therefore was not considered in this research study.

One of the basic criteria Collins' (2001) used in *Good-to-Great* in selecting the indicator of organizational effectiveness was to find an indicator that was related to the mission of the organization which, in his case, were private sector corporations. The modern community college has many missions including: (a) general education leading to transfer to four institutions, (b) remedial education, (c) professional education, (d) service to business and industry, and (e) life enhancement education. Although it is acknowledged that the community college has multiple missions, arguably a case can be made that any of the indicators found in the common set in Table 22 could meet Collins' criteria. To narrow the selection of an indicator of good or great for community colleges, consideration was given to Collins' secondary criteria of broad accessibility, consistency, and objectivity of data. Of the five mission areas noted above, I have found no comprehensive state or national data sets on student satisfaction, student workplace performance, employer satisfaction, or contribution to the public good. For the mission area of Student Academic Performance, only completion rates and transfer rates are consistently available across states and across the country via the data generated for the *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)* (n.d) as mandated by the Student Right-To-Know Act (Code of Federal Regulations, 1999). As such, the combination of completion rates and transfer rates were selected as the indicator of organizational effectiveness for the community colleges to be used in this study.

Strengths and Limitations of Selected Indicator of Organizational Effectiveness in Community Colleges

The purpose of this section is to identify the strengths and limitations of using the combination of completion rates and transfer rates as the indicators of overall organizational effectiveness for community colleges for the purpose of my research study. The primary mission of most community colleges is to provide academic and professional instruction for undergraduate students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007b; Bailey & Morest, 2004; California Education Code -Title 3, 2005).

Completion rates and transfer rates then are certainly legitimate indicators of the performance of community colleges in terms of organizational effectiveness, but they have both their strengths and limitations. The following section will address those strengths and limitations.

Strengths

One of the greatest strengths of using completion and transfer rates as indicators of organizational effectiveness was that completion of academic programs and/or transfer to four year institutions is presumably one of the primary missions, if not the core mission of today's community college. From its earliest beginnings, the community college was designed to help students progress to achieve their academic goals (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007b; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). An additional strength of the completion and transfer rates relating to Collins' (2001) criteria was the accessibility of the data. With the passing of the Student Right to Know (SRTK) and Campus Security Act of 1990 as amended, all of the colleges and universities who received federal funding were required to submit completion and transfer rates to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) to be included in the *Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS)* (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). With this mandate of reporting came additional strengths of the completion and transfer rates given the precise and consistent definitions of how to define the rates. Both rates were developed based on tracking student performance via cohorts of students. The cohorts were defined as a collection of students who were first-time freshmen, enrolled full-time as degree-seeking students, and who completed their academic program and/or transferred within three years of beginning their program. "The [SRTK] graduation and transfer rates are the only easily available and reasonably consistent outcome measures for all community colleges, and certainly the only college-level data based on a longitudinal measure of student achievement" (Bailey *et al.*, 2007, p.1).

Limitations

There were also certainly limitations in using completion rates and transfer rates as indicators of overall organizational effectiveness for community colleges. The first limitation was its narrow focus on academic performance given the variety and

complexities of the community college missions. Even if the case was made that the academic performance of the student is a core mission, the completion and transfer rates as reported to the federal government have additional limitations.

First, the completion and transfer rate indicators do not fully account for the changing intention of the students. Although they are intended to track degree seeking students, some students will change their goals after taking courses and choose another path. Also, students may indicate they are degree seeking to be considered for financial aid or acceptance to other courses, but may not have this as a true intention.

Second, the completion and transfer rates track cohorts of students. The cohort is defined as first-time, full-time, degree seeking students who are followed for three years or one and a half times the time required to typically complete the respective degree or certification program. However, the criteria allow for cohorts as small as one student therefore providing for broad statistical swings from year to year as well as limited representation of the entire community college population.

Third, the prescriptive definitions mandated by the NCES does not allow those students who have completed their academic programs to be considered in the transfer rates thereby understating the count of students moving from the two year institution to the four year universities and colleges ("Interpreting SRTK rates", 2008). For example, if a student has graduated from the community college with an associate's degree and then transfers to a four year institution to complete a bachelor's degree, the student would only be counted as a community college graduate and would not be counted as a transfer student.

Finally, the use of completion and transfer rates focuses on the quantity or throughput of students going through the educational institution. It does not measure the quality of the students' education in terms of success in securing a job, being academically prepared at a four-year institution, or improved quality of life.

Summary

In summary, this section of the literature review introduced possible indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college using the Collins' (2001) criteria. The indicators selected were completion rates and transfer rates. This section also

identified strengths and limitations of using the combination of completion rates and transfer rates as indicators of organizational effectiveness.

The major findings were that a significant strength of completion and transfer rates was that they met the Collins' (2001) criteria of accessibility, consistency, and objectivity of the information related to the mission. As the primary mission of most community colleges is to provide academic and professional instruction for undergraduate, completion rates and transfer rates are legitimate indicators of the performance of community colleges in terms of organizational effectiveness. The limitations of using completion and transfer rates were that: (a) they do not represent the varied missions of the community college well, (b) the method of counting students in a cohort can be misleading, (c) students who complete their academic programs are not included in transfer rates even if they transfer, and (d) they measure throughput instead of quality of the student education.

Summary of Literature Review for Indicators Used to Identify Overall Effectiveness of the Community College

This third and final area of the literature reviewed focused on exploring selected contemporary definitions of great in terms of organizational effectiveness for community colleges and narrow the possibilities of indicators by utilizing Collins' (2001) methods as a guide. The intention was to suggest a handful of possible definitions of great for the community college and evaluate the strengths and limitations of each. As a result of the review, several instructive considerations became apparent. First, with calls for increased accountability from various stakeholders, the identification of indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college is increasing in importance. In growing numbers, state and federal policy makers are asking and demanding community colleges demonstrate the value they add to their students as well as to the community at large. Second, given the complexities of the modern community college, there are several possibilities for indicators of organizational effectiveness. For each of these indicators there are strengths and limitations not only in what they measure, but also what resources are needed just to measure them. Just as Collins found in his study, there are no perfect indicators for determining good and great. Third, of all the indicators suggested by the literature, completion and transfer rates are among the common indicators recommended

as relevant for community colleges that also meet the Collins' criteria of accessibility, consistency, and objectivity of the information.

The intent of this study was to determine which of Collins' (2001) themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. Based on this section of the literature review, although flawed in some regards that are made explicit, completion and transfer rates as indicators of organizational effectiveness were the best choice of legitimate measures to identify community college that had made the transition from good to great given Collins' criteria.

Relevant and precise indicators of organizational effectiveness needed to be identified for community colleges. Using the combined completion and transfer rates, I was able to seek out institutions that had moved from good to great again adapting Collins' criteria for site selection.

Summary of Literature Review

In this literature review, I have examined publication history pertaining to Collins' (2001) Good-to-Great theory, Collins' Good-to-Great research methods, and select indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college. The literature, as outlined, served as a foundational context as well as a practical guide for this study based on Collins' theory and methods from which to recreate and replicate aspects of the *Good-to-Great* study in the community college environment.

From the review of literature, several general concepts and themes emerged. First, the literature suggested, from a variety of perspectives, a growing importance of demonstrating organizational effectiveness in the community college. With limited resources, higher demand, and greater competition, has also come heightened expectations for performance where community colleges are expected to clearly demonstrate their accountability to both internal and external stakeholders. Second, in an attempt to discover strategies for improving organizational effectiveness, a growing number of leaders from a variety of organizational sectors have found value in the themes and theory Collins' (2001) purports in *Good-to-Great*. Third, very few studies of Collins' findings and their adaptation to the other sectors have been conducted by anyone

including Collins himself. These concepts strengthened the rationale for conducting my study.

The literature also had direct implications for the developing the design of this dissertation. From the first section of the review, an overview of Collins' (2001) Good-to-Great theory was provided. The literature indicated that Collins found seven themes common to the 11 good-to-great companies studied. Collins also identified some organizational differences between the corporate and social sectors that led to the adaptation of the seven themes to the social sector. The themes encompassed topics around: (a) the characteristics of senior leadership, (b) the quality of the personnel, (c) the frankness, (d) the focus, and (e) the discipline demonstrated in the organizational culture, (f) the use of technology, and (g) the momentum gained from sustained focused effort. In this study, my intention was to develop a deep understanding of the community college leaders' perspective on how they moved from good to great. This had implications for the design of this dissertation as the themes, including concepts and definitions, and resulting theory provided both a context and a language from which the research questions were answered. They also provided a structure from which to compare and contrast the results of the data and in-depth interviews of leaders of the community college. As the primary research question sought to answer which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness, I endeavored to see if Collins' themes would emerge in the context of a community college and, if present, how important the participants felt they were to the resulting transition.

The literature also suggested that asking participants to recall their perceptions of what contributed to the good to great transition had potential limitations in that the perceptions could lead to the halo effect. As the halo effect may have been in effect for both the participants and for me as the observer, I attempted to mitigate this phenomenon by not over emphasizing the greatness of the community college and by attempting to be open to hearing the themes that emerged directly from the research.

Finally, the literature suggested that there was value in writing in a language that remained meaningful yet is easy to understand. It was my intention to use Collins' (2001)

writing style as a model for making the analysis of this dissertation accessible to community college practitioners.

In the second section of the literature review, Collins' methods used in *Good-to-Great* (2001) and *Good-to-Great in the Social Sectors* (2005a) were summarized in great detail. The literature was very explicit about: (a) the methods for determining the good-to-great organizations, and once determined, (b) the methods for developing the themes and respective theory. The literature acknowledged that any definition of good and great has its limitations. There are no perfect indicators of overall organizational indicators for good and great companies and there are not likely to be perfect indicators for community colleges; however, Collins' (2001) provided a set of criteria that were applied to this research study. In addition to the criteria of logical and credible, Collins used: (a) accessibility, (b) consistency, and (c) objectivity of the information related to the mission of the organization as the criteria used to determine the indicator of organizational effectiveness. I added do-ability to the list of Collins' criteria to determine the good to great community college in the design of this dissertation.

Once the good-to-great companies were selected, Collins (2001) modeled a philosophical approach as well introduced his methods used to identify the common themes. Specifically, Collins utilized an interpretive multiple case study approach to exploring the themes common to the 11 good-to-great companies. This approach was used as a guide for this dissertation. In addition, Collins provided detailed methods for exploring the themes including the use of interviews and analysis of internal and external documentation. Specific participant selection processes and questions used in the interviews were provided as well as the specific types of internal and external documents sought. Collins also suggested that some adaptation of the original study with the corporate sector may be necessary for social sector organizations such as the community college environment. As I intended to replicate Collins' study as closely as possible, I utilized these specific methods and Collins' suggested adaptations for the social sector as guides for developing the design for this dissertation.

From the third section of the literature review, select studies were introduced that provided a several possible indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community

college from a variety of perspectives including state policy makers, community college and League for Innovation leaders, and the academic scholars. It was clear that any one or two indicators of organizational effectiveness are limited in their ability to truly measure the effectiveness of a comprehensive community college. However, using the criteria used in Collins' (2001) *Good-to-Great* study of (a) accessibility, (b) consistency, and (c) objectivity of the information related to the mission, the combined completion and transfer rates were selected as the best indicators of organizational effectiveness for community colleges. To understand what themes were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness, the good-to-great community college must first be determined. Using the combined completion and transfer rates, I was able to seek out institutions that moved from good to great in keeping with the methods employed by Collins' as criteria for site selection.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN OF STUDY

This chapter of the dissertation will describe: (a) the philosophical approach including assumptions and criteria for truth, and the strengths and limitations of the approach, (b) a personal disclosure, (c) the research method, and (d) procedures for the research including participant and site selection, data needed, data collection procedures, and data analysis, and strategies to ensure soundness.

The purpose of this research study was to understand the case of a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness and to explore which of the themes found in *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001), if any, were present during that transition. I also explored: (a) what other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to “great,” (b) the relative importance of Collins’ themes among themselves and in relation to other important themes, and (c) how Collins’ themes might be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great. My intent in conducting this research was to provide community college leaders with the opportunity gain a deeper understanding of how one community college made the transition from good to great from the perspective of those who were present and engaged during the transition.

Philosophical Approach

The philosophical approach used in this study was that of the interpretive social science. The purpose of this section of the design of study is to introduce the philosophical approach adopted for this dissertation. Interpretative social science is defined as the “systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 2003, p. 76). This section will be organized by: (a) the history of the interpretive social science as a philosophical approach, (b) the aims, assumptions, and criteria for truth in the philosophical approach, and (c) the strengths and limitations of interpretative social science.

History

The history of interpretive social science can be traced to later part of the 19th century with the work of philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey and socialist Max Weber (Carr & Kemmis, 1997; Neuman, 2003; Patton, 2002; Schwandt, 2001; Van Manen, 1990). Dilthey posited that there were two fundamentally different types of science. One type of science was the prevalent paradigm at the time based on the abstract yet rational explanation of nature. This form of science attempted to explain such things as cause and effect of the natural world. The other type of science was a social science based on an empathic understanding of the “everyday lived experience of people in specific historical settings” (Neuman, p. 75). Weber suggested that social science focus on studying social action with an intentional purpose (Neuman, 2003). He argued that researchers should endeavor to learn the personal motivations and reasons that shape one’s feelings and that guide decisions to act in particular ways.

Interpretive social science also has roots in the theory of hermeneutics (Carr & Kemmis, 1997; Neuman, 2003; Patton, 2002). Found largely in the humanities, hermeneutics is a theory that attempts to understand the whole by deeply exploring the viewpoints of the parts and how those parts relate to the whole via text. The text can include, but is not limited to written words, conversations, and pictures. Hermeneutics acknowledges and embraces the fact that it is a subjective evaluation where each reader brings her or his own experience to understanding the meaning of the text.

Aims, Assumptions, and Criteria for Truth

Interpretative social science aims to educate the reader through a deepened insight between the purpose and intentions of study participants and their actions. Through the means of participant observation and in-depth interviews, interpretive social science is intended to reveal that which may be unconscious to the participants and reader. “For interpretive social science, the only aim is enlightenment, and through enlightenment, rationality in a critical, moral and reflective sense” (Carr & Kemmis, 1997, p. 94). The interpretative social science researcher assumes that social reality is not independent of human consciousness. There is no social reality consisting of pre-existing laws waiting to be discovered. Instead, reality is what people perceive or interpret it to be. Social reality is constructed by human beings both individually and collectively through social

interactions and socially constructed meaning systems. People may not experience the world in the same way. As such, multiple interpretations of human experiences are possible. “Social life exists as people experience it and give it meaning. It is fluid and fragile. People construct it by interacting with other in ongoing processes of communication and negotiation. They operate on the basis of untested assumptions and taken-for-granted knowledge about people and events around them.” (p. 77)

As such, researchers must:

- Endeavor to understand what is meaningful and relevant to the people being studied in their natural setting.
- Strive to see the world via the point of view of those being studied.
- Study meaningful social action, not just external or observable behavior. Social action is that action to which people attach subjective meaning and is activity done with a purpose or intent.

The role of the researcher then is critical as the key instrument for observation. The researcher enters the field with the intent to learn about the participants in the context of their world. The interpretive social science researcher must convey a deep understanding of the way the study participants reason, feel, and see their world. “Empathic or appreciative accuracy is attained when, through sympathetic participation, we can adequately grasp the emotional context in which the action took place” (Weber as cited by Neuman, 2003). For the interpretative social science researcher “the setting has to be understood in the context of the history of the institutions of which they are a part” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 30).

As the key instrument for observation, the subjectivity of the researcher is also embraced as the concept of objectivity is considered an illusion. There is no attempt to be value free as the values and meaning of social reality are embedded in everything. Given this, the researcher’s perspective must be explicit and shared with the readers (Neuman, 2003). The researcher acknowledges her or his values and experiences in the study to provide credibility and context (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995).

Given the interpretative social science approach, an additional aim of the research is that it must be descriptive. Instead of looking to quantify the world through numbers, words, pictures, and other symbols are used to “illustrate and substantiate the presentation” of the case (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 30). The researcher must use great intention to take note of the smallest of details. The interpretative social science approach “demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock the more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied” (p. 31). The interpretive researcher will use bracketing to take notice of the common sense or taken-for-granted assumptions. Bracketing is a research technique where the researcher suspends common sense and pre-conceived assumptions about the social world to understand how the participants experience their reality (Schwandt, 2001).

When considering the criteria for truth in interpretative social science, the criteria contrasts significantly with the positivist approach. Specifically, for the interpretive researcher, the quest for an absolute discoverable truth is a futile aim as, from her or his perspective, no such truth exists. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that the criteria suitable for measures of truth in quantitative research (i.e., validity and reliability) are unsuitable for judging research that is conducted in a naturalistic paradigm. Instead, the interpretative researcher seeks to develop a deep understanding of the human experience as perceived through the lived experiences of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Meaning in the social world is created by the subjective understandings between study participants and the researcher and between the researcher and the reader of the research. As such, a central criterion for truth is an intersubjective understanding and agreement where the researcher makes every effort to authentically reflect the participants’ perspective to the reader (Neuman, 2003). The goal of intersubjectivity is to provide trustworthiness to the study by allowing the reader to experience the phenomenon as closely as possible as experienced by the participant. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four criteria to ensure trustworthiness and soundness of an interpretive study including: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, (c) transferability, and (d) conformability, each of which will be described later in this chapter. Although it was my goal to achieve this intersubjectivity for the study, it again cannot be fully realized. Different researchers

utilizing the same data sources and techniques can emphasize different aspects of the data and come to different interpretations thereby constructing different meanings.

Strengths and Limitations

The interpretative social science approach focuses on the exploration of human experiences in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of study participants and how they construct meaning (Carr & Kemmis, 1997; Creswell, 2002). As such, the strengths of interpretative social science approach include providing voice to study participants in sharing their experiences. The interpretive social science researcher can also “uncover the set of rules which give point to a certain kind of social activity and so reveal the structure of intelligibility which explains why any actions being observed make sense” (Carr & Kemmis, 1997, p. 89). From the stories of the participants can come a praxis or practical application of face credibility which may yield insights for thinking, dialogue, and practice in other settings and other individuals.

According to positivist researchers, a limitation of interpretive social science is an inability to generalize findings to the larger population as well as the inability to provide objective standards for verifying any resulting theories as the context and constructed meaning are dynamic and subjective. However, Stake (1995) suggests that interpretive social science can yield “naturalistic generalizations” where through the process of thick description, the participants and readers can add the single case to other cases with which they are familiar. “Naturalistic generalizations are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves” (Stake, 1995, p. 85).

Some researchers accept the tenet that social activities must be understood in terms of their meanings by the participants both individually and collectively. However, they cite as a limitation of the interpretive approach the inability to consider any meaningful or instructive explanations in the investigation of social phenomena. They note that, taken to its extreme, the aim of solely understanding the lived experiences of the studied participants does not allow room for explaining and controlling social phenomenon that may have significant importance. Interpretive social science “neglects questions about origins, causes, and results of actors adopting interpretations of their

actions and social life, and neglects the crucial problems of social conflict and social change” (Carr & Kemmis, 1997, p. 95).

An additional criticism of the interpretive approach is a concern with unintended consequences of social actions. The critics suggest that although there is always intentionality for actions taken, there are also ramifications of actions that were neither anticipated nor intended. As such, the participants may be completely unaware of the impacts of their actions and therefore may not allow for any frame of reference for understanding by the participants (Carr & Kemmis, 1997).

In summary, this section of the research design outlined the history, aims, assumptions, and criteria for truth, as well as the strengths and weakness of the interpretive philosophical approach. In this study, I interviewed leaders from a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness to explore which of Collins’ (2001) themes, if any, were present. Through the research process I sought to understand the perspectives and context of the leaders in the organization as they reflected on the transition with the intention to help create meaning of use by others with an interest in this phenomenon.

Personal Disclosure

Researchers using the interpretive philosophic approach acknowledge that objectivity in studying the social sciences is not only difficult, it is truly impossible (Patton, 2002). As such, the interpretive approach embraces the researcher as a subjective participant in the research while needing to be reflexive. Reflexivity involves self-questioning and self-understanding in an attempt to understand what I know and how I know it (Patton, 2002). This allows the reader to better understand the researcher’s position and assumptions (Stake, 1995). As such I have attempted to provide a personal disclosure of my values, beliefs, and background as they are related to this dissertation.

Based on my personal values and beliefs, I would most aptly identify with the pragmatists philosophical approach. Pragmatism is the knowledge claim that the conventional allegiance to one specific methodological perspective or worldview is inherently flawed and that adopting “methodology appropriateness” should be the primary criterion for judging methodological quality (Patton, 2002). Pragmatism has its

origins in the work of authors Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey (Cherryholmes, 1992, as cited in Creswell, 2003) who suggest that the focus of the research should be on applications that help illuminate solutions to problems and less on philosophical traditions. However, the philosophical traditions still have value. Patton states that “paradigms are really about epistemology, ontology, and philosophy of science. As such, paradigms are important theoretical constructs for illuminating fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality. [However], the point is to do what makes sense, report fully on what was done, why it was done, and what the implications are for findings” (Patton, 2002, p. 72). “Such pragmatism means judging the quality of a study by its intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed, and results obtained, all within a particular context and for a specific audience” (Patton, 2002, p. 71). Patton continues, “the methods of qualitative inquiry now stand on their own as reasonable ways to find out what is happening in programs and other human settings” (Patton, 2002, p. 137).

Although I do not subscribe to a specific philosophical approach at this point in my scholarly journey, adopting the interpretive social science approach provided context, guidance, and credibility for this dissertation. In addition to the structure and credibility it provided, the interpretive approach appealed to me as I do believe much of our social reality is constructed by our individual and collective meaning ascribed to it. If there is a social reality out there, we are like the fable of the elephant and the six blind men where we do not have access to the entire truth or reality. For the research questions in this study, the interpretative approach was deemed as appropriate given the need to understand the participants’ perspectives of how their institution moved from good to great. I also believe the stories of participants are a powerful means through which to provide insight and wisdom in our every day existence.

Personally and professionally, I have always had an interest in organizations and how to make them more effective. My former academic pursuits included study of organizations and people through the lens of a business and sociology paradigm. Professionally, I brought those perspectives and interests to my work as a senior administrator in a large campus auxiliary department. There I have witnessed intelligent well-intentioned leaders and managers struggle with how to best balance the needs and desires of students with the stewardship and sustainability of the organization.

Although I have been working in an institution of higher education for over 20 years, I have not worked or been a student on a community college campus. I have spent brief amounts of time on community college campuses through meetings, visits with colleagues, and internship opportunities. I have also spent three years in a doctoral community college leadership program engaged in thoughtful study of the community college environment. The cohort model led to in-depth conversations with colleagues from various community and technical colleges who brought a broad range of experiences and perspectives to the classroom. As a result of these encounters, I do believe that there is value in gaining a deeper understanding into how a community college moved from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness.

Research Method

The purpose of this section is to introduce the case study research method utilized for this dissertation. This section will be organized by: (a) the rationale used for selecting the case study method, and (b) the key concepts of the case study method.

Rational for Method Selection

Patton (2002) posited that research focusing on organizational effectiveness in terms of quality enhancement, excellence, or greatness tends to involve individual stories and professional judgments that cannot be standardized.

Excellence is manifest in quality responses to special cases or especially challenging circumstances. Thus, while quality control relies on standardized statistical measures, comparisons, and benchmarks, quality enhancement relies more on nuances of judgment that are often best captured qualitatively through case studies and cross-case comparisons. (Patton, 2002, p. 149)

Therefore, for this dissertation I used a single-case study research method with an interpretive social science approach with the intention of eliciting an experiential understanding of the themes present at a community college that transitioned from good to great. Stake (1995) defined case study as the “study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity with important circumstances” (p. xi). The single case affords the researcher an in-depth analysis of the case. A case study focuses on an integrated system of people, programs, and working parts (Stake, 1995). Unlike ethnography where the research is focused a cultural phenomenon, the case study focuses on a “program, event, or activity involving individuals rather than a group per se”

(Creswell, 2002, p. 484). Researchers “are more interested in describing the activities of the group instead of identifying shared patterns of behavior exhibited by the group” (Creswell, 2002, p. 484).

Key Concepts of Case Study

When utilizing the case study method, several key concepts must be present (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995). For example, a case needed to be defined and should be identified as either typical or exemplary. A case study must be a bounded system either by time or by place. It must utilize multiple sources of data collection to provide the detail needed to understand the case. A thick description of the context and setting of the case must also be included to provide the reader a sense of place, time, and circumstances.

I specifically conducted an instrumental case study where I focused on one college to gain insight into the particular themes that allowed that institution to transition from good to great. The instrumental case study is one that uses a particular case to illuminate a given issue with the intention of providing potential insight into other cases (Creswell, 1998, 2002; Schwandt, 2001).

Although criticized for being too relativistic and subjective, qualitative studies in general, and qualitative case studies specifically have become more accepted approaches in educational and social research (Bredo & Feinberg, 1982). Stake (2001) argues:

[W]e have a long history of qualitative case study work in Education. It is not necessary for us today to begin a dissertation with an argument that case study is a legitimate research method. Legitimacy has been established. Some faculty members remain uncomfortable and unready to supervise case study. But the approach is widely accepted for doctoral dissertations at most Universities in the Western World. (2001, p. 1)

I attempted to make meaning of the good to great transition through the exploration of documents, interviews, observations, and artifacts that could then be analyzed and shared as a story in order to yield deeper understanding (Creswell, 1998).

Procedures

The research procedures for this dissertation were informed by the interpretive social science approach and the case study method to understand which of Collins’

(2001) themes, if any, were present for a community college that had transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. This section of the research design describes the procedures that were used to: (a) select the site and participants, (b) identify and the collect the data needed, (c) conduct the data analysis, (d) ensure soundness of the research, and (e) ensure protection of the human participants.

Site and Participant Selection

In selecting a single case study site, the first criterion to consider was maximizing what could be learned (Stake, 1995). As outlined in the third section of the literature review relating to possible indicators of organizational effectiveness for the community college, I utilized Collins’ (2001) criteria for selecting the indicator of the good-to-great companies for the purpose of eliciting the best indicator for community college effectiveness; these criteria included: (a) a consistent measure over time, (b) accessible information, (c) relatively objective, and (d) related to the mission. As such, the combined indicators of transfer rates and completion rates, also known as the academic success rates, best met Collins’ criteria as overall indicators of effectiveness for community colleges given the purpose of this study (see Table 23).

Table 23

Selection of Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges

Good-to-Great Indicator	Relevant Criteria for Indicator Selection	Good-to-Great Community College Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cumulative stock returns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent measure over time ▪ Accessible information ▪ Objective ▪ Related to mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combined transfer rates and completion rates

As Collins (2001) used the *Fortune 500* list as a way to narrow the focus of all companies, I narrowed the site selection of possible community colleges in the United States by looking at community colleges from three states. I chose the state with the larger of the community college systems due to its size, accessibility of data (via the Internet), and geographic accessibility for the field research (Stake, 1995).

Using the rationale outlined in the review of literature, the transfer and graduation rates were identified using the web-based Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) database managed by the National Center for Education Statistics. I specifically used the Peer Analysis Tool which allows users to access a variety individual campus data for comparison and analysis. The criteria selected were:

Degree/certificate-seeking students (2-year institutions)

- Adjusted cohort (revised cohort minus exclusions)
- Completers within 150% of normal time total
- Transfer-out students

This data was then combined and compared to the average rates of other community colleges in the same state system. Community colleges operating within the same state system were assumed to have similar external environmental factors such as statewide leadership, funding, and administrative laws, policies, and procedures.

The next step in site selection using Collins' (2001) criteria was determining what qualifies as a transition from good to great for the community college setting. Collins defined a period of time prior to the transition and after the transition to reduce the likelihood that the success was due to luck. In both cases, Collins used 15 years. For this study, data for the selected state's community college system was not systematically reported prior to 1998. As such, I identified a community college that had at least two years of lower than average academic success rates compared to the average, had a transition, and then had better than average academic success rates over a period of time of at least three years (see Table 24).

Table 24

Working Definition of the Good-to-Great Community College

Term	Good-to-Great Companies	Working Definitions	Good-to-Great Community Colleges
Good Organizational Effectiveness	Average or below industry average stock returns for a period of time of at least 15 years	Average or below average performance compared to industry over time	Average or below average performance compared to other community colleges in same state system over time
Transition Point			
Great Organizational Effectiveness	Average stock returns of at least three times the industry norm for a period of time no less than 15 years	Above average performance compared to industry over time	Above average performance compared to other community colleges in same state system over time

I found two institutions that met the criteria. Between the two institutions, the institution selected had a greater gap between their academic success rate and the state average academic success rate since the transition, and had a longer period of above average academic success rates from their transition point. As such the selected institution met and exceeded the criterion having two years of academic success rates at or below the state average and then having eight years of better than average academic success rates. Figure 6 represents the comparison of academic success rates for G2G College compared to the average academic success rates for the all community colleges within the same state.

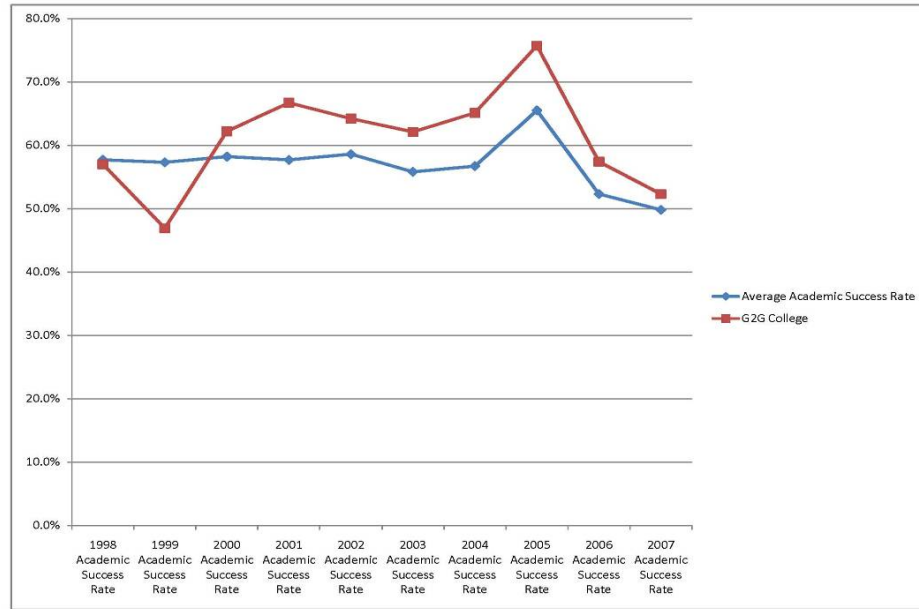


Figure 6. Academic success rates for G2G College compared to state average.

Once the site had been selected, the selected study participants were those who had been engaged in or lived through the period of their community college transitioning from good to great. As there are multiple perspectives of any system, it was my intention to interview a cross section of the leaders at the community college using purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1998) including faculty, senior administrators, and board members. This was consistent with Collins’ (2001) approach in his good to great study. Purposeful sampling is a sampling technique where specific individuals are selected to participate in my study given their common and unique perspectives on a common case (Creswell, 2002). Since, in a case study, there is not the goal, need, or ability for broad generalizations, I was not as concerned with the statistically representative nature of the participants. Specifically, I hoped to gain access to various leaders from the campus administration, faculty, and board member perspectives who represented a broad cross-section and diverse perspectives of the organization.

To gain access to these leaders, I contacted the chief executive officer of the community college and requested support for my study. I developed an informed consent document as part of my protections for human participants’ process for my study so that my needs and intentions were clear to the institution and we could agree on appropriate access to study participants. The site institution also had an institutional review board

with a required approval process. Once approval was granted, the Director of Institutional Research at the college facilitated the identification of 20 potential participants for my study who met the primary criteria of being senior leadership, faculty, and board members who had been at the institution prior to and after the transition from good to great. I then worked with the Director of Institutional Research to narrow the potential participants even further to the six core participants who best fit the criteria of: (a) being informative about events during the time of the transition, (b) being willing to talk deeply about their perspectives/perceptions of the transition, and (c) coming from a broad enough perspective that represents various parts of the institution.

Once on site, I also utilized a snowball technique. Snowball sampling in a case study begins with the researcher asking initial participants to recommend subsequent participants (Creswell, 2002). The intention was to find people who had not been previously selected and who met the above criteria so that I could have a greater understanding of the case. Since speaking to every person identified by the core participants might not be appropriate given the needed criteria nor possible given the time constraints, I chose to focus on those participants who did meet the criteria and were recommended by at least two of the core participants. This yielded two more participants for a total of eight.

Data Needs and Data Collection Procedures

In case studies, the researcher is seeking insight into the case from a variety of sources including: (a) documents and records, (b) interviews, (c) observations, and (d) physical artifacts (Creswell, 1998). The data needs for this dissertation were dictated by the research questions and were informed by Collins' study. Table 25 outlines the data needs in relation to the research questions for this dissertation.

Table 25

Research Questions and Respective Data Needs

Research Question	Data Needs
Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior leaders, faculty, and board members • Internal documents
What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior leaders and board members • External documents • Internal documents
What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior leaders and board members
How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior leaders and board members

For this dissertation, I needed to gain access to the campus, the campus' leadership, and various internal and external documents. Regarding the acquisition of data, my initial intention was to use Collins' (2001) study as a guide and collect as many of the data items identified in *Good-to-Great* as described in Table 26. As the concept of acquisitions did not have meaning in the community college setting, I did not solicit this information.

Table 26

Data Needs

Collins Data Needs	Data Needs for This Research Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisitions • Executive compensation • Business strategy • Corporate culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisitions • Executive compensation • Organizational strategy • Organizational culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other companies • Key people to interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other community colleges • Key people to interview

Using the internet resources, I searched for external documents prior to the field research of the G2G College to obtain information for as many of the data needs as possible. As indicated in the previous section, in addition to collecting internal and external records as outlined by Collins (2001), I interviewed the leaders of the college including representatives from the senior management team, faculty, and board who were present before, during, and after the transition from good to great. I also followed Collins’ lead and used a purposeful and snowball sampling technique to identify the participants who were active at the college through the transition (Collins, 2001; Creswell, 1998). My intention was to accurately capture the meaning from their stories, observe the environment within which the transition occurred, and collect any artifacts that could help describe the case and answer the research questions.

I needed to solicit the stories from the participants that addressed the first two research questions of: (a) Research Question #1 - Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness?, and (b) Research Question #2 - What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? To do this, I used the questions developed by Collins (2001) in his interviews of corporate leaders as a starting point to understand the participants lived experiences (see Appendix B). Using Collins' questions allowed me to see how asking the same questions might yield similar or different responses given the community college context.

Since I was asking the participants to reflect on their experiences and perspectives between 1998 and 2007, I wanted to give them some time to be able to recall their memories from that time period. I also wanted to give them an opportunity to pull any specific documents or other artifacts they felt would be pertinent to my study. As such, I shared Collins' (2001) questions that were slightly modified for the community college context when I confirmed the interview times with the participants.

I also needed to address the third research question for this dissertation which was, What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? To answer this I needed to develop questions that allowed for deeper exploration of the components that made up Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes. In *Good-to-Great*, Collins provided detailed summaries of each chapter which featured key concepts and components of his findings for the various themes which was reference in the review of literature. For the actual interviews I developed questions based on these summaries and added them to Collins' original questions. After exploring the key concepts and components with the participants to see what naturally emerged, I also wanted to gain the participants' perspectives on Collins' themes directly. As such, I asked the participants if they were familiar with Collins' study. I then provided the participants the working definitions of the seven themes described in the previous chapter and gave them an opportunity to read them and ask any clarifying questions.

Finally, to address the fourth research question (e.g., Research Question #4 - How should Collins’ themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?), I needed to understand how the participants would alter Collins’ (2001, 2005a) themes from their perspective. As such, I asked the participants how they would alter Collins’ themes and if they would add anything to them. Appendix C provides the questionnaire used for the onsite interviews. As my intention was to learn more about the case and knowing that each of the participants brought a unique perspective to the case, I was not concerned about using the questions as a rigid survey instrument, but instead as a guiding document to facilitate the interviews.

Table 27 identifies the data needs along with the process used for collecting the data, and the types of resources that were solicited. I also addressed any data needs not found from my independent investigative efforts.

Table 27
Data Needs, Collection Processes, and Resources

Data Needs	Data Collection Process	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive compensation • Organizational strategy • Organizational culture • Layoffs • Leadership styles • Financial ratios • Management turnovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books/articles • Annual reports • Reference materials • Internal publications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of factors/inputs contributing to transition and sustained effectiveness • Decision making processes • Comparisons to other community colleges • Key people to interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management during transition • Faculty leaders during transition • Board members during transition

In addition to the data needs describe above, I collected information by observing the environment during my research. This included descriptive notes on the people, places, and climate of those being observed. I also developed reflective field notes on my experiences, insights, and learning (Creswell, 1998).

For both the interviews and the observations, I developed a protocol, or predetermined form (see Appendix D) that assisted me in organizing information (Creswell, 1998). Protocols can help the researcher create structure in starting or concluding interviews, provide headers for observations, and reminders for thanking study participants. I took extensive field notes and taped interviews. Stake (1995) indicated that using a tape-recorder can be an effective data collection approach, however, cautioned that the amount of tape a researcher can work with is very small. He advocated the researcher developing a skill of keeping shorthand notes and counting “on member checks to get the meanings straight” (Stake, 1995, p. 56). In an attempt to accurately capture the thoughts and specific quotes from the participants, I decided to tape all interviews and then had them transcribed by a professional transcription service. I also listened to the tapes and checked for any errors or omissions on the transcripts.

Data Analysis

The data analysis used the research questions for this dissertation as a way to organize and understand the findings. Specifically, I explored the perspective of the participants in an effort to understand which of Collins’ (2001, 2005a)) themes, if any, were present for a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. I explored what other themes, if any, were important in the transition from good to great and what the relative importance was to the themes identified by Collins. Finally, I explored if and how Collins’ theme should be altered to better describe their relevance in the transition.

Stake (1995) suggested that the analysis can start with the first impressions and can continue through final drafts of the report. Both Creswell (1998) and Stake (1995) advocated that the researcher use the following procedures in analyzing the qualitative data in a case study. First, a description of the case is developed by describing the detailed aspects of the case and its setting. Second, categorical aggregation is performed.

Categorical aggregation is the process of coding the information into five or six categories with the intention of developing themes. For this process, I considered Collins' (2001) original coding categories, but found that they did not inform the research questions. Instead, I allowed the codes to emerge from the data by listening to the audio of the interviews three or more times, and reviewed that transcripts four or more times looking for key concepts and components that could be consolidated into themes. Third, the researcher conducts direct interpretation. Direct interpretation is the process where the researcher "looks for a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking for multiple instances. It is a process of pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways" (Creswell, 1998, p. 154). Fourth, the researcher develops patterns whereby connections between two or more categories are explored. Finally, from the description and classification tasks, comes the process of interpretation and making naturalistic generalizations through the lessons learned (Stake, 1995). Natural generalizations are "conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves" (Stake, 1995, p. 85).

In alignment with the process used by Collins (2001) (see Table 28), the entire analysis process was an iterative one where initial themes emerged and were later challenged or supported by subsequent data (Collins, 2001; Creswell, 1998). Over time, the themes became more precisely and holistically refined. The processes outlined by Stake (1995) and Collins were followed for all four research questions.

Table 28

Summary of Data Analysis Process Suggested by Collins

Data Analysis Process
Step 1 - Code data
Step 2 - Develop ideas based on data (discuss, debate, reflect)
Step 3 - Test against data
Step 4 - Revise ideas – Go back to Step 1
Step 5 - Build a coherent framework
Step 6 - Develop a theme

Strategies to Ensure Trustworthiness and Soundness

Strategies to ensure soundness of data collection must link to the criteria for truth given the interpretive philosophical approach of this study; specifically an authentic telling of the case as perceived by the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asked: "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 301). Stake (1995) asked the question, "Do we have it right?" (p. 107). As noted in the section on the interpretive philosophical approach, a key criterion for truth is intersubjective understanding and agreement between the participants, the researcher, and the reader. To ensure trustworthiness and soundness for this study, I used the four strategies proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to verify the descriptions and applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Good-to-Great themes at G2G College including: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) conformability.

Credibility

Credibility is the ability of the researcher to provide confidence in the truth of the findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). To meet the criteria for truth and to gain the needed credibility of an interpretive study, Creswell (1998) outlined eight procedures that are commonly used: (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation, (b) triangulation, (c) peer review or debriefing, (d) negative case analysis, (e) clarifying researcher bias, (f) member checks, (g) rich, thick description, and (h) external audits. Creswell also recommended qualitative researchers "engage in at least two" (p. 203) of these procedures in any given study. Consistent with Stake's (1995) recommendations, I chose three approaches to ensuring soundness: (a) triangulation, (b) member checking, and (c) rich, thick description.

The triangulation protocols used included data source, investigator, and method triangulation. In addition to the primary interviews with the eight participants, I sought data from documents and electronic sources that were created by the institution and outside the institution. I also employed observation of the case in terms of the setting, the people, and the other artifacts.

The member checking protocol used included asking the participants clarifying questions to ensure I understood their perspective and that I had captured both the essence and specifics of what they were saying accurately. I also shared the specific verbatim transcripts with each of the respective participants I interviewed to make sure that I accurately captured their words and ideas. I also shared the profiles of the G2G College and the respective profile of each of the participants with those individuals. In the few cases where the participant noted factual errors, I made those changes. In no case were substantive errors identified. I did not disclose the data from all eight of the interviews to any one participant to maintain highest level of confidentiality possible within the participant group. As such, I did not provide the participants the opportunity to review the findings and interpretations of the applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes and the emergent themes across the eight interviews.

A thick description of the case, the profiles of the participants, and the responses from participants was utilized to provide enough detail for the reader to gain a sense of the place, time, and circumstances of this instrumental case study.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which two or more contexts may be similar thereby allowing the possible transfer or application of the conclusions and implications from one context to another (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). This requires the researcher to provide "sufficient information about the context in which and inquiry is carried out so that anyone else interested in transferability has a base of information appropriate to the judgment" (p.124-125). The selection of the site and the perspectives solicited from the various participants were done intentionally to achieve transferability. Although there were aspects unique to G2G College, the college had many of the same opportunities, challenges, and constraints as other colleges in the region and state. Thick description was utilized to provide the reader enough detail as to determine whether the findings might be applicable to a different context. Thick description is defined as thorough description of the context and processes in which the case is placed (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

Dependability

Dependability focuses on the process of the inquiry in providing the ability for researcher to demonstrate the findings are consistent and could be repeated if replicated with the same or similar participants the same or similar context (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). This requires clarity of the process so that readers can rely on the findings. The detailed description of the research process described in this chapter provides an audit trail for the data collection and analysis.

Conformability

Conformability is the degree to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not by the researcher's bias, motivation, or interest (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). To achieve conformability, I again utilized member checking and triangulation protocols described previously. In addition, I employed reflexivity where the context of my background and perspectives were described through the expression of a personal disclosure statement.

The data from all of the above sources was collected and analyzed with the aim of intersubjectivity between the case and my interpretations. Priority was given to the data from the participant interviews. From the eight interviews, I found that there was a great deal of consistency from their collective perspectives in the applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes and the other emergent themes given the various perspectives solicited. Both the internal and external documents supported the perspectives and assertions of the participant interviews with regard to priorities, communications, and organizational results.

Summary

In summary, I described the strategies I employed to ensure soundness of the data used in the study. The purpose of this section was to link to the criteria for truth given the interpretive philosophical approach of this study; specifically an authentic telling of the case as perceived by the participants and to gain an intersubjective understanding between my study participants and the researcher. To ensure soundness for this study, I used four strategies to verify the descriptions and applicability of Collins' themes (2001,

2005a) at G2G College including: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, (c) transferability, and (d) conformability.

Strategies to Protect Human Participants

To protect human participants during this study, I followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies as outlined in the *Human Research Handbook* utilized at Oregon State University and directed by Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 34 CFR 97 (Oregon State University, n.d.). These policies embrace an ethical standard and context that intend to protect research participants from harm as a result of participating in this study or from the subsequent publication of the results, analysis, and conclusions. The research methods were outlined, including the practice of informed consent whereby participants were informed of the process and its intended use as well as the ability to remove themselves from my study at any time and for any reason.

As the process of interviewing and observation are dynamic, I gave broad descriptions of my interaction with individuals (Van Manen, 1990). However, I also raised issues of potential harm that might have occurred as a result of institutions or individuals participating in this study. Since I interviewed participants in person, I knew who they were and therefore anonymity was not offered. It is my intent to maintain confidentiality of the institutions and individuals that participate in this study. All transcribed and recorded data will be destroyed within three years of the completion of my dissertation defense as required by the site institution's IRB policy.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter of the dissertation will provide a description of the findings from the data collection at a good-to-great community college. The sources of the data included participant interviews, observations, documents, and electronic sources. This chapter will be organized into two sections. The first section includes the profiles and context for the good-to-great community college including: (a) a profile of the good-to-great community college selected, (b) a brief profile of each of the eight participants interviewed, and (c) a summarized profile for all participants. The second section will include the findings organized by the four research questions: (a) Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness?, (b) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?, (c) What is the relative importance of Collins' themes among themselves and in relation to other important themes? and (d) How might Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? The research questions provide a framework for the organization of the findings.

Profiles and Context

This section presents the profiles for the good-to-great community college including: (a) a profile of the good-to-great community college selected, (b) a brief profile of each of the eight participants interviewed, and (c) a summary profile for all participants. These profiles introduce the institution and the eight organizational leaders thus providing a context for the college selected and each of the participants for the case of the good-to-great community college.

The college and participants were assured confidentiality beyond the researcher. As such to maintain the confidentiality of the selected institution, details about the name, city, and state were altered or not disclosed. The good-to-great college will be referred to as G2G College. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants selected, pseudonyms of Good-to-Great Leader or G2GL#1 through G2GL#8 will replace their actual names for all quotes. To add an additional level of confidentiality, the profiles of the individual participants will be identified by their role, but will not be linked to a specific G2GL pseudonym. Since the numerous documents utilized could also disclose the institution's

identity, documents will be identified using the description of the type of document and the date of the creation of the document if known (i.e., document type, document date).

Profile of Good-to-Great Community College

This section provides an overview of the history of the selected good-to-great community college as well as a summary of selected attributes framed by the years reviewed, 1998 and 2007, respectively.

History

The good-to-great college is situated in a relatively large community college system in the United States. G2G College began its existence in the late 1960s with overwhelming support from the local community during a November election. The population of the district where G2G College was situated started with 40,000 residents. Located in a small, but emerging community just outside of a large metropolitan area, the voters saw the need for an institution of higher learning to serve their community. From the initial vote, G2G College also elected a five-member board of trustees to set the plans in motion for establishing the institution. Located initially in the local high school, G2G College officially started offering classes in the fall of 1969 serving just over 700 students (historical celebration document, 2004, fact book, 2000, fact book 2005, strategic planning document, 2008, college web site, n.d.).

The demand for the G2G College courses grew quickly and the high school no longer met the need. Voters approved a \$4 million construction bond to create a dedicated home for the college. Over 150 acres was purchased for the use of the new institution. The first permanent building was completed in 1973.

From its inception until 1988, G2G College had moderate growth in enrollment, employees, and revenue. In 1988, the current president joined the institution. Prior to this appointment there had been three presidents leading G2G College. From 1988 to 2009, the college has experienced a tremendous amount of growth in enrollment, number of employees, capital construction, and revenue as well as improvement in relationships and reputation with the community, local business leaders, and local and state governmental officials.

Selected attributes

To determine the selected institution and as described in the previous chapter, I searched for a community college that met the criteria of at least two years of lower than average academic success rates compared to the state average, had a transition, and then had better than average academic success rates over a period of time of at least three years. G2G College met and exceeded that criterion. In the years 1998 and 1999, G2G College had at or below average academic success rates compared to the state average. In 2000, G2G College transitioned to above average academic success rates and continued with better than average success rates through the 2007 cohort; the last year that information was available at the time of this study.

As stated in the previous chapter, there were advantages of utilizing the IPEDS data for the site selection, but there were limitations as well. With the multiple missions of the modern comprehensive community college, it was completely plausible that I would find the other potential indicators of organizational effectiveness to be in alignment or in conflict with the academic success rates. To provide additional evidence that the site institution might be a credible good-to-great candidate, I identified a number of attributes that addressed the multiple missions and gauged the transition and growth of G2G College during the same span of years. In almost all measurable attributes, G2G College saw growth and success. Table 29 provides a summary of selected indicators of organizational effectiveness (fact book, 2000, fact book 2005, strategic planning document, 2008, electronic state data source, n.d.).

Table 29

Selected Indicators of Organizational Effectiveness for G2G College

Attribute	Good-to-Great College	
	1998	2007
Number of students – Headcount	9,029	18,471
Number of full time equivalent students (FTES)	5,551	8,561
Number of employees	208	454
Number of sections	1,017	2,150
Degrees, certificates awarded	721	931
Transfers to in-state 4-year institutions	387	786
Percentage above (below) state average SRTK academic success rate	(0.7%)	2.5%
State revenue	\$20,832,445	\$55,472,156
Foundation revenue	\$964,531	\$1,338,568
Grant revenue	\$1,409,915	\$6,542,116
Buildings	21	49
Population of county	188,922	251,265

Profile of Good-to-Great Community College Participants

Participants for this study were selected using the purposive sampling technique based on the criteria used by Collins (2001). Specifically, Collins chose to interview the senior managers and board members present during the time of the transition. Being an institution of higher education, I also included faculty leaders. In an effort to capture a data rich, yet manageable number of perspectives, I narrowed the potential participant pool from 20 to six by using the criteria of: 1) being informative about events during the time of the transition, 2) being willing to talk deeply about their perspectives/perceptions of the transition, and 3) coming from a broad enough perspective that represents various parts of the institution. Using a snowball sampling technique, I then identified three additional participants that met the criteria above. Two of the recommended participants agreed to take part in my study and one did not. The interviews were all conducted in person and in the participants’ offices with the exception of the Development & Technology Vice President which was conducted over the phone. The interviews were

recorded via field notes and utilizing two digital recorders. This section provides a brief profile of each of the eight participants interviewed and a summary profile of the roles, experience, tenure at G2G College, and academic credentials of all participants. The data was captured from the interviews with the participants as well as other campus sources including the G2G College campus directory, schedule of classes, and fact book.

Instruction Vice President

After receiving a bachelor's, master's, and doctorate in Psychology, Instruction Vice President started working at a local community college as a way to supplement his income as a post doctorate researcher teaching one class a week.

A friend of mine was teaching at a local community college and said, "Would you like to teach a class in the evening?" I was a struggling, starving graduate student. I was married. The pay was great. It was fantastic. So I said, "Sure." (Instruction Vice President, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

After teaching part time for one year, a full-time position came open at a community college and Instruction Vice President had a decision to make; continue as a researcher or move fulltime to the community college? Instruction Vice President chose to end his research career pathway to become a fulltime professor for 15 years. "So I started teaching at the community college and loved it, just fell in love with what it was about and its mission and its goals and everything" (Instruction Vice President, personal communication, February 27, 2009). After serving as a professor for a while, Instruction Vice President assumed additional leadership roles at the college (e.g., faculty union president, faculty senate president, department head, and division chair) and became involved in community college reform by serving on numerous committees at the state level.

In 1992, Instruction Vice President was hired as a Dean of Instruction at a small rural community college where he worked for six years. Due to his involvement in the state leadership, Instruction Vice President was recruited and hired in 1998 at G2G College as the Executive Vice President/Assistant Superintendent of Instruction where he worked until 2006 when he left to become president of a community college in a different community.

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Instruction Vice President	36	6	B.A. –Psychology M.A. - Psychology Ph.D. – Physiological Psychology

Development & Technology Vice President

Development & Technology Vice President began his academic pursuits as a student at G2G College. After receiving his associate’s degree in Psychology, Development & Technology Vice President transferred to a medium size public institution where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in Psychology. He then went on to a large private institution where he obtained a master’s degree in Educational Psychology and Technology and a doctorate in Educational Psychology with an emphasis on statistics and measurement.

Development & Technology Vice President taught at a several medium and large public universities and conducted evaluation work on a national scale at a large private university and a large public university for four years.

In 1999, Development & Technology Vice President joined G2G College as the Assistant Superintendent/Vice President for Institutional Development, Technology, and Online Services. In his role, Development & Technology Vice President provides leadership for many of the assessment and evaluation systems, processes, tools and structures that support the institutional effectiveness strategies.

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Development & Technology Vice President	17	10	A.A. – Psychology B.A. – Psychology M.S. – Educational Psychology and Technology Ph.D. - Educational Psychology

Enrollment Services Dean

Enrollment Services Dean began her academic pursuits at a community college 12 years after graduating from high school. While at the community college, Enrollment Services Dean was given a part-time position in the Admissions and Records department. After receiving her associate’s degree, Enrollment Services Dean transferred to a medium size public institution where she pursued a bachelor’s degree in English. She intended on becoming a teacher, but while she was a student, she went through a divorce.

Here I am with three kids and as part of the teaching thing, you have to go into the classroom for a year unpaid. Hmm, not gonna work. *(Laughs)* Little mouths to feed. So, I had been working, supplementing, borrowing my books, and actually ended up [working] full time as things digressed in my personal life. (Enrollment Services Dean, personal communication, March 3, 2009)

Enrollment Services Dean started as a classified staff person and worked her way up to assistant director of Admissions and Records (A&R) while working on her bachelor’s degree. After working in various roles for nine years, Enrollment Services Dean desired to become the director of A&R, but saw that her current director was not planning on leaving the position so she took a job as a student services liaison between a local community college district and a national management information system provider. After serving in this role for approximately four years, Enrollment Services Dean was hired at G2G College as the Director of Admissions and Records in 1997. In 2006, Enrollment Services Dean was promoted thus giving her a number of additional responsibilities. She currently serves as the Dean of Enrollment Services for G2G College.

I am responsible for Admission and Records, Counseling, Student, the Student Services computer support person, Matriculation, the Student Business Office, Student Recruitment and School Relations and the Transfer Center. So, I have a big, huge job – I’m also the Academic Division Dean for the Student Services Division. (Enrollment Services Dean, personal communication, March 3, 2009)

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Enrollment Services Dean	23	12	A.A. – Liberal Arts B.A. - English M.P.A. – Public Admin

Public Information Officer

Public Information Officer started her academic pursuits at a private institution with an emphasis in Fine Arts. In addition, Public Information Officer's father had been a journalist which influenced her interests. "I came into journalism because my dad was senior news correspondent for [United Press International]. So, I learned to write journalistically when I was very young, and I freelanced. I really pursued through my younger years, two careers – one in art and one in journalism" (Public Information Officer, personal communication, February 26, 2009). After receiving her bachelor's degree, Public Information Officer taught in the primary and secondary school systems as an art teacher. In addition to teaching and freelance journalism, Public Information Officer freelanced as a public relations consultant.

Public Information Officer then moved to a large metropolitan area and pursued a master's degree in Mass Communications. While taking courses, Public Information Officer was asked to guest lecture in her graduate program teaching news writing and photography courses for an instructor who had become ill.

Prior to her employment at G2G College, Public Information Officer had never attended or worked at a community college. In 1989, Public Information Officer was hired as the first public information officer (PIO) for G2G College. She is responsible for producing all college level marketing, publications, websites, press releases, and mass communication external to the college as well as coordinating many of the comprehensive messages internal to the college employees. In addition to producing materials that are important to share on behalf of the college, Public Information Officer also feels she has an important role in listening to the needs of the community. In describing her role at the institution, Public Information Officer indicated,

I believe that part of the role of a PIO is to sit on a fence between the public and the external and internal. It's not just that I take information from the inside and throw it over there to those people on the outside.

I need to be [listening] all the time, which is part of why we have all these clippings and why I read stacks of newspapers every day. I've been watching the community. What's going on? What are the trends? What's happening? What are people saying? I'm reading blogs. (Public Information Officer, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Public Information Officer	41	20	B.A. – Fine Arts M.A. – Mass Communications

Faculty/Academic Senate President

“To some extent, I am the product of a community college in more ways than one,” said Faculty/Academic Senate President (Faculty/Academic Senate President, personal communication, February 25, 2009). Faculty/Academic Senate President’s father had been an instructor at a local community college for 30 years. After completing high school, Faculty/Academic Senate President attended a large community college in the area before transferring to a mid-size public university. It didn’t surprise him when he decided to make a career in the community college environment. After completing his Bachelor’s degree in History and his Master’s degree in History and Political Science, Faculty/Academic Senate President began his career in the community college system by becoming a “freeway flier” teaching in a large metropolitan area. A freeway flier refers to adjunct faculty who teach in several institutions at one time. “You jump on the freeway and you go from one point to another” (Faculty/Academic Senate President, personal communication, February 25, 2009). At one time, Faculty/Academic Senate President was teaching at four separate institutions at the same time.

In 1988, Faculty/Academic Senate President was hired at G2G College as a professor in the History department. In 1991, Faculty/Academic Senate President was first elected as the president of the academic senate and has been reelected to serve in this role ever since. As president for the academic senate, Faculty/Academic Senate President works closely with the institution leadership and the faculty to develop and implement curriculum and other academic policies for the college. Faculty/Academic Senate President currently serves as “a professor of History and Political Science, President of the Academic Senate, tenure coordinator, and field studies coordinator; a little of this and a little of that” (Faculty/Academic Senate President, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Faculty/Academic Senate President	25	21	B.A. – History M.A. – History/Political Science

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer started her academic pursuits at a local community college receiving her associate’s degree in Liberal Arts. She then transferred to a medium size public institution where she received her bachelor’s in Sociology and Speech. After receiving her undergraduate degree, Chief Executive Officer taught in junior high schools teaching Mathematics, English, History, and Government and taught Sociology at the local community college as an adjunct faculty member while working on her master’s degree in Psychology and Counseling. Chief Executive Officer then moved to the community colleges as a counselor serving students who were considered disadvantaged “economically, educationally, and linguistically” while working on a doctorate in Educational Administration at a small private institution (Chief Executive Officer, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

In 1984, Chief Executive Officer took her first administrative job as the Dean of Instruction and Student Services at a small community college. After two years, she was hired as the Dean of the College District at a medium size community college district.

In 1988, Chief Executive Officer became the fourth chief executive officer (CEO) of G2G College.

I was only an administrator for four years before I became a college president...and this is my first and only CEO job. The reason I underscore that is because I think that, that makes a difference. I think that I wasn’t an administrator long enough to forget why I was in the business in the first place. (Chief Executive Officer, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

When speaking about how she sees her role at the institution, Chief Executive Officer indicated, “You know what? I’m a big picture thinker. That’s what I do really well, that’s why I was hired here” (Chief Executive Officer, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Chief Executive Officer	37	21	A.A. – Liberal Arts B.A. – Sociology M.S. – Psychology/Counseling Ed.D. – Education Admin

Faculty/Program Director

Faculty/Program Director received his Bachelor's in Business and Master's degrees in Political Science. After graduation, Faculty/Program Director began his career as a Political Science instructor. "I got a job teaching in a brand new community college right out of my Master's program, so I was really lucky. I never had to teach high school and go through that phase" (Faculty/Program Director, personal communication, February 24, 2009). Faculty/Program Director taught for twelve years before being hired by G2G College. While at a previous institution, Faculty/Program Director became interested in teaching improvement programs.

So instead of getting a doctorate in political science, I already knew... that I was really interested in the teaching aspects of it and that I wanted to continue to do some work in professional development. So that's what I emphasized – that [doctoral] program actually allowed me to emphasize teaching rather than educational administration. (Faculty/Program Director, personal communication, February 24, 2009)

In 1987, Faculty/Program Director was hired at G2G College as the chair of the Political Science department. In 1989, Faculty/Program Director attended a professional development workshop focused on microteaching. Faculty/Program Director indicated that microteaching is a "technique for having teachers work together in a small group and teach to each other, teach short lessons and receive feedback based on those lessons" (Faculty/Program Director, personal communication, February 24, 2009). After returning from the workshop, Faculty/Program Director worked with other colleagues to develop a new program at G2G College providing professional development to the adjunct faculty focused on microteaching among other topics.

In 2001, Faculty/Program Director was solicited by the Vice President for Instruction to co-lead an effort to develop a professional development curriculum for all

full time instructors in addition to the adjunct faculty. That year, they developed an institute for teaching and learning. The institute allowed fulltime faculty to attend these academic courses, become certified, and utilize the courses as professional development credit which advanced them on the salary schedule.

After the program was developed, Faculty/Program Director stepped out of the leadership role for the first three years serving primarily as an instructor in the institute. In 2004, Faculty/Program Director became the director of the institute.

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Faculty/Program Director	34	22	B.S. – Business M.A. – Political Science Ed.D. – Higher Ed.

Board Member

Now a current board member, Board Member enrolled at G2G College in the first class when the institution opened in 1969 as a first generation college student. As a young married woman with a child, Board Member took about four and half years to complete her associate’s degree at G2G College. After being mentored and encouraged by an instructor at G2G College to continue her education, G2GL#3 transferred to a large public university. “I’m thoroughly convinced that had I not had the experience here I wouldn’t have gone to [the large public university]. I just wouldn’t have thought of it” (Board Member, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree, Board Member moved to another state as her partner went to medical school. Board Member enrolled in a graduate program and completed a Master’s in Counseling. Board Member then went to work for a couple of years in a retention program as a counselor at the local community college. After her partner completed medical school, Board Member came back to her home community to raise her children.

In the mid-1980s, a seat came open on the G2G College Board of Trustees. Board Member said, “Well, I could do that. I know about community colleges. I’m a product. I really believe strongly in them. This would be a good thing. And I’ve lived in this

community a long time” (Board Member, personal communication, February 25, 2009). Board Member has been reelected to the Board of Trustees ever since.

When asked what she feels is the primary role of a board member, Board Member indicated, “I think the primary role of a board member... is hiring and retaining excellent leadership – the person who is gonna lead the district on a day-to-day basis” (Board Member, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Board Member	27	25	A.A. - Anthropology B.S. - Anthropology M.A. – Counseling

Summary for All Participants

The Good-to-Great Leaders (G2GLs) had a variety of personal, academic, and professional experiences before arriving and while working at G2G College. Traits that they had in common included a clear dedication to the mission of community colleges, a significant number of years engaged in experiences that prepared them for their current roles; on average the G2GLs had 30.0 years of experience, and a number of years working together at G2G College; on average the G2GLs had 17.1 years of experience at G2G College.

Table 30 provides a summary of roles, years of experience, years at G2G College, and academic credentials of the respective Good-to-Great Leaders.

Table 30
Summary Profiles of Good-to-Great Leaders

Role	Years of Experience	Years at G2G College	Academic Credentials
Instruction Vice President	36	6	B.A. – Psychology M.A. - Psychology Ph.D. – Physiological Psychology
Development & Technology Vice President	17	10	A.A. – Psychology B.A. – Psychology M.S. – Educational Psychology and Technology Ph.D. - Educational Psychology
Enrollment Services Dean	23	12	A.A. – Liberal Arts B.A. - English M.P.A. – Public Admin
Public Information Officer	41	20	B.A. – Fine Arts M.A. – Mass Communications
Faculty/Academic Senate President	25	21	B.A. – History M.A. – History/Political Science
Chief Executive Officer	37	21	A.A. – Liberal Arts B.A. – Sociology M.S. – Psychology/Counseling Ed.D. – Education Admin
Faculty/Program Director	34	22	B.S. – Business M.A. – Political Science Ed.D. – Higher Ed.
Board Member	27	25	A.A. - Anthropology B.S. - Anthropology M.A. – Counseling
Average	30.0	17.1	

Findings in Response to Research Questions

In this section, the findings are organized by the four research questions: (a) Which of Collins’ themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from “good” to “great” in terms of organizational effectiveness?, (b) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?, (c) What was the relative importance of Collins’ themes among themselves and in

relation to other important themes? and (d) How might Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great.

Following the social interpretative science approach, I have attempted to represent the voices of the participants through the use of direct quotes and paraphrasing the ideas collected during the interviews. As an approach to explore all four of research questions, I separated the questioning into three parts. My intention was to allow any possible themes to emerge naturalistically from general questions about why the participants thought G2G College had gone from good to great in terms of the academic success rates. This was done in alignment with Collins' (2001) original interview questions and to mitigate against the halo effect in the most extreme case where, if I had started with Collins' themes, the participants may have made specific evaluations based on a general impression (Rosenzweig, 2007). The second part of questioning involved general indirect questions which was informed by the chapter summaries of Collins' respective themes. The second area of questioning did not, however, involve asking respondents to react to Collins' definitions directly. The third part of the questioning involved the explicit presentation to the participants of the working definitions of Collins' themes for the corporate and social sector and then asking the participants to react to those definitions based on their perception of applicability at G2G College. Although all eight of the participants had heard of Collins' book *Good-to-Great*, none of them had read it.

To gain additional context and clarity on initiatives and efforts discussed in the interviews, I also reviewed other data sources created by G2G College that included planning documents, policy documents, various reports, schedules of classes, marketing collateral, board minutes, program outlines and reviews, fact books, Web pages, and position descriptions. I also reviewed documents external to the case including state laws and policies, minutes from state committees, news articles, and references to G2G College in corporate Websites.

Research Question #1: Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness?

In this section, the findings are presented that address the first research question: Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has

transitioned from “good” to “great” in terms of organizational effectiveness? The rationale for this question was to verify whether Collins’ (2001, 2005a) themes were relevant in the community college context; as such, this research question is the primary question at the core of the purpose of my study. Answering the question provided an understanding of the degree to which the participants believed Collins’ themes were relevant to the community college setting.

The findings will be organized by Collins’ (2001) seven themes: (a) Level 5 Leadership, (b) First Who...Then What, (c) Confront the Brutal Facts, (d) The Hedgehog Concept, (e) A Culture of Discipline, (f) Technology Accelerators, and (g) The Flywheel and the Doom Loop (p. 12). The findings for each theme will include data from: (a) the participant interviews, (b) other data sources, and (c) my interpretation as an observer/investigator. Within the thematic organization, the findings will also be organized by: (a) the descriptions by the participants in the general questioning, and (b) the reactions of the participants to the working definitions of Collins’ themes for the corporate and social sectors.

There were not many of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) themes that fully applied to G2G College nor were there any themes from Collins that had no application to the college. Instead there was a continuum of applicability of Collins’ themes from partially applied to mostly applied. To provide an indicator of the degree to which the themes applied based on the data, I included a table at the end of each theme summarizing the applicability to the representative theme using the indicators of: (a) applied, (b) partially applied, (c) did not apply, and (d) silent if there was no data to make an evaluation. For my interpretation of applicability, I based my evaluation using the criteria of: (a) the evidence presented across the participant interviews, (b) evidence from the other data sources, and (c) my observations in the field. I also compared the evidence to the detailed key points provided by Collins as chapter summaries in *Good-to-Great*. In an effort to describe and discuss the specific key points that I found applied and did not apply at G2G College, I sought permission by the author to quote key points, but was not granted that permission. I am willing to orally discuss the key points that I found applied and those that did not for those readers that may be interested. Although the findings are framed by

Collins' themes, I have reserved the direct analysis of the findings in relation to Collins' research for the summary and discussion section of Chapter 5 of this study.

Level 5 Leadership

To explore the Level 5 Leadership theme, each of the participants was first asked to discuss how they would describe the personal and professional characteristics of the executive leadership. The executive leadership was initially defined as the CEO and the members of the executive cabinet including such positions as the chief instructional, student affairs, institutional development, operations, informational, and financial officers. As such, the questions were originally intended to capture any shared qualities of the executive leadership. In attempting to understand the specific characteristics of the CEO, the general definition of executive leadership evolved to focus solely on the CEO. Once the general questioning was asked, the participants were then asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions I created of Collins' (2001) Level 5 Leadership theme from *Good-to-Great* and his modified theme from *Good-to-Great and the Social Sector* (2005a) adapted to the social sector (see Table 3, p. 29).

Executive leadership characteristics described

Each of the participants was asked to discuss how they would describe the personal and professional characteristics of the executive leadership and specifically the CEO. The participants had a common perspective on many of the characteristics of the CEO of the G2G College during the time of the transition. Common adjectives used to describe the CEO were dynamic, smart, energetic, and focused (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 24 through March 6, 2009). "I mean, we got a Chancellor now who is really, really good at what she does" (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009).

All of the participants highlighted the CEO's ability, interest, and expectation of being innovative and in continuously trying new things (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 24 through March 6, 2009). "[C]redit must be given to the president of the college, who said, 'Hey, why don't we try this'" (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)? G2GL#8 echoed this quality of the CEO as a "driving force" for change by saying, "[The

CEO] encourages folks throughout the organization to have this approach where...she says that if they can dream it, they can do it” (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

The G2G College CEO was not simply a dreamer without action; she was also one who required the development of plans to reach the vision and then follow-up to track the results. “We come up with a strategic plan every three years, and then, at the end of the three years, we do a strategic plan accomplishments to show how and what did we do in each goal” (G2GL#4, February 26, 2009). G2GL#4 went on to say,

We had 212 objectives and 11 strategic goals. The college has achieved 202, or 95 percent of the objectives identified in the accomplishments, and 205 additional accomplishments, that resulted from adaptations of our [initial] directions... We then send out this document [to the entire campus] and say, “This is what we did in the last round. These are going to be...the goals that are going to be included for the next three-year cycle.” And, “What objectives do you have at the departmental or division level that fit within these [strategic] goals?” (G2GL#4, February 26, 2009)

When exploring how credit for the success and accomplishments of G2G College was apportioned, there were numerous communications by the CEO via planning documents, reports, marketing collateral, and news articles that the success of the institution was credited to faculty, staff, board members, business and city partners, and other stakeholders (strategic planning document, 2008, accreditation self-report, 2009, newsletter, 2009, website, n.d., local news article, 2009). Although there was data crediting the success of G2G College to the CEO from the participant interviews and other sources (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, board minutes, 2009, local news article, 2009), I could not find any evidence that the CEO gave herself sole or primary credit for the institution’s transition from good to great.

Many of the participants described the CEO as someone who had very high expectations of herself and others but who also understood that with risks also came the probability of mistakes. When mistakes were made in good faith, she did not cast blame, but instead asked for a plan to address the issue (G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 25 through March 6, 2009). When mistakes occur, G2GL#5 indicated that the CEO would ask, “Okay, what do we need to do to

move forward and what's your plan” (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009)? G2GL#5 went on to say,

The other aspect of it is, “What are you going to do so this doesn't happen again? I want to know what that plan is? What kind of checklist? What preventative [measures will you take]?” But we are all encouraged to take risks, so if you're going to encourage people to take risks, then you can't have people afraid to tell you when they have failures. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

G2GL#6 echoed this characteristic,

She is a unique human being. She certainly was my mentor in the sense of what could be done. But more important was her willingness to let you risk, let you take the lead, let you make a mistake... I never heard [the CEO] ever castigate any member of our team, ever. We make some – we had some – hey, hey, when you're doing a lot, you make some big blunders. So we'd come in the cabinet and one of the vice presidents, or maybe me, they say, “We got a big problem here. We did this and now it's a big mess. It's just awful.” [The CEO's] only response to that was, “Okay, okay. So now, what are we gonna do?” (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

In search of other data sources for evidence of leadership qualities, I found there were multiple examples of the CEO articulating a tone that G2G College was a dynamic and progressive institution (i.e., planning documents, newsletters, website, reports) including messages about the innovative programs, people, and partnerships present at G2G College. It was clear that the CEO had a deep commitment and was dedicated to the institution.

Regarding the focus on legislative or persuasive leadership described by Collins (2005a) for the Level 5 Leadership in the social sector, there were explicit guidelines articulated for how ideas were supported and decisions were made in the institution (decision making document, March 2008). These guidelines were authored originally by the CEO (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009). From this document, it was clear that if anyone in the institution had an idea about how to meet the mission of the institution, they were encouraged to bring that forward and were able to do so via a variety of pathways. In alignment with the guidelines, there were a variety of groups, committees, and task forces that engendered a participatory process in decision making (strategic planning document, 2008, decision making document, March 2008).

Response to the working definitions

After the general questions about leadership characteristics were asked, I wanted to know how the participants would respond to the explicit definition of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Level 5 Leadership. The participants were each provided the following working definitions for Collins' theme of the Level 5 Leadership for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Provide leadership that authentically embodies a mix of both personal humility and professional will focused on the company's success.	Leadership is accomplished more through persuasion, convincing others, and identification of shared interests (e.g., "legislative" leadership) than making directives (e.g., "executive" leadership).

The participants were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the Level 5 Leadership traits in the CEO as described above. There was a strong consensus from all participants that the CEO provided leadership that authentically embodied a professional will focused on the G2G College's success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 24 through March 6, 2009). Many commented on the CEO's tireless focus and dedication to G2G College. G2GL#8 even indicated that the CEO was "famous for calling us while she's kayaking on a lake in the Sierras and sharing when she's dreaming a whole bunch of new ideas (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

G2GL#2 and G2GL#6 also saw the CEO most effective when she utilized Collins' Level 5 Leadership for the social sector adaptation. "When we do have the legislative leadership, we do a lot better, especially dealing with, as I said, individualistic faculty members" (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009). G2GL#7 indicated,

You have very little authority in a public institution. You don't order – the only people you can order are your direct reports. You tend not to want to order them. [The CEO] never ordered us to do things. She told us what we needed to do... But she inspired people to do – she treated you like she believed you could get it done.

Then you in turn did the same thing with, of course, all the faculty and all the division chairs. (G2GL#7, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

Summary

There was a consensus among interview participants and evidence from other data sources that the CEO was a dynamic, smart, energetic, and focused individual driven to make G2G College great. The CEO also was focused on developing a vision of the institution, creating strategic goals and plans, and then diligently executing those plans as evidenced by tracking the results. From the perspective of the G2G College CEO, the success of the institution was credited to faculty, staff, board members, business and city partners, and other stakeholders and not to the CEO herself. The G2G College CEO expected the G2G College employees to take risks in their quest for innovation and improvement in organizational effectiveness and understood that with risks came the possibility of mistakes. When mistakes were inevitably made, the CEO did not look to cast blame, but instead asked what the plan was for resolving the issue. The CEO was also described as being at her best when utilizing a legislative leadership style.

Based on both explicit and derived responses to the applicability of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Level 5 Leadership theme at G2G College, the evidence suggested that two of the eight respondents perceived that the Level 5 Leader theme applied to the CEO. Six out of the eight indicated it partially applied. The other data sources also suggested partial applicability to the Level 5 Leadership theme. From my interpretation, I determined that the theme partially applied at G2G College. Table 31 provides a summary of the findings given the specific data sources.

Table 31

Summary of the Applicability of Collins’ Level 5 Leadership Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Applied	2			
	Partially Applied	6	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply				

 Silent

First Who...Then What

To explore the First Who...Then What theme, each of the participants was first asked to describe what they felt came first, the decisions about what to do as an organization, or who to bring into the organization. Once the general questioning was completed, the participants were then asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions created for Collins' (2001, 2005a) First Who...Then What theme for the corporate sector and modified for the social sector.

Priorities of who versus what described

When the participants were asked to describe what they felt came first, the decisions about what to do as an organization or who to bring into the organization, most of them saw this as an intriguing question analogous to the infamous riddle, Which came first, the chicken or the egg? As such most of the participants saw both happening (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 24 through March 6, 2009). “[I]f I had to say anything, I’m sure I would end up somewhere in the middle... I mean by that that simply I see both things happening” (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009). The lack of applicability of the theme to the G2G College context will be explored more fully in response to Research Question #4.

Although there were perspectives expressed that indicated it was difficult to determine which came first, both G2GL#3 and G2GL#5 were clear that the priority was about hiring the right people first.

[T]he original turn around started when [the CEO] was hired, and she started looking at what needs to be done, what's lacking here. There needs to be a mission. There needs to be a strategic plan. We need to work with businesses. We need to know what the community needs and create the programs to do that. But you couldn't really create those programs until she hired the people and, in fact, I would say it's absolutely people first. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

G2GL#6 indicated that even when new instructional programs were conceived of first, it was important to hire faculty on in the earliest stages of the program development.

We decided that the best strategy was always to hire the faculty first because that was your – that’s your energy. That’s your new bright eyed, bushy tailed, gonna get it done, gonna work their tails off to make it happen group. So we would start a program. We decided, “Okay, what do you want to start?”... [W]e built a performing arts program from scratch. We hired performing arts faculty first. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

In the course of the interviews, it was revealed that the CEO retained active final decision rights on every full-time faculty selection process and that she had hired the majority of the faculty still with the institution (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication February 24 through February 27, 2009). As a follow up question, many of the respondents were asked about whether the CEO’s involvement in final hiring decisions resulted in common traits shared by all of the employees. Most of the participants indicated that there were common characteristics in the employees of G2G College that included an entrepreneurial spirit, focus on teaching, continuous self-improvement, and a commitment to personal and professional connections within the larger community (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 24 through March 6, 2009). When asked how this came to be, whether this was a trait developed and groomed by the organization or a trait sought in individuals applying during the hiring process, both were seen as occurring, but the emphasis was clearly the latter (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication February 24 through March 6, 2009). To further demonstrate the commitment to seeking characteristics of candidates beyond their technical content knowledge of a given discipline, G2G College would be explicit about what they were looking for in their position announcements and descriptions. Below is selected language included in all of the faculty position announcements and position descriptions (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, position description A, 2006, position description B, 2007):

Desirable knowledge, skills, experience and abilities:

- Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with both on-campus groups (including students, faculty, administrators, and staff) as well as off-campus community and education partnerships.

- In addition to being well qualified to teach in their respective disciplines, it is desirable that faculty have additional abilities and interest in contributing to other professional pursuits at the College, such as instructional innovation, sponsoring clubs, new program development, student success initiatives, and community or high school outreach.

Professional Abilities:

- Success and commitment as a team player, including ability to engage in cooperative problem solving
- A positive attitude, including the ability to foster collegiality
- Open-mindedness, including fairness and the ability to see multiple perspectives
- The willingness to take risks and be innovative
- The willingness to accept responsibility for professional and personal growth

G2GL#6 summarized this focus in hiring sharing,

[W]e thought the most important thing we did was to hire people...When we were talking about hiring, what we came up with is the concept that we ought to hire people that are going to fit with and be happy with the way we think the college should be. Why hire people who are gonna be miserable here?

Historically, that's what most colleges [do], must have a master's degree in psychology, PhD preferred, at least three years of teaching experience, must have a good knowledge of the following concepts, must understand pedagogy, must have an appreciation for diversity. Pretty standard.

What's unique about [the G2G College announcements and position descriptions] is then it comes and says, "In addition to these" – as qualifications for the job, [are] not just nice things to have, these are actual qualifications for the position – "you must be a risk taker. You must be a team player. You must be willing to try out things. You must..." – and there's a list. We authored that list. We put it in all the advertisements and we inserted it.

We had good relations with academic senate and the union [so] it's enshrined in the evaluation process. So tenure committees are authorized and fully empowered, in writing, to judge somebody not only – just because a faculty member knows their subject matter really well and dutifully meets all of their lecture sections, doesn't cut it... [T]he question is, "Well, so what else are you doing? What are you growing? What's your contribution? How are you getting along with your colleagues?"

We fired people. Didn't grant tenure. Sometimes people are really nice people and they would know their subject matter really well, but they...didn't fit. We hired to that set of cultural values.

So then you end up three or four years later with (Laughter) like everybody's been hired. You hire administrators [who] are kind of fun loving workaholics. People who are miserable there, people who try to figure out what most people do, "Let's

see, How can I do this job with less effort and less time and have more time for golf and long lunches?” They were miserable at [G2G College]. They would not take the job typically.

We look for energy. We look for motivation. We look for somebody who basically said, whatever they did, “My motivation is to make this the best, the best.” They were really into what they did. We didn’t want to hire people who taught history. We wanted to hire historians who wanted to create the best history department in the state... who had that kind of entrepreneurial spirit. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

Response to the working definitions

After the general questions about priorities of who versus what were asked, the participants were all provided the following working definitions for Collins’ (2001, 2005a) theme of the First Who...Then What for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Hire the best people first. Then decide what the organization should focus on and where the organization should go.	Focus on: (a) immediate span of control without having executive powers, (b) creating high standards in hiring practices when openings occur, and (c) rigorously utilizing early-assessment mechanisms available to keep the best people and terminate or separate from those who do not meet the high expectations.

The participants were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the First Who...Then What theme at G2G College. Based on the brief definitions above, a number of the participants indicated that they did feel G2G College had adopted the First Who...Then What theme (G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#7, personal communication February 25 through March 3, 2009). Again, there was some variability in the applicability of the theme as perceived by the participants. However, there was a strong sense from many of the participants that G2G College had to attract the right people to be able to develop the right programs and initiatives. According to G2GL#5, “I

think we have lots of examples of people first... hire the people when you know you have something you're gonna need to do, and then those people help you build the programs that you need, most of the time” (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

Summary

A number of the participants saw G2G College as a place that at times focused first on who to hire and then what to do and at other times focused on what to do, then finding the right people to execute the vision. The hiring of the CEO was seen as the clearest example of the First Who...Then What theme applied at G2G College. When hiring G2G College employees, there was a disciplined search for characteristics beyond simple knowledge, skills, and abilities of the position. They also looked for specific attitudes, abilities to enhance relationship internal and external to the college, and abilities to continuously improve. For people who didn’t embody these characteristics, they were ultimately not successful at G2G College and would leave the organization.

In summarizing the explicit and derived responses to the applicability of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) First Who...Then What theme, three of the eight respondents perceived that the theme applied to the G2G College context. Five out of the eight indicated it partially applied and one did not believe it applied at all. The other data sources suggested partial applicability to the First Who...Then What theme. From my interpretation, I determined that the theme partially applied at G2G College. Table 32 provides a summary of the findings from the various data sources for the applicability of Collins’ First Who...Then What theme at G2G College.

Table 32

Summary of the Applicability of Collins’ First Who...Then What Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Applied	4			
	Partially Applied	3	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	1			
	Silent	0			

Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)

In alignment with Collins' (2001) findings for the Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith) theme, each of the participants was first asked to describe their perceptions of: (a) the process of how decisions were made, (b) whether different perspectives were welcomed and/or encouraged at G2G College, and (c) how G2G College handled major challenges and adversity. The participants were then asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions created to articulate Collins' Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith) theme which was unmodified for the social sector.

Decisions making process described

Each of the participants was asked to describe their perceptions of the process of how decisions were made and whether different perspectives were welcomed and/or encouraged at G2G College. The majority of respondents saw structures and processes in place to encourage inclusive decision making for major decisions (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). This included areas of policy development, strategic and tactical planning, budget development, and program assessment and review (G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 26 through March 6, 2009). For G2G College, there were explicit policies in place to ensure a participatory governance of the institution (policy document, 1989). There were also a number of advisory groups, committees, and task forces that were created to facilitate the participation from faculty, staff, and administrators (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009, decision making document, March 2008). In many cases, any employee at G2G College interested in participating was encouraged to do so.

Some participants indicated that they saw G2G College's ability to honestly evaluate data as an important part of the college's success as an innovative institution (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009). On an organizational level, G2GL#7 perceived a general willingness to look at facts regardless of implications indicating,

I really do think that the fact that we are not afraid to look at the data and what we're doing and say, you know what, okay, well, this is working okay; what can we do to make this better?...We do that on an annual cycle all the time. Our planning cycle for the college reinforces that... everybody's constantly looking at [it]. (G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009)

When asked about how G2G College handled major challenges or adversity, most of the participants had specific examples of overcoming adversity recounting stories of the impact of rapid growth (G2GL#1, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, personal communication, February 24, through March 3, 2009), when G2G College endured financial hardships (G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009), the effort to pass local bond measures (G2GL#1, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 24, through February 27, 2009), and the impact of a major natural disaster that crippled the local community (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009, G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, history document, 2005). What was common in all of these stories was perception of an organizational culture of confidence in the ability to overcome any adversity.

[T]he week before classes started, there was a huge major [natural disaster] here... Whereas most colleges and most campuses would probably just stay shut for a long time, I think what happened is that a huge number of [G2G College employees], after seeing that their home and everything was fine, they came over to the campus. We had a lot of [G2G College employees] working together to see what could we do to help the campus. Calls were made, and within a couple of days we had...large, banquet style tents that were erected. We were [teaching] classes in the tents, so within a short period of time, we were back to having classes. I think that is probably, for me at least, one of the best vignettes that [demonstrates], "Okay, here's a crisis but we're not gonna cry over it. We're really gonna try to pull forward on this." (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)

Response to the working definitions

Following the general questioning, the participants were all provided the following working definitions for Collins' (2001) theme of the Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith) for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured. Even when the truth is negative, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.	<i>No adaptation for social sector.</i>

The participants were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith) theme at G2G College. Many of the participants again saw G2G College being a place that the theme applied at times and did not at others (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24, through March 6, 2009). The lack of applicability of the theme will be explored more fully in the response to Research Question #4. In support of the applicability of the Confront the Brutal Facts theme, G2GL#2 indicated that at G2G College there was, “The belief that people have the ability to overcome the adversity, yes. I suppose you could say, you know, ‘Here’s the problem. How could we do things better?’” (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

Summary

The findings demonstrated that the G2G College employees were encouraged to be engaged with the improvement of the college. The college supported the participation and solicitation of ideas for how to improve the organization via intentional rhetoric and in structures. Several of the participants saw the ability for G2G College to Confront the Brutal facts as an important factor for the college being able to take risks and be innovative. The findings showed many examples of G2G College being a place where adversity was confronted and overcome.

Half of the participants indicated that the Confront the Brutal Facts theme applied to G2G College and half indicated it partially applied. The other data sources suggested

the Confront the Brutal Facts theme applied. From my interpretation, I also determined that the theme applied to G2G College. Table 33 provides a summary of the findings for the applicability of Collins' (2001) Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith) theme at G2G College given the various data sources.

Table 33

Summary of the Applicability of Collins' Confront the Brutal Facts Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Applied	4	X	X	X
	Partially Applied	4			
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			

Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles)

In alignment with Collins' (2001) findings for the Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles) theme, most of the participants were asked to describe their perspectives on the three primary components of Collins' Hedgehog Concept including: (a) Was there something that G2G College was clearly passion about as an organization?, (b) Was there one most important indicator of success as an organization, and if so, what was it?, and (c) Was there something that G2G College was better at doing than any other place in the world? The participants were then asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions I created of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles) theme and his modified theme adapted to the social sector.

Hedgehog Concepts described

For the question about an overriding organizational passion, most of the participants focused on a perceived passion for students and student success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Some participants also sensed a passion around being distinctive

and innovative as an institution (G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 25 through February 27, 2009).

When the participants were asked, “Was there one most important indicator of success as an organization, and if so, what was it?,” most of their responses initially indicated that there was not one overriding indicator of success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). However, G2GL#5 answered differently taking a broader perspective saying:

Success is very easily defined by us... it's access and success. There's two pieces. Making sure that we have access for everybody who can benefit by being here, and then making sure they're successful. I mean...we define success by students who go out our doors with knowledge and skills and the things they need so that they can be productive in their lives.

And that can be somebody who is retired and is in their 60s or 70s and they're coming back here where we're offering them classes in their communities because it keeps them healthy to be taking classes in current events or tai chi, or whatever it is that keeps minds and bodies healthy.

That's success just as much as an 18 year old who comes here for two years and leaves and has the ability to pass their nursing boards on the first time and go out and help and get the job instantly because we have a huge shortage of nurses in our country and in our state and in our community. That's the primary to me a measure of success for us. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

Although there was no singular indicator of success articulated by the participants, each of the participants did indicate the importance of planning and development of intended outcomes (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). G2GL#8 summarized this focus on outcomes by saying,

Everything that we do has an objective. It could be a variety of things. Each of the areas would be very different. Facilities will have 50 objectives that they're focused on... On the instructional side, on the other hand, we'll have a whole set of goals and objectives, but everyone has outcomes that [they're] trying to achieve. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

Many of the participants were also asked whether they thought G2G College was better at doing something than any other place in the world. With some humor and facetiousness, a few of the participants indicated that many people at G2G College

thought they were the best at everything. “Well we think we’re better than everyone at everything... I realize that there’s some truth with that” (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009). With a sense of humor, G2GL#5 also said, “Well, we, always think we're the best at everything, but you know, we're not” (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009). G2GL#5 later in the interview said, “[W]hen you asked if we were great, if we were one of the best, I hesitated, because I think that a lot of people feel that they work at the best college, but we all really do feel we're great” (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009). Although there was some facetiousness in the responses, it was clear that the participants felt their college was great at many things and there was a deep sense of pride with those aspects that made G2G College special. It was also clear that there was not solely one thing that made them special.

A few of the participants saw the ability to attract and retain world-class faculty and staff who had a passion for the college’s mission as one of the things that made G2G College unique (G2GL#2, G2GL#5, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 25 through March 6, 2009).

As described by G2GL#5:

We had a math teacher with degrees from [a prestigious four-year institution], who could have gone anywhere or worked at [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] and made a whole lot of money in industry or work at [another prestigious four-year institution]. But they came and worked here, because what they wanted to do was be in a teaching institution. And they fell in love with the mission of community college. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

A more common theme about what G2G College was best at was around the areas of energy, innovation, and judicious risk taking (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). “I think that we are definitely way out of the box and innovative” (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

G2GL#1 characterized this innovative best-in-the-world quality of G2G College by saying:

I guess I would go back to that word ‘dynamism.’ I don’t know if that’s exactly the right one. But there is an energy to this campus, an openness to change that is just churning. It’s churning and it’s producing stuff and some of it works and some of it doesn’t work, but there’s an awareness that that’s what we’re about. That’s okay, and if you got ideas, there’s a good chance you can make ‘em – bring ‘em to fruition. I’m sure not all campuses are that way. (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009)

G2GL#6 and G2GL#8 suggested that there was a common cultural ethos at G2G College that embodied a can-do work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. From G2GL#6’s perspective, one could ask anyone on campus what was unique or special about G2G College and they would respond:

‘We’re a can-do college.’ They’ll say things like, ‘Well, [G2G College] is – we’re a can-do college. We’re very entrepreneurial. The answer at [G2G College] is almost always yes.’ You know? That’s an amazing thing because that’s what you’ll find that’s different about [G2G College] than in any other college you want to go to is you can’t do that in any other college. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

G2GL#8 summarized much of this thinking by saying:

I think what makes us unique [is a] willingness to experiment, a willingness to fail. The fact that we aggressively seek resources, a variety of resources. The talent. The CEO being very energetic and driving change. All of those I think make us very unique and bring our level of innovation up to a level that’s really unparalleled. I think that you could compare us – we could be compared to just about any institution in the world and really compare favorably in terms of our level of innovation. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

Response to the working definitions

The participants were all provided the following working definitions for Collins’ (2001, 2005a) theme of the Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles) for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Focus organizationally on one big concept. Specifically the intersection of: (a) their greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) what can financially support or excel their efforts, and (c) the source of their greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.	Instead of focusing on an economic engine based financial outputs, the social sector should broadened the concept to a resource engine that focuses on resources (e.g., time, money, and brand) utilized to accomplish the social sector mission. Time is defined by how well managers attract talented people to support the mission given limited financial incentives. Money is defined by the cash flow needed to continue the work. Brand is defined as the ability to “cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters” (p. 18).

In most cases, the fable of the hedgehog and the fox as well as Collins’ (2001) Venn diagram of the Hedgehog Concept were also shared with the participants. The participants were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles) theme at G2G College. The participants did not have a common perspective when talking about the Hedgehog Concept theme which will be explored later in response to Research Question #4.

In support of the applicability of the theme, some of the participants felt the idea of looking at one big concept to focus on resonated with their experiences at G2G College (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). For those who did see one big concept, when asked to explain what they meant, they had different responses. From G2GL#4’s perspective, the big concept was about not creating limits to possibilities (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

We don’t say to people, “No, That’s not what we’re supposed to do.” If our community needs it, then we’ll probably figure out a way to do it. So, we don’t always work from here to there, sometimes we work from there to here. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

G2GL#6 talked about education as the big concept (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009). G2GL#1 and G2GL#7 thought focusing on what was best for the student was the big concept for G2G College (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009, G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009). G2GL#8 perceived the focus on intended outcomes as the big concept (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

Summary

The participants felt G2G College employees were passionate about different things from students and student success to being a distinctive and innovative college. Most participants could not articulate a singular overriding indicator of success for the organization, however one participant felt the indicators were clearly about access and success for the students. Most participants did indicate that G2G College developed plans resulting in specific intended outcomes which were seen as indicators of success. In terms of what made G2G College unique or best in the world, participants shared attributes including hiring world-class employees, being innovative, and a willingness to take risks.

The findings indicated that none of the participants saw Collins' (2001, 2005a) Hedgehog Concept theme fully applying as represented. Seven of the eight saw it partially applying with one participant remaining silent on the issue. The other data sources also suggested partial applicability to the Hedgehog Concept theme and I determined that the theme partially applied at G2G College. Table 34 provides a summary of the findings for the applicability of Collins' Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles) theme at G2G College.

Table 34

Summary of the Applicability of Collins' Hedgehog Concept Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Applied	0			
	Partially Applied	7	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	1			

A Culture of Discipline

In alignment with Collins' (2001) findings for the Culture of Discipline theme, participants were asked to describe their perspectives on the questions: (a) What role did bureaucracy play at G2G College? and (b) How did G2G College prioritize and decide what not to do, if anything? The participants were then asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions I created for Collins' Culture of Discipline theme which was unmodified for the social sector.

Culture of Discipline described

In terms of the role of bureaucracy at G2G College, each of the participants discussed the sophisticated systems and structures that were in place to support planning, budget, and assessment which, in turn, were used to inform the decision making processes throughout the college (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). The descriptions of the extensive systems were supported by the many planning documents, committee structures, and reports created by the college (fact book, 2005, planning document, March 2007). Those systems could certainly be perceived by the casual observer as bureaucratic or mechanistic. For those participants who discussed the role of bureaucracy at G2G College, they did not see the systems as barriers or hurdles to accomplishing their work. Instead, they talked about how the structured systems were viewed as constructive systems used to support the G2G College efforts. When asked

how G2G College kept the planning, budget, and assessment/tracking systems from becoming overly bureaucratic, G2GL#5 said,

There are certainly some aspects of it that are bureaucratic, but I think... as we grow, we need the structure of a bureaucracy more and more. ..[A]nd we do. The bigger you get, the more people who are on staff and who are working for you, the more you need to have processes that you can rely on that keep things flowing so that stuff happens... [B]ureaucracy doesn't have [to be seen] in a negative way as a bunch of barriers that slow things up and make stuff take a long time. It doesn't have to be, and I don't think that's what it is here. I think bureaucracy is a way of saying we can say yes. We make stuff happen, because we were put in place processes and people who know how to do it, and what they have to do to be able to do it, and that may come back to our leadership. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

Most of the participants were also asked to describe how G2G College prioritized effort and decided what not to do, if anything. Again, all of the participants asked this question indicated that there were no set mechanism or criteria for deciding what not to do (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 24 through February 27, 2009). G2GL#1 thought that there were some natural budgetary and hierarchical structures that filtered out some of the ideas (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009). However, the rest of the participants indicated that the emphasis at G2G College was how to say yes to as many ideas as possible (G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 25 through February 27, 2009). This lack of mechanisms to say no to new ideas will be explored more fully in the response to Research Question #4.

G2GL#4 indicated that they used discrepancy analysis to prioritize the goals and efforts of the college. By discrepancy analysis G2GL#4 meant creating a desired end state and comparing it to the present state thereby determining the various pathways to achieve the desired results (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009). When asked what the end state was that G2G College was working towards, G2GL#4 responded:

[T]he end is in our mission statement, which is plastered on the wall over there. We review our mission and our philosophy and our vision statements every two to three years. We take them to the Board for approval. We use those three things, then, to re-do our strategic plan, which we re-do every three years. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

Response to the working definitions

Following the general questioning, the participants were all provided the following working definitions for Collins' (2001, 2005a) theme of the Culture of Discipline for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Create a culture where self-disciplined employees adhere to a consistent system and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.	<i>No adaptation for social sector.</i>

The participants were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the Culture of Discipline theme at G2G College. All of the participants who spoke to the question indicated that they did see the theme in practice at G2G College (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Many of the participants specifically spoke to the fact that they saw both the systems that were in place, and also the freedom and responsibility employees had to work within the framework of the system (G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 25 through March 6, 2009).

Several participants discussed the importance of creating a clear and compelling vision and then allowing the people to use their creativity to find the solutions (G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 25 through March 6, 2009).

[O]ne of the things that a vision helps produce is...then if people buy in to the vision, you can turn them loose and they will be self-disciplined because they know what their piece of it is. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

Summary

G2G College had created numerous systems and structures to support the planning, budget, and assessment for the institution which, in turn, were used to inform the decision making processes throughout the college. Many of the participants did not see the systems and structures as bureaucratic barriers to achieving success. One participant challenged the premise that bureaucracy was bad. Instead the participants indicated the systems were helpful to illuminate pathways. The participants also saw G2G College employees having the freedom and responsibility to act within the systems and structures created. Prioritization for the college was implemented using discrepancy analysis between the mission, vision, and philosophy of G2G College and the current state.

The evidence suggested that five of the eight respondents perceived that the Culture of Discipline theme applied to G2G College. Two participants indicated it partially applied and one did not provide enough information to make a determination. The other data sources suggested partial applicability to the Culture of Discipline theme and I agreed that theme partially applied at G2G College. Table 35 provides a summary of the findings for the applicability of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Culture of Discipline theme at G2G College.

Table 35

Summary of the Applicability of Collins’ Culture of Discipline Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Applied	5			
	Partially Applied	2	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	1			

Technology Accelerators

To explore the applicability of Collins’ (2001) findings for the Technology Accelerators theme to G2G College, the participants were asked to describe: (a) What

role, if any, did technology play in G2G College's success?, (b) Was technology a catalyst/creator or a support?, and (c) How were the technology needs determined? The participants were later asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions I created for Collins' Technology Accelerators theme which were unmodified for the social sector.

Technology Accelerators described

All eight of the participants saw technology playing an important role in G2G College's success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). All of the participants also specifically saw technology being a support to the college's success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Some of the participants also saw technology as a catalyst to G2G College's success in some respects which will be explored more fully in the response to Research Question #4 (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009, G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

The technology needs for G2G College appeared to be determined both by intentional planning and by organizational inertia or evolution. A few of the participants talked about how the leadership utilized the assistance of a consultant to develop the first technology master plan for G2G College in 1996 (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009, G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009, technology master plan, 1996). This impacted everything from administrative tasks to information sharing, to counseling, to the delivery of courses.

The advances in technology just really have been remarkable in helping people do the things that impacts what happens in the classroom, whether it's a computerized mannequin for the nursing folks or online registration for our students and our [management information system] and admissions and records folks worked on. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

Response to the working definitions

The participants were all provided the following working definitions for Collins' (2001, 2005a) theme of the Technology Accelerators for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Use technology only to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort in achieving the organizational goals.	<i>No adaptation for social sector.</i>

The participants were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the Technology Accelerators theme at G2G College. Most of the participants who spoke to the question indicated that they did see the Technology Accelerators theme in practice at G2G College (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communications, February 24 through February 27, 2009). Although not all of the participants agreed, G2GL#2 appeared to resonate with the principle of the Technology Accelerators theme.

I would think more of a support. Obviously, it would open up and give us ideas, but I think, in general, it really is a support. Once you start saying, also, “Okay, we have new technology and we are going to have programs to use the technology when the tail starts wagging the dog,” then you have faculty members who go, “Wait. No, no, no. We’re not gonna do this.” (G2GL#2, personal communications, February 25, 2009)

Summary

The findings with regard to the presence of Collins’ (2001) Technology Accelerators theme demonstrated that technology had been a very important factor in the success of G2G College. From most of the participant interviews and as articulated via the technology plan, technology was viewed as a support to the strategic and tactical efforts of the college.

Based on both explicit and derived responses to the applicability of Collins’ (2001) Technology Accelerators theme at G2G College, six of the eight respondents perceived that the theme applied to G2G College. Two out of the eight participants indicated it partially applied. The other data sources suggested applicability to the Technology Accelerators theme. From my interpretation, I determined that the theme partially applied at G2G College. Table 36 provides a summary of the findings for the applicability of Collins’ Technology Accelerators theme at G2G College.

Table 36

Summary of the Applicability of Collins’ Technology Accelerators Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Applied	6	X		X
	Partially Applied	2		X	
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			

The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

In alignment with Collins’ (2001) findings for the Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme, the participants were asked whether they saw the transition from good to great as a change that was gradual or quick? The participants were later asked to read and provide a response to the working definitions created for Collins’ Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme including the adapted definition for the social sector.

The Flywheel and the Doom Loop described

Most of the participants indicated that they saw the transition at G2G College taking a longer period time to build momentum (G2GL#1, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). All of the participants spoke to the fact that they saw the major transition G2G College began when the CEO was hired in 1988 (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). From G2GL#2’s perspective, G2G College’s transition did not feel like a gradual shift which will be explored more fully in response to Research Question #4.

Many of the participants saw the importance of enhancing the reputation of G2G College over time as an important priority (G2GL#1, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). G2GL#5 recounted a conversation with the CEO where she said:

I want this community to forget [the derogatory nickname of G2G College]. Get rid of it. That's not who we're going to be. This is a sleepy place and I want it, and

it needs to really serve the community, and it needs to be a part of the community and needs to be respected by the community. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

G2GL#5 went on to say that the leadership of G2G College knew to change the institution’s reputation needed to be more than public relations rhetoric, but instead truly meeting the educational needs of the community (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

Response to the working definitions

The participants were all provided the following working definitions for Collins’ theme of the Flywheel and the Doom Loop for the corporate and social sectors.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definitions	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Focus on long term success by consistently employing the previous six themes yielding greater momentum over time.	Momentum is measured by reputation or brand of organization instead of financial outputs.

The participants were also provided a diagram of the Flywheel and Doom Loop images present by Collins (2001). They were then asked to evaluate whether they saw the Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme at G2G College. Most of the participants who spoke to the question indicated that they did see the Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme in practice at G2G College (G2GL#1, G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL #8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009).

G2GL#2 felt that the concept of the doom loop was in align with what he heard the CEO would share with the college.

What I find fascinating about the doom loop is that when you talk with [the CEO] about enrollment, and why we want to meet and exceed enrollment as opposed to standing still or just not trying to push to get as many, that’s practically what her words are. (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)

G2GL#5 reacted to the working definition of the flywheel theme by saying,

Focus on long term success by consistently focusing on the previous six themes? I think so. I think long term success is very much our goal...I think we're almost always looking at the long term. We haven't in the past always, but we have more

and more. [The CEO] she is always struggling to get [specific units] to look ahead. Don't just plan the next semester, have a two-year plan. Look, you know, we do five-year facilities plans. We are doing funding scenarios with all the uncertainty in our budget this year, we just passed a budget. We did scenarios practically every month that would involve at least five scenarios. If this happens, what's gonna happen? If this happens, what's gonna happen? And then how, how will each of those carry us? Where will we go in five years? (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

When reading the working definition of the flywheel theme, G2GL#6 thought it applied to G2G College saying, "I think what that means is you got to keep your eye on the prize...what are you trying to head towards?" (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

Summary

The findings demonstrated that there was largely agreement from the interviews and other data sources that the transition from good to great was a gradual shift. One participant felt the model of the doom loop resonated with what he heard the CEO speak about on several occasions. Changing the reputation of G2G College over time based on serving the educational needs of the community was seen as a priority. Many participants indicated G2G College was an institution that focused on the long term strategic goals of the organization as opposed to only looking at short term gains.

The findings indicated that six of the participants felt the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme applied to G2G College. One participant felt it partially applied and one remained silent. The other data sources also suggested and I concurred that the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme applied at G2G College. Table 37 provides a summary of the findings for the applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) The Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme at G2G College.

Table 37

Summary of the Applicability of Collins' Flywheel and the Doom Loop Theme at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 7 - The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Applied	6	X	X	X
	Partially Applied	1			
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			

Summary

In summary, the findings associated with the first research question were presented, specifically, Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness? From the perspective of the participants and from other various data sources, Collins' (2001, 2005a) seven themes making up the Good-to-Great Theory had a varied level of applicability from partial application such as Level 5 Leadership or the Hedgehog Concept theme to strong applicability such as the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme. Table 38 provides a summary of the applicability of all Collins' seven themes at G2G College.

Table 38

Summary of the Applicability of Collins' Good-to-Great Themes at G2G College

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Applied	2			
	Partially Applied	6	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Applied	4			
	Partially Applied	3	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	1			
	Silent	0			
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Applied	4	X	X	X
	Partially Applied	4			
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Applied	0			
	Partially Applied	7	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	1			
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Applied	5			
	Partially Applied	2	X	X	X
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	1			

Good-to-Great Theme	Applicability	# of Participants	Other Data Sources	Investigator	Overall Assessment
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Applied	6	X		X
	Partially Applied	2		X	
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			
Theme 7 - The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Applied	6	X	X	X
	Partially Applied	1			
	Did Not Apply	0			
	Silent	0			

The above table suggests a continuum of applicability of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) themes to G2G College. Table 39 provides a simplified summary of the applicability of Collins’ seven themes at G2G College prioritized by degree of applicability from greatest applicability to G2G College to least.

Table 39

Simplified Summary of Good-to-Great Themes at G2G College Prioritized by Degree of Applicability

Collins’ Good-to-Great Themes	Degree of Applicability
Theme 7 - The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Mostly Applied
Theme 6 - Technology Accelerators	Mostly Applied
Theme 5 - Confront The Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)	Mostly Applied
Theme 3 - A Culture of Discipline	Partially Applied
Theme 1 - Level 5 Leadership	Partially Applied
Theme 2 - First Who...Then What	Partially Applied
Theme 4 - Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles)	Partially Applied

Research Question #2: What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?

In this section, the findings are presented that address the second research question: What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? The rationale for this question was to allow for the exploration of additional emergent themes not identified by Collins (2001, 2005a) and possibly unique to the community college setting.

The findings will be organized by the three emergent themes that emerged: (a) Context Matters, (b) Enduring Leadership, and (c) Creating the Reality We Need. The findings for the themes will include data from: (a) the participant interviews, (b) other data sources, and (c) my interpretation as an observer/investigator. Within the thematic organization, the findings will also be organized by: (a) the descriptions provided by the participants in the general questioning, and (b) a summary of my interpretations for the emergent theme. For my interpretation of applicability, I based my evaluation using the criteria of: (a) the evidence presented across the participant interviews, (b) evidence from the other data sources, and (c) my observations in the field.

Context Matters

In alignment with Collins' (2001) original questioning, I began my interviews asking each of the participants, What do you see as the top factors that contributed to or caused upward shift in performance in graduation and transfer rates during the years 1998 to 2007 given the transition point in 2000? In addition to other themes related to Collins' Good-to-Great theory, all of the participants mentioned aspects of the context in which they saw G2G College being situated. As evidence of the Context Matters theme, the participants mentioned G2G College was in a unique environment where: (a) the community served a growing population, (b) the community was very supportive of education in general and supportive of G2G College specifically, and (c) G2G College enjoyed a relative physical advantage being the only accessible higher education option in the community. The findings for each of these elements contributing to the theme will be more fully explored in the next section.

A growing community

The first contextual factor mentioned by all of the participants was the fact that the community in which G2G College was situated had experienced a significant population growth. From 1970 to 2007, the community had a 413% increase in population (fact book, March 2008). From the perspective of the participants, this created an increase in demand for G2G Colleges educational and training services.

You know, we're one of the fastest growing communities, and so I think as more and more students started to come in, it was like, "Okay, how are we gonna deal with this? I know. Let's expand and take advantage of this. (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 24, 2009)

Although a contributing factor to G2G College's success, the participants also acknowledged that population growth alone was not enough to assure organizational success.

[S]omeone might say about [G2G College], "Well, sure [G2G College]'s grown because look at all the growth that's happened up in [in the surrounding community]." No, no, no, no. No, no, no. Actually, in other colleges [experience similarly] huge growth all around it and the college remains the same. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

In fact at first, some of the participants indicated that G2G College was not initially positioned to take advantage of the population growth. G2GL#3 described it by saying, "The area... was starting to grow, but the college wasn't really growing, and it was... kind of stagnant" (G2GL#3, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

G2GL#7 initially saw the growth as a challenge,

We... were in the middle of the most gigantic growth spurt. I mean, we had double digit growth during that period of time, and... it took us a couple of years to try to figure out, "Oh, my goodness what are we gonna do here? We can barely handle them coming in the doors." (G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009)

One key issue was that early on G2G College found that the growth they were experiencing required them to identify and acquire additional funding to accommodate the rapid growth. At one point, they had demand exceeding their associated funding by 25 percent (G2GL#3, personal communication, February 25, 2009). The process they used to address the funding disparity will be addressed in the Creating the Reality We Need theme. Once additional funding sources were in place, the opportunity to grow the

college created other opportunities. The participants discussed how the growth and associated funding contributed to a shift in organizational culture where everyone was encouraged by the leadership to think about how they could improve and grow the institution's offerings to better serve the community (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009).

[C]redit must be given to the president of the college, who said, "Hey, why don't we try this?" ... I think that did help engender an attitude among faculty members, to say, "Okay, why don't we try this? Why don't we do this?" (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)

Supportive community

Several of the participants shared that they also saw the fact that the community was supportive of education in general and of G2G College specifically as a contributing factor to the college's success. G2GL#2 said, "Not only [does the community] just...care about education; there is a support for the college" (G2GL#2, February 25, 2009). This enabled G2G College to pass bond measures, raise private funds via the foundation, and create partnerships with the local school district, government, and business leaders (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009, fact book, 2008). They attributed this support to characteristics inherent to the community as well as the influence of the improving reputation of G2G College through various efforts (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 24 through February 27, 2009). G2GL#3 thought that the socio-economic profile of the community also contributed to this support. "I think this area is fortunate in that we're middle to upper-middle income, and I think the value of education is perceived as being very important in the community" (G2GL#3, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

Location advantage

A few of the participants described G2G College's physical proximity to the community and the lack of other institutions of higher education as a contributing factor to their success (G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, personal communication, February 25, through March 6, 2009).

[I]t's nice to be the only game in town. Now... that's a factor if you exploit it. Just because you are the only game in town doesn't mean you're gonna produce this wonderful Camelot existence. But...it's an opportunity. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

Summary

It was clear talking to the participants that they felt that their context had an impact on their ability to be successful. This was confirmed by the other data sources and my interpretation. The context of growth, support, and the physical location of the community in which they were situated was a common theme in all of the interviews. When asked whether the people at G2G College could be successful if they were picked up and moved to another community without some of the contextual factors, G2GL#8 responded,

We would have to change. The college has to respond to the community's needs. So if you picked us all up and plopped us in a different community, we would have to change to that community's needs. And if you put us in a rural community, I would guess that the needs that would be dramatically different than [our current community], suburban, fast growing community with a fast growing industrial base. Those needs would be dramatically different and we would have to adapt to 'em. So I don't think it would work for us just to be transplanted someplace else and be expected to – without us changing out we approach things. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

G2G College was successful at being able to identify external factors as opportunities to exploit them. They then leveraged the external opportunities to support the growth of the college. Below is a working definition of the first emergent theme found at G2G College.

Emergent Themes	Working Definition
Theme 1 - Context Matters	Identify contextual opportunities and leverage them to the benefit of the community college.

Enduring Leadership

In my interviews with the G2G College leaders, all of the participants discussed the fact that there had been such stable leadership for so many years as a contributing factor to G2G College's success. (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). As indicated in the participant profile section of this chapter, the average tenure of

the participants, including executive administrators, faculty members, and a board member, was 17.1 years at G2G College with the CEO being in her position for nearly 21 years. Looking at other data sources demonstrated that the CEO was one of the longest serving CEOs in the state (CEO seniority benchmark report, 2008). The findings demonstrated that G2G College benefited from stable and steady leadership for the college.

The participants discussed how the relatively long tenure of the leadership at G2G College allowed the organization to have stable and consistent perspectives as well as the establishment of long term relationships that allowed them to see the benefits of some of their efforts (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4. Speaking about the CEO, G2GL#1 said,

[G2G College has had the same CEO] for almost twenty years now. That's not been the norm. That's really unusual, that you're not going through different phases because you got people going out, coming in, fallowed years because of that, right? Where somebody's not quite doing the job and it takes the Board a while to figure that out. Ask them. They gotta build up the rapport. We just haven't had any of that, right? So, just that consistency, I think, is really, really important. (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009)

The duration of time at the college also allowed the leadership to hire the employees who could implement the leadership's vision.

[During their tenure, the G2G Leadership] had hired 75 percent of the faculty...[W]hen we were talking about hiring, what we came up with is the concept that we ought to hire people that are going to fit with and be happy with the way we think the college should be. Why hire people who are gonna be miserable here? (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

The length of service did not apply only to the senior executive leadership and faculty of the college, it also applied to the Board of Trustees. The G2G College Board had relatively stable members over the years with an average of 14.2 years of service in their positions (website, n.d.). G2GL#3 spoke about the long tenure of the board as well, saying

I think because... the board has been stable, that that's been a really good thing. There hasn't been a lot of turnover on the board so that you maintain a consistent kind of point of view. You don't spend a lot of time bringing people up to speed that get on new or get on with a particular agenda. (G2GL#3, personal communication, February 25, 2009)

Where the board members of some other community colleges appeared to be motivated to serve on the board in the hopes of furthering their political career, several of the participants had the sense that the G2G College board members were primarily interested in serving the interests of the college versus their own political agenda (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009, G2GL#3, personal communication, February 25, 2009, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

Again, the participants acknowledged that the length of tenure of the leadership alone would not have necessarily produced the results enjoyed by G2G College. The enduring leadership was also married to a dynamic and progressive effort over time as described in Collins’ Flywheel theme. G2GL#1 described the tenure of the CEO saying,

So, just that consistency, I think, is really, really important. But, if it was consistency of mediocrity then that wouldn’t work either. And it’s not that. I mean, she’s phenomenal just in the sense that she’s been able to maintain her energy for twenty years. She’s as excited about it and is into it now as she was before. (G2GL#1, personal communication, February 24, 2009)

Summary

It was clear talking to the participants that they felt that consistency coupled with the dynamic effort of the senior executive leadership and board was a common theme in all of the interviews. G2G College had senior leaders and board members who embodied the enduring commitment and patience needed to implement long term change and properly implement the Flywheel theme. Below is a working definition of the second emergent theme found at G2G College.

Emergent Themes	Working Definition
Theme 2 – Enduring Leadership	Provide effective, consistent, and enduring leadership.

Creating the Reality We Need

While answering the question about the top factors that contributed to or caused upward shift in performance for G2G College, all of the participants mentioned that they perceived G2G College having a great deal of influence or control of their own destiny as a contributing factor to their success. This included being able to change the rules of the

systems within the college operated and creating the reality they needed to support the college (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). When they encountered the inevitable challenges and barriers of leading a comprehensive community college, the participants felt their ability to choose their response and create the reality they needed was unique. As evidence of G2G College's Creating the Reality We Need theme, the participants discussed: (a) the ability of the CEO to influence the state decision makers to change the formula for funding growth, (b) the ability of G2G College to attract diverse funding sources for the college which allowed them to try many things, and (c) their perception that their choice in attitude created a frame or paradigm for their successful efforts. The findings for each of these elements contributing to the theme will be more fully explored in the next section.

Changing the state funding model

Every participant mentioned a story about how the G2G College CEO had worked with the leadership of the state to change the model for funding the community colleges (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Prior to the change, G2G College was experiencing a rapidly growing community, but they found that the state's model did not account for that particular growth and G2G College could not fund the additional courses and programs needed to serve the community. They recalled that the CEO spent much of her time traveling to the state capital to lobby on behalf of the community college.

For many years, [the CEO] was doing frequent flyer miles up to [the state capital]. We had a joke here that at one point the members of the state legislature would say, "It's [the CEO of G2G College]. Oh, no. Just go away. We'll give you what you want. Just go away." (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)
G2GL#5 recalled,

[The CEO] went [to the state capital], and she came back with ... the people of the Department of Finance. And she went to the Sheriff's Department, and got them to send helicopters over. And she flew them over the community in helicopters and said, "Look at these paths, look at this place. You think this place is gonna grow two percent? You're crazy. You need to change the formula by which you calculate growth and how you fund communities that are going to

grow." And with [the help of a state senator], she got things changed, and money started flowing in. They started funding growth. (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

Diversifying the funding sources

In addition to changing the way the state allocated resources to G2G College, all of the participants mentioned the ability of G2G College to find a diversity of resources to fund the growth of the college as an important contributing factor to their success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Several of the participants talked about how G2G College was always able to find the money that they needed for their efforts. These additional resources came from sources such as bond measures, contract work with local businesses, partnerships with the local government, school district and businesses, state and federal grants, and private donations. G2GL#8 said,

[W]e don't accept a lack of resources. And if one stream of funding starts to dry up and we're getting two others, so the resources is critical. You can't buy new computers if have no money. At the same time, we don't just accept the constraints. The state may decide to come up with a new rule that restricts growth funding. Our response is to go to the state every other week and get those rules changed to make sure that the growth funding is there. We actively seek out all those resources at all levels of the state, federal, private foundations, donors. And that's critical. All colleges need to do this. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

Choosing the attitude

All of participants described a G2G College ethos that had been cultivated and nurtured in various forms (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Many of the participants talked about how G2G College was a place where all employees were encouraged to risk and when asking to try something new, they would be supported by the decision makers (G2GL#4, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 26 through March 6, 2009). As described earlier in response to Research Question #1 and the Hedgehog Concept theme, G2GL#6 saw the can-do cultural norm as central to G2G College's success say,

People who wanted to talk to me about [G2G College], I'd say, "Look, look, if you want to know," I said, "just go up to [G2G College] and pick somebody on the campus. Pick a custodian. Pick an A and R person. Pick a faculty member

who is one of the new gang. Ask them, ... 'Can you tell me something about [G2G College]?' and I'll bet you a cookie that three out of four of the things they say are exactly the same.' They'll say things like, "Well, [G2G College] is... a can-do college. We're very entrepreneurial. The answer at [G2G College] is almost always yes. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

G2GL#4 thought that at the essence of this campus culture was the ability for the employees of G2G College to frame their reality in a productive way. As additional evidence of this emphasize on attitude, when asked what themes were missing from Collins' (2001, 2005a) seven *Good-to-Great* themes, G2GL#4 replied,

I think the thing that maybe isn't in here is the attitude. See, I'm a firm believer that... "If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it." I really believe that. I say that all time, ten times a week. And if somebody says, "Well, I just don't think --" I say, "Well, then stop thinking and go take a break, and come back when you can think differently, because if you continue to that negative self-talk, you're never gonna go anywhere." I think attitude and passion are two key motivators, and if you're not passionate about what you're doing, then, do something else, for Pete sakes, you know. Don't waste our time, your time, you know, and nobody benefits when you're not doing what you really love. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

Summary

Each of the participants saw G2G College creating a great deal of influence or control in their own destiny or creating the reality they needed as a contributing factor to their success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Whether it was in regard to changing the funding model at the state, diversifying the other funding sources for the college, or embracing a can-do ethos, it was clear that there was an intolerance of external or internal limitations to creating the reality they wanted and moving towards stated goals. For the emergent theme, *Creating the Reality We Need*, the leadership of G2G College were able to overcome internal and external limitations to progress by leveraging their creativity, relationships, and initiative to create the reality they needed for the organization. G2GL#4 summarized it by saying,

[W]e have a philosophy that we want to be able to say yes as much as possible if it means enhancing any opportunity for students or our community. And so, in order to make that work we also have to be incredibly flexible, open-minded, and not victims of our own structures. And I think that's what kills most colleges. They become victims of their own structure. They'll say, "Well, that's a great

idea, but we don't have anybody that does anything like that here." And I guess a lot of people would say no because of that. We don't do that.

We say, "Okay. Well, we got a lot of really creative and talented people here, so let's find somebody who wants to do that here." That's what I mean. Our job descriptions – people's responsibilities here – change. Some of them change every month. And when we get a great idea, but it really is like way out of the box – and, yet we know that ultimately, if we pass on that, we're not gonna get that chance again for a really long time – Or, maybe ever, I'll usually go to the person for whom it seems logical, like Student Services, or Instruction, or Economic Development. But, if that person either can't – doesn't have the time, really doesn't have the time, or doesn't have the passion for it – which is more important than time, then I'll just say, in Executive Cabinet, "Hey, we've got a chance to develop a partnership over here with [a major business partner]... and [the logical employee] doesn't have time to do it. Who else wants to – does somebody want to do that?" And people say, "Yeah. I'll do that." (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

As was the case for the other two emergent themes, there was alignment between all of the participants, the other data sources and my interpretation that the Creating the Reality We Need theme applied at G2G College. Below is a working definition of the third emergent theme found at G2G College.

Emergent Themes	Working Definition
Theme 3 – Creating the Reality We Need	Create a culture of possibilities through leveraging where internal and external limitations to progress are challenged and overcome.

Summary

In summary, the findings associated with the second research question were presented, specifically, What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? From the perspective of the participants and from other various data sources, three additional themes emerged as factors that resulted in G2G College moving from good to great. This included: (a) the Context Matters theme where situational and physical environment impacts the ability for a college to be successful, (b) Enduring Leadership theme where the marriage of consistency and dynamism of senior leaders over time can implement the Flywheel theme and leverage long term possibilities, and (c) the Creating the Reality We Need theme, where internal and external limitations to progress are challenged and overcome by leveraging the

creativity, relationships, and initiative of the organization. Table 40 provides a summary of the three emergent themes that emerged from the data.

Table 40

Summary of the G2G College Emergent Theme

Emergent Themes	Working Definition G2G College Emergent Theme
Emergent Theme 1 - Context Matters	Identify contextual opportunities and leverage them to the benefit of the community college.
Emergent Theme 2 - Enduring Leadership	Provide effective, consistent, and enduring leadership.
Emergent Theme 3 - Creating the Reality We Need	Create a culture of possibilities through leveraging where internal and external limitations to progress are challenged and overcome.

Research Question #3: What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great?

In this section, the findings are presented that address the third research question: What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? The rationale for this question was to gain an understanding of not only the presence of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes, but also the prioritized degree to which the participants felt they contributed to the transition of G2G College from good to great. The findings for the relative importance of the themes will include data from the participant interviews and my interpretation as an observer/investigator. The findings will be organized by a general reaction of the participants to the research question and then a summary of the findings in response to the third research question will be provided.

Participant perspective on relative importance

During the general questioning, I explored what factors the participants thought were important in contributing to G2G College's transition from good to great. At the end of the exploration of the emergent themes and the discussion of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Good-to-Great themes, I then asked four of the participants the following question: If applicable, what was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and

in relation to other important themes? In general, the participants struggled with the idea of evaluating the relative importance of the various factors (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, personal communications, February 24 through February 25, 2009). With follow-up questioning, the struggle appeared to be caused by two main issues. First, for those who evaluated Collins' themes, none of the participants had read nor were familiar with the book, *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001). As such, their first exposure to Collins' themes was from the brief working definitions that I provided them only moments before this question on relative importance. In most cases, the participants seemed to not have enough information to make an informed decision about the relative importance of Collins' themes. Second, even when I followed up with the participants asking them about the relative importance of the emergent themes that they had produced, they still struggled with identifying the relative importance of the themes in helping G2G College transition from good to great. In many cases, the participants could identify specific themes as important, but they struggled to prioritize them in any way as they saw all of their identified themes as important to the success of the college.

To further explore the relative importance of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes, I needed to employ different strategies as the method of direct questioning on relative importance provided limited insight. One strategy was to simply utilize the frequency of the occurrences from the data where Collins' themes were found to have applied at G2G College as indicated in Table 36. From this interpretation, one could conclude that the Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme was the most important and the Hedgehog Concept theme was the least important of Collins' themes. As described in the response to Research Question #1, these findings reflected the interpretation of the applicability of Collins' themes after a holistic review of the data including all levels of questioning.

An additional strategy to understand the relative importance of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes was to reflect on the initial question where the participant were asked, "What do you see as the top factors that contributed to or caused upward shift in performance in graduation and transfer rates during the years 1998 to 2007 [transition point in 2000]?" From the responses to this open ended question, I again utilized frequency of responses that had a relationship to Collins' themes as an indicator of importance. Two of the Good-to-Great themes that had possible importance to G2G

College were the Hedgehog Concept and Flywheel themes. In the adaption of both themes for the social sector, Collins identified the reputation of the organization as a legitimate substitute for financial progress utilized in the corporate sector. In the G2G College interviews, six of the participants mentioned the importance of the enhanced reputation of the college with the business and community leaders and the citizenry in helping them transition from good to great (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 24 through February 27, 2009). Although reputation was seen as an important contributor to G2G College's success, it was only part of the key points addressed in Collins' themes. As such, reputation alone does not equate to the applicability of the Hedgehog Concept or the Flywheel themes.

The only Good-to-Great theme that was consistently mentioned by all eight participants as an important priority was the Level 5 Leadership theme (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Participants specifically discussed the importance of the CEO's professional will and energy in serving G2G College, but again, did not indicate the relative importance of this theme to any others.

G2GL#4 shared her struggle in assigning the relative importance of the various factors that contributed to the transition from good to great for G2G College.

I don't believe that anything gets accomplished in isolation of an interplay of other factors. I started out with a few things, and then I – and then it caused me to leapfrog to the next thing... I think the most important thing I learned in my doctoral program... was a discrepancy analysis. That's the most important thing that I learned, and I use it every single day, several times a day. And that is, if this is where we are, and this is where want to end up, how do we work backwards and chart out the multiple ways we can get there? Because there isn't one way. There are multiple routes. And they're impacted by the things in the circle that influence, at one point in time, stronger than another. And you may have to leap routes, and go different junkets to get there... [I]it's like a scatter gram of knowing how to leap and leverage from one place, to get further along on the path. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

Summary

In summary, the findings associated with the third research question were presented, specifically, What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving

from good to great? From the perspective of the participants, evaluating the relative importance of any of the themes was challenging. Instead they appeared to see the interplay of all of the themes contributing to the transitioning of G2G College to be needed. Utilizing a strategy of identifying frequency of Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes as an indicator of relative importance, two additional interpretations were described. First, based on the frequency of data sources that indicated the relative theme applied to G2G College, the Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme was the most important theme and the Hedgehog Concept was the least important theme. Second, based on the frequency of Collins' themes mentioned in response to the initial question about factors contributing to G2G College's success, the reputation of the college had the possibility of indicating importance of the Flywheel and the Doom Loop and the Hedgehog Concept themes, however the additional key points found by Collins for these themes were not present. The only theme that could be identified as being important relative to other themes was the Level 5 Leadership theme. The analysis of the relative importance of the Good-to-Great themes in relation to Collins' research will be reserved for the summary and discussion section of Chapter 5 of this study.

Research Question #4: How Might Collins' Themes Be Altered To Better Describe Their Relevance In A Community College Moving From Good To Great?

In this section, the findings are presented in association with the fourth research question: How might Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? The rationale for this question was to explore, if applicable, how Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes might be adapted to better fit the community college environment. For the exploration of how Collins' themes might be adapted, I again utilized the findings that emerged from my three part questioning: (a) general questions about factors contributing to G2G College transitioning from good to great, (b) questions based on Collins' chapter summaries leading to his seven themes, and (c) explicit questions asking for reactions to Collins' themes via my working definitions for the corporate sector and his adaptation for the social sector. I also explicitly asked some of the participants: How would you alter Collins' themes to better fit the community college context?

With the exception of presenting the responses from the participants and in keeping with the intent of a chapter on the research findings, I will refrain from providing my own interpretation of how to alter Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes until the following chapter. Instead, I will present the findings that demonstrated the lack of applicability to Collins' themes as a way to suggest the need and provide guidance for the direction in altering Collins' themes for the community college context.

The findings associated with the fourth research question will be organized by Collins' (2001) seven themes: (a) Level 5 Leadership, (b) First Who...Then What, (c) Confront the Brutal Facts, (d) The Hedgehog Concept, (e) A Culture of Discipline, (f) Technology Accelerators, and (g) The Flywheel and the Doom Loop (p. 12). The findings for each theme will include data from (a) the participant interviews, (b) other data sources, and (c) my interpretation as an observer/investigator. Finally a summary of the findings associated with the fourth research question will be provided.

Level 5 Leadership

As presented in the findings for the first research question, the G2G College CEO did embody several of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Level 5 Leadership characteristics including being driven to make G2G College great, not casting blame when mistakes were made, and being at her best when utilizing a legislative leadership style. Some of the leadership characteristics, however, were not completely in alignment with Collins' findings for the Level 5 Leadership. Collins (2001) found that ten out of the eleven good-to-great companies selected their CEO during the time of the transition from within the organization. In the case of G2G College, the CEO was not selected from within the organization, but instead had been recruited to the CEO position from another college. As described by the participants and through my observation, the CEO was very confident and matter-of-fact in her demeanor and her description of her work. She was not perceived as having a "gargantuan personal ego" that Collins described for the CEOs at the companies that failed to go from good to great. However, she was also not characterized as having a "compelling modesty" or "self-effacing and understated" quality as Collins' described the CEOs of the good-to-great companies. In addition, unlike Collins' description of the CEOs from the good-to-great companies, the G2G College CEO did seem to have a "dazzling, celebrity" as perceived by the campus and

local community (Collins, 2001, p. 39) as evidenced by the participant interviews, internal documents, and external media accounts (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#7, personal communication, February 24 through 27, 2009, G2G College newspapers, Spring 2009, local community newspaper, June 2009).

In Collins' (2005a) adaptation of the Level 5 Leader theme for the social sector, he described leadership accomplishing more through persuasion, convincing others, and identification of shared interests, what Collins called "legislative" leadership, than making directives, what Collins described as "executive" leadership. It was clear that given the community college environment, the legislative leadership resonated with the participants. "When we do have the legislative leadership, we do a lot better, especially dealing with, as I said, individualistic faculty members" (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009). In order to lead the institution, however, the CEO felt she needed to solicit input broadly but also needed to retain final decision rights for those things that the leadership was going to be held responsible. In describing the development of the participatory governance policy, G2GL#4 stated:

We realized that you can't hold the committee responsible for a decision. So, different groups of people have a right to participate in providing input and reviewing alternatives related to their job descriptions in their professional category. But, ultimately, the decisions had to go through the CEO and on to the Board. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

Summary

Some of the key points from Collins' (2001) Level 5 Leadership theme did not apply to G2G College. Specifically, the CEO had not been hired from within the organization, but instead had been recruited from another institution. Although the G2G College CEO did not have a "gargantuan personal ego" described in the comparison companies that did not go from good to great, she also did not express the "compelling modesty" or "self-effacing and understated" quality described of the CEOs good-to-great companies. The CEO also enjoyed an almost celebrity status on the campus and in the community. Although a legislative leadership style was adopted to provide broad input for decisions, the CEO retained final decision rights for directing and leading G2G College.

First Who...Then What

At times, Collins' (2001, 2005a) First Who...Then What theme resonated with the participants theme (G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, personal communication, February 25 through March 3, 2009). Specifically they saw the hiring of the CEO as the clearest example of the First Who...Then What theme applied at G2G College. The institution employed a conscious and disciplined search for specific attitudinal, relational, and motivational characteristics sought when selecting and retaining G2G College employees. There were also exceptions to the theme.

The first exception to the theme was that the fundamental mission of the college could not be changed by the leadership implying that the "What" was known before the "Who." G2GL#4 indicated this by saying,

I don't think we have the luxury of deciding what the organization should focus on. I mean our mission is directed by how we're funded [via the state]. So, I think how to get to the strategic vision, certainly is enabled when you hire the best people first. But, we don't get to decide we don't want to do transfer here. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

Another exception was the fact that on many occasions, G2G College leadership would first decide what to do in both strategic and tactical terms, then decide who the best people were to implement the vision. For example, to support the long term success of G2G College, the CEO and the Board decided early in their leadership tenure to increase their capacity in the strategic areas of data acquisition, resource diversification, and reputation management. They then went out and hired the assistant dean of institutional development, director of the foundation, and the first public information officer, respectively (G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, personal communication, February 25 through February 26, 2009). In another case, the G2G College leadership decided to develop a computer numerically controlled (CNC) software training program based on input from local business leaders. Once they decided to create the program, they then solicited faculty to teach in the program (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

In terms of an additional exception to the First Who...Then What theme, Collins' (2001) research team found no systematic pattern linking executive compensation to the shift from good to great. Collins' posited that "the purpose of compensation [at the good-

to-great companies] is not to ‘motivate’ the right behaviors from the wrong people, but to get and keep the right people in the first place” (Collins, 2001, p. 64). At G2G College, none of the senior executive cabinet were compensated using a salary schedule nor were they given a standard cost of living increase. Instead they were compensated with a base salary plus merit tied directly to their articulated goals and metrics (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009, G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009). Although in any given year, the specific percentage of merit increase was not prescribed, the general policy was that if the administrators met or exceeded their articulated goals, they would receive a merit increase; occasionally reaching double digit percentage increases. As a result many of senior executive cabinet members received some of the highest compensation in the state (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009, local newspaper, April 2007). Although the participants did not see this compensational structure as motivational in and of itself, they recognized the incentive the structure created to remain focused on achieving the stated goals.

Summary

There were three of Collins’ (2001) key points for the First Who...Then What theme that did not appear to apply at G2G College. The first was that unlike a corporation, the leadership of the community college could not legally change their core mission although they did have flexibility within the boundaries of the law. Second, there were several cases where the strategic vision or tactical direction was established; the what was known including, and then G2G College went out to hire the right people. Third, at G2G College, many of the senior executive cabinet members received some of the highest compensation in the state via a merit-based structure.

Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)

As presented in the findings for the first research question, there was some alignment with Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Confront the Brutal Facts theme and G2G College. Specifically, they had developed policies, processes, and structures in their organization to encourage a participatory climate in decision making. The findings also revealed there were many examples of G2G College being a place where adversity was confronted and overcome. Although there was evidence of applicability of the Confront the Brutal Facts theme, there were also findings that demonstrated a lack of fit at G2G College.

As evidence of this lack of applicability, G2GL#2 indicated that at times there was too much of an emphasis on what G2G College was doing well or how it could be meeting new educational needs of the community and not enough on the challenges facing the college. “[There is a perception at G2G College that] never a discouraging word should be heard” (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

Other participants saw G2G College as a place where the Confront the Brutal Facts theme applied, but they indicated that the way the facts were presented to the leadership would often dictate how they would be perceived (G2GL#3, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 25 through February 27, 2009). G2GL#4 echoed this perception by indicating that any questions or opinions could be shared, but that there were certain rules employees needed to observe when sharing with her.

Well, they can't whine, that's the first thing... They can't bitch, which is different than whining. They can't complain... They can't complain about their supervisor. They can't do end-runs.

[If they have an idea about changing or improving things] I'll direct them to the Committee. I'll say, “If you have a better opinion about, you know, how the Website – you know, what it should include, why aren't you on the Website Committee? Go join the Website Committee. You know, take responsibility. You know, get on with it. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

When speaking about how facts were addressed by the G2G College employees, G2GL#6 indicated that if the facts were negative or uncomfortable, it was important to articulate them in a way as to not have the employees internalize the difficult circumstances. He would talk about the challenges by reframing the problem.

“You're not your balance sheet... We've got a problem we have to solve. But that doesn't define who we are. We're just still defined by how well we serve our students and our innovative programs and what we're working on.”

We're not gonna lie to people. When you tell people that we've got a major fiscal problem, which we did one year at [G2G College], big time, we just – but ... you create such a well spring of trust and buy-in that when we have to suddenly cut... The people will step forward and do what they need to do in the bad times... But you can't do that in a district where the faculty and administration are used to being in a confrontational mode all the time rather than a collegial mode... If you establish that shared culture and shared values that in times of adversity, ... people will work together. You have to remind [them] that just because they're poor, they're not bad. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

G2GL#4 had some interesting insight in response to the question about the G2G College's response to negative facts. Specifically, the leader took exception to the premise that facts were given values of positive or negative (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

You know, I don't see truth as negative. So, I don't use negative words. So – I mean, I think maybe a better statement here is even when the truth is uncomfortable, but not negative. It's a fact of the fact. It's not negative or positive. And that same fact in another context might be viewed differently. So, facts are sometimes uncomfortable. (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009)

One of Collins' (2001) key points in his summary for the Confront the Brutal Facts theme did not appear to apply at G2G College. Collins asserted that, "spending time and energy trying to 'motivate' people is a waste of effort" (p.89). While most of the participants saw the employees of G2G College being self-motivated (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24, through March 6, 2009), there was also an acknowledgement that there was a lot of intentional energy spent and effort given to motivating the G2G College employees (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24, through March 6, 2009).

Summary

Although there were elements of the definitions for Collins' (2001, 2005a) Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith theme that appeared to apply in the G2G College environment, there were others that did not apply. It was shared that at times there seemed an exaggerated emphasis on the positive aspects of the college and not enough attention on the challenges facing the institution. The findings also demonstrated that at G2G College the way negative facts were shared to both the leadership and the employees made a difference as to how they were received and acted upon by the respective audiences. The premise that truth could be negative was challenged suggesting that truth was value neutral although it could be uncomfortable at times. Also, although the G2G College employees were described as largely self-motivated, considerable amount of effort was put forth in staff motivation by the CEO and other leadership.

Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles)

As was presented in the findings in response to the first research question, several of the participants could provide a variety of responses to the questions about organizational passion, indicators of success, and what G2G College could be the best in the world at. However, there were not unified answers to the questions raised regarding the three circles (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009). Instead of having a common understanding of a focused perspective as suggested by Collins (2001) in the good-to-great companies, G2G College appeared to have a scattered approach to its various efforts.

For example, when the participants were asked if there was an essence of the G2G College passion, there were a number of varied responses as indicated in response to Research Question #1. Participants responded with perceptions of organization passion from that of students and student success to being a distinctive and innovative college.

As an additional insight, G2GL#6 challenged the premise that G2G College had an organizational passion. Instead, the leader said, “No. I think it’s the other way around. I think we hired people who had passion... That was one of the requisites for working here” (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009).

When asked if there one most important indicator of success as an organization, there was only one participant who could easily answer the question indicating student access and success. Most of their responses initially indicated there was not one overriding indicator of success. For most of the participants, the question even appeared to be seen as a naive or inappropriate question given the complexity of a comprehensive community college. “I don’t believe so. I don’t believe there is one indicator of success, like transfer rates, or going to work, or upgrading your job. I think that there are many... I don’t think there is a single thing” (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009). As indicated in response to Research Question #1, G2G College had used planning and goals to develop appropriate multiple intended outcomes which became indicators of success. These included focus on attracting exceptional employee talent, emphasizing reputation development, and developing strategies for acquisition of

multiple funding sources to drive their economic engine (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

Likewise, from responses in the individual interviews, the participants also did not have a common understanding of what G2G College could “be in the best in the world at, and equally important what it [could not] be the best at” (p. 118). As indicated in the findings in response to Research Question #1, the participants shared a variety of perspectives from world-class faculty, to innovation and judicious risk-taking, to energy and dynamism, to everything (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communication, February 24 through March 6, 2009).

With the numerous target groups and educational programs administered in a variety of ways typical of a modern comprehensive community college, G2G College certainly did not appear to embody Collins’ (2001) good-to-great trait of acting “more like hedgehogs-simple, dowdy creatures that know ‘one big thing’ and stick to it [versus an organization that was] more like foxes-crafty, cunning creatures that know many things” (p. 119).

Summary

G2G College was successful despite the fact that on a practical or tactical level, it clearly did not have the “require[d]... deep understanding of three intersecting circles translated into a simple, crystalline [Hedgehog] concept” (p. 118). For what G2G College was deeply passionate about, the findings indicated perceptions of organization passion from that of students and student success to being a distinctive and innovative college. For the resource engine and indicator of success, the findings suggested G2G College did not have one indicator of success, but instead was able to develop and achieve intended outcomes appropriate to their various goals. They also did not have a shared understanding of what G2G College could be the best in the world at with responses from world-class faculty, to innovation and judicious risk-taking, to energy and dynamism, to everything. Instead of having the simple and focused qualities of a hedgehog, G2G College appeared to embody the more scattered and complex qualities of the fox.

A Culture of Discipline

There appeared to be alignment with much of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Culture of Discipline theme as was presented in the findings for the first research question. Specifically, all of the participants discussed and other data sources supported, the sophisticated systems that were in place to support planning, budget, and assessment which, in turn, were used to inform the decision making processes throughout the college. The participants who discussed the role of bureaucracy at G2G College did not see the systems as barriers or hurdles to accomplishing their work. Instead, they talked about how the structured systems were viewed as constructive systems used to support the G2G College efforts. Finally, many of the participants saw G2G College employees having the freedom and responsibility to act within the systems and structures created. However, some of the key points from Collins' Culture of Discipline theme did not fit the G2G College context.

For example, although some of the participants indicated that the employees were largely self-disciplined, the participants also pointed out that they had grown into this culture over time and there were still occasions that employees needed to be motivated to complete the stated objectives (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009, G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009). G2GL#6 said,

I like to feel that I – I push my staff...I push them. They know that... But the key – there's that balance there. I think leaders have to, of course, inspire. That's the old traditional platitude. But you do have to push. (G2GL#6, personal communication, February 27, 2009)

G2GL#8 discussed the balance of freedom the employees enjoyed with the accountability to perform. "[W]e don't follow rules. Are our people self motivated? Yes, they have to be self motivated. Well, it helps if they are self motivated. But if they're not, they'll get a good kick to get it going (Laughter)" (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

Collins (2001) described the good-to-great companies as seeing a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" (p. 143) as irrelevant unless it fit within the three circles. He suggested that the good-to-great companies felt they would have many once-in-a-lifetime

opportunities. At G2G College, instead of having specific criteria to evaluate new opportunities, they were constantly looking for ways to say yes to new and innovative ways to improve the institution. G2GL#8 described G2G College as having an experimental culture indicating,

[G2G College employs an] empirical research approach where we wanna try things out, and if it works, great. If it doesn't work, well, we'll figure out how to change. And there's a variety of reasons why the outcomes might not have been what we expected, so then we have to figure out why the outcomes didn't come out and adapt our approach. We're all comfortable doing that. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March, 6, 2009)

Finally, Collins (2001) indicated that the good-to-great companies created "stop doing" lists that were more important than "to do" lists (p. 143). This did not describe G2G College. When participants were asked to describe how G2G College decided what not to do, most of the participants indicated that there were no set mechanism for deciding what not to do (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 24 through February 27, 2009). Instead, the participants again described the emphasis at G2G College was to say yes to as many ideas as possible (G2GL#2, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communication, February 25 through February 27, 2009).

Two of the participants saw this bias to always say yes as a potential cause for concern (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009, G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009). G2GL#5 shared, "We have identified as one of our action priorities in our accreditation self-study that... we don't have... a process for eliminating programs" (G2GL#5, personal communication, February 26, 2009). G2GL#2 questioned the sustainability of this bias to always say yes by saying,

[T]hat is one of the concerns ...sometimes is are we trying to be everything to every person, and that goes back to [the question], "At some point do we need to stop and reassess where we are? Are we going to be the equivalent of the [current national] housing bubble? Are we gonna grow so large and then, all of a sudden, we find that there's not enough there?" (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)

Summary

Collins' (2001, 2005a) Culture of Discipline theme had some applicability to the G2G College context, however there was not complete alignment with the theme. G2G

College had many self-disciplined employees, but participants indicated that at times the employees also needed to be motivated and held accountable for accomplishing their work. Instead of having criteria to evaluate new opportunities, G2G College created a culture of empirical research where they would try many things and keep those that worked. G2G College did not have mechanisms in place to decide what to stop doing. Some participants perceived the ability to stop doing things as a challenge for the organization.

Technology Accelerators

As indicated in the findings for the first research question, there was a great deal of alignment between Collins' (2001, 2005a) Technology Accelerator theme and the perceptions of the participants at G2G College. All of the participants saw technology being important to the college's success (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). From most of the data, technology was viewed as a support to the strategic and tactical efforts of the college.

However, as referenced in response to Research Question #1, some of the participants also saw technology as a catalyst in some respects (G2GL#4, personal communication, February 26, 2009, G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009, G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009). When responding to the specific working definitions of the Technology Accelerator theme, some of the participants felt the definition did not completely fit G2G College objecting to the idea that technology was "only" used to reinforce and enhance the college's efforts. From G2GL#8's perspective, "I don't know how thrilled I am about those words... I suppose they're fine. Like I said, I think I see technology as a tool. In some ways it can accelerate innovation too" (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009). As G2GL#7 shared,

Okay... I suppose you could look at it as reinforcements and enhancements, but I actually think in many ways it is the driving force mostly because of the – it formed the basis of our opinions for things. That could be my bias, my technological bias. Not that I'm [a] Techy, by the way. I just understand how important it is to the success. (G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009)

As evidence of this innovative thinking, a few of the participants shared that before the college's transition, G2G College had many separate computer systems and

did much of their administrative and counseling work by hand on paper. G2GL#7 shared stories of how the lack of appropriate technology made the processes in counseling, registration, and course scheduling very inefficient and ineffective. The adoption of new technology resulted in not only more efficient and effective information systems, but also created opportunities for different thinking about how things were done. With the adoption of the new technology, G2GL#7 discussed how it opened the possibilities of spending less time on administrative barriers and more time on understanding how to serve the students' needs. For example, they were able to use data that the technology provided to identify students who were close to graduation, but had stopped out; a task that would have been virtually impossible before the unified database. The G2G College staff then notified the students of the courses they needed to take to complete their program and saw a significant increase in completion rates. In addition, this allowed G2G College to develop new comprehensive programs for retention and completion support (G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009, G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009).

G2GL#4 also emphasized the role of technology on the thinking at G2G College saying,

I think that technology has expanded access for staff and students. I think it's helped us to do better research. I think that's eliminated barriers for students. So, I think it's been a good catalyst for new opportunities, as well as an enabler.

G2GL#8 added to this perspective of technology being a driver of innovative thinking sharing,

I think it was a tool to people trying out new things. But maybe it was a catalyst to innovation. [E]very department looks on how they wanna use technology and things that they can do with technology... Then the college has a strategic goal and has had a strategic goal for, since I've been at the college, on technology. (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009)

G2GL#7 also saw technology playing a significant role in shaping the talent of G2G College employees.

[W]e lost a lot of people who went, "Oh, no, thank you. I'm out of here." [Then] a few people came on board with us who said, "Okay, yeah, this is good... And the move from such a non-technical staff to a highly technical, highly educated staff. It changed our minimal [qualifications] on almost all of our jobs in Student

Services. We require everybody to have technical ability when they walk in the door now, as well as in most cases some sort of college, not just ... a high school education. [The technology skill requirements] virtually changed the face of our staff. (G2GL#7, personal communication, March 3, 2009)

Summary

Although all of the participants at G2G College perceived technology as a tool used to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage the organizational goals, some of the participants also saw technology serving in a catalytic role for change. Evidence of this catalytic role included technology being a driver for new and innovative thinking and initiatives as well as a catalyst in changing the skill set of the G2G College employees.

The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

Of all of the seven themes, Collins' (2001, 2005a) Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme had the most applicability as perceived by the participants at G2G College. Most of the participants indicated that they saw the transition at G2G College taking a period of time to build momentum (G2GL#1, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, G2GL#7, G2GL#8, personal communications, February 24 through March 6, 2009). One participant felt the model of the doom loop resonated with what he heard the CEO speak about on several occasions. Changing the reputation of G2G College over time based on serving the educational needs of the community was seen as a priority. Many participants indicated G2G College was an institution that focused on the long term strategic goals of the organization as opposed to only looking at short term gains.

With this high level of alignment, there was one exception to the perspective that the transition occurred as gradual momentum over time. From G2GL#2's perspective, G2G College's transition did not feel like a gradual shift.

I think it was kind of all of a sudden. The early '90s, our population just started to boom. [Previously G2G College had] a very disengaged president. So, we get a new president. A dynamic president. We start to get more faculty members. We have a good core. The community started to grow. Probably in the mid-'90s, it really began to pick up. (G2GL#2, personal communication, February 25, 2009)

As an additional exception to the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme at G2G College, Collins (2001) asserted that the good-to-great companies did not have to spend time creating alignment or motivating the employees. Collins suggested that, "Under the right conditions, the problems of commitment, alignment, motivation, and change largely

take care of themselves. Alignment principally follows from results and momentum, not the other way around” (p. 187). Although the outcomes and results were certainly a key component of the G2G College alignment (G2GL#8, personal communication, March 6, 2009), as presented in the findings earlier, there was also a considerable amount of energy spent trying to motivate the employees of the college via all-college meetings, extensive orientation initiatives, recognition activities, college newsletters, a G2G College intranet, and even personal notes from the CEO (G2GL#1, G2GL#2, G2GL#3, G2GL#4, G2GL#5, G2GL#6, personal communications, February 24 through February 27, 2009).

Summary

There was a great deal of alignment between the working definitions of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme and their applicability to G2G College as perceived by the participants. While most participants saw the transition from good to great of G2G College as a gradual shift, one participant perceived the shift to be sudden. Although Collins (2001) found in the good-to-great companies little effort exerted to motivate the employees, G2G College leadership spent considerable effort to motivate the G2G College employees.

Summary

In summary, the findings associated with the fourth research question were presented, specifically, How might Collins’ themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? Although all of the themes had some aspects of applicability to G2G College, from the perspective of the participants and from other various data sources, each of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) seven themes making up the Good-to-Great theory had elements that did not apply. This implies that Collins’ themes should be altered to better describe G2G College moving from good to great. I will suggest these alterations to Collins’ themes in the next chapter. Table 41 provides a summary of the findings that suggest the need and direction for alteration of Collins’ themes to the community college context based on the findings from G2G College.

Table 41

Summary of Findings that Suggest Need and Direction for Alteration of Collins' Good-to-Great Themes for the Community College Context

Collins' Good-to-Great Themes	Findings that Suggest Need and Direction of Alteration for Collins' Themes
Level 5 Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEO had not been hired from within the organization, but instead had been recruited from another institution. • The CEO did not have a “gargantuan personal ego, but did not express the “compelling modesty” or “self-effacing and understated” quality. • The CEO also enjoyed an almost celebrity status on the campus and in the community. • Although a legislative leadership style was adopted to provide broad input for decisions, the CEO retained final decision rights for directing and leading G2G College.
First Who...Then What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike a corporation, the leadership of the community college could not legally change their core mission. • Many times, the “what” was known (i.e., mission, strategic plans, programs), and then G2G College went out to hire the “who” or the right people. • Many of the senior executive cabinet members received some of the highest compensation in the state.
Confront The Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At times, there seemed to be an exaggerated emphasis on the positive aspects of the college and not enough attention on the challenges facing the institution. • The way negative facts were shared to both the leadership and the employees made a difference as to how they were received and acted upon by the respective audiences. • The premise that truths could be negative was challenged • Considerable amount of effort was put forth in staff motivation by the CEO and other leadership.

Collins' Good-to-Great Themes	Findings that Suggest Need and Direction of Alteration for Collins' Themes
Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For what G2G College was deeply passionate about, the findings indicated a variety of perceptions from students and student success to being a distinctive and innovative college. • For the resource engine and indicator of success, G2G College did not have one indicator of success, but instead was able to develop and achieve intended outcomes appropriate to their various goals. • G2G College did not have a shared understanding of what it could be the best in the world at. Instead there were a variety of responses from world-class faculty, to innovation and judicious risk-taking, to energy and dynamism, to everything. • Instead of having the simple and focused qualities of a hedgehog, G2G College appeared to embody the more scattered and complex qualities of the fox.
A Culture of Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G2G College had many self-disciplined employees, but participants indicated that at times the employees also needed to be motivated and held accountable for accomplishing their work. • Instead of having criteria to evaluate new opportunities, G2G College created a culture of empirical research where they would try many things and keep those that worked. • G2G College did not have mechanisms in place to decide what to stop doing. • Some participants perceived the ability to stop doing things as a challenge for the organization.
Technology Accelerators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the participants saw technology also serving in a catalytic role for change in thinking and in skill set of the G2G College employees.
The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G2G College leadership spent considerable effort to motivate their employees.

Summary of Findings

This chapter of the dissertation presented the findings from the data collection at a good-to-great community college. This chapter was organized into two sections. The first section included the profiles and context for the good-to-great community college including: (a) a profile of the good-to-great community college selected, (b) a brief profile of each of the eight participants interviewed, and (c) a summary profile for all participants. The second section included the findings organized by the four research questions: (a) Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness?, (b) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?, (c) What is the relative importance of Collins' themes among themselves and in relation to other important themes? and (d) How might Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? The research questions provided a framework for the organization of the findings. The sources of the data included participant interviews, observations, documents, and electronic sources. The interviews of the G2G College leaders served as the primary source of data for the findings. In alignment with Collins' (2001) interview process for selecting participants of the good-to-great companies, eight leaders were interviewed from executive leadership, faculty, and the board of trustees. The other data sources collected from the G2G College included planning documents, policy documents, schedule of classes, board minutes, reports, marketing collateral, program outlines and reviews, and fact books. It also included data from the G2G College website.

The findings associated with the first research question were presented, specifically, Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness? From the perspective of the participants and from other various data sources, all of Collins' (2001, 2005a) seven themes making up the Good-to-Great theory applied or partially applied as factors that resulted in G2G College moving from good to great. This resulted in a continuum of applicability based on the various data sources. Table 42 provides a summary of the continuum of applicability of Collins' seven themes to G2G College.

Table 42

Summary of the Continuum of Applicability of Collins’ Seven Themes to G2G College

Flywheel	Technology accelerator	Confront the Brutal Facts	Culture of discipline	Level 5 Leadership	First Who ...Then What	Hedgehog Concept							
Applied						Partially Applied							Did Not Apply

Continuum of Applicability of Collins’ Themes at G2G College

The findings associated with the second research question were presented, specifically, What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? From the perspective of the participants and from other various data sources, three additional themes emerged as factors that resulted in G2G College moving from good to great. This included: (a) the Context Matters theme where situational and physical environment impacted the ability for a college to be successful, (b) the Enduring Leadership theme where the marriage of consistency and dynamism of senior leaders over time created long term possibilities, and (c) the Creating the Reality We Need theme also emerged, where internal and external limitations to progress were challenged and overcome.

The findings associated with the third research question were presented, specifically, What was the relative importance of Collins’ themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? From the perspective of the participants, evaluating the relative importance of the themes in relation to each other was challenging and problematic as the interplay between all of the themes was seen as important. Based on counting the respective indications of applicability from the participants, the other data sources, and my interpretations, the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme was most important and the Hedgehog Concept was least important theme to the G2G College context. Based on the frequency of participants mentioning element of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) themes in describing the factors that contributed to G2G College’s success, the Level 5 Leadership theme was the most important.

The findings associated with the fourth research question were presented, specifically, How might Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great? From the perspective of the participants and from other various data sources, each of Collins' (2001, 2005a) seven themes making up the Good-to-Great had elements that did not fit the college suggesting that Collins' themes should be altered to better describe G2G College moving from good to great. In the following chapter, I will discuss the implications of the findings for practice and policy and suggest recommendations for future research on the topic of themes related to community colleges transitioning from good to great.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) theory, as originally introduced and as adapted for the social sector, to the ways institutions move from being good to being great in the higher education context, and more particularly to community colleges. This chapter provides a summary, discussion, and possible implications of the study by: (a) summarizing the findings of the study in relation to the literature review and how findings are in agreement or in contrast with previously published works, (b) suggesting implications for policy and practice for the community college context, and (c) making recommendations for future research.

This study focused on describing the factors that contributed to a community college that transitioned from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness. The American community college has been touted as a key element in educating the populous and invigorating the national economic engine (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007b; Potter, 2003). Due to population shifts and the increasing costs of higher education, the demand for educational services provided by community and technical colleges continues to rise. Meanwhile, community colleges have received significantly fewer resources from the state and federal governments (Sarasohn, 2007). In the midst of this building pressure, critics of the community college system have questioned whether the institutions are doing enough to fulfill their mission. They question whether the community colleges have lost their way in their apparent attempt to be all things to all people (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). These pressures of increased accountability and demand in the face of decreased resources are creating real stresses on the colleges' capacities to serve their students and communities. However, the question is not whether community colleges are good. Being "good" is no longer sufficient. The question is, "Where to now?" And how we are going to get there" (Deborah M. DiCroce, president of Tidewater Community College, in Virginia as cited by Evelyn, 2004, p. A28)? Today's community college leaders need insight into possible strategies that can help focus effort and yield improved organizational effectiveness of the community college.

To gain this insight, many leaders have turned to popular business leadership and management books proposing techniques to improve organizational effectiveness

including Collins' (2001) book, *Good-to-Great*. However, there has been little critical analysis to determine whether the principles and practices suggested by Collins are truly applicable or appropriate given an educational context in general, and the community college context, specifically. This study contributed to the body of knowledge on Collins' Good-to-Great theory of organizational effectiveness as it applied to the community college context.

Summary and Discussion

The summary section discusses the findings to the four research questions in relation to Collins' (2001) Good-to-Great theory reviewed in Chapter 2. The four research questions of my study were:

- 1) Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness?
- 2) What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?
- 3) What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great?
- 4) How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?

The findings showed that Collins' (2001, 2005a) Good-to-Great themes and theory as described in the literature review had varied applicability to G2G College. The methodology was an interpretive instrumental case study with eight community college leaders at a community college that had transitioned from good to great in terms of academic success. The data collected included interviews with eight participants, observations, documents, and electronic sources and was used for the discussion and analysis as it relates to the literature. The summary and discussion will be organized by combining the first and fourth research question in an effort to holistically address the applicability of Collins' themes and address the elements that applied and did not apply to G2G College. The themes will be discussed in order from least applicable to most applicable to the community college context as represented by G2G College. The themes will only be related to the context of Collins' research since the purpose of this study was to explore the application of his work to the community college context. At the end of the

summary and discussion of each of Collins' themes, an alteration of the theme will be proposed to better describe each of the Good-to-Great themes in the context of the community college. The next section will provide a summary and discussion of the second research question, What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great? Since these were emergent themes, they will be summarized and discussed in relation to the current literature. Finally, a brief summary and discussion of the third research question will be presented, What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves, and in relation to the other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great?

Research Questions #1 and #4: Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness?, and How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?

This section presents a summary and discussion of the findings in response to Research Questions #1 and #4 in relation to the relevant literature. As there was varying applicability to Collins' (2001, 2005a) seven Good-to-Great themes, the aspects that applied and that did not apply will be discussed. This section is organized by: (a) an analysis of the findings as to the extent to which Collins' Good-to-Great themes applied and did not apply to G2G College, and (b) a proposed alteration of Collins' themes to better fit the community college context. Based on the degree of applicability to G2G College, as presented in the findings, the themes will be analyzed in order of applicability from least applicable to most applicable, specifically: (a) the Hedgehog Concept, (b) First Who...Then What, (c) Level 5 Leadership, (d) Culture of Discipline, (e) Confront the Brutal Facts, (f) Technology Accelerators, and (g) the Flywheel and the Doom Loop.

Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles)

Collins (2001) indicated that the good-to-great companies all had a deep understanding of the intersection of their organizational passion, what they could be the best in the world at, and what drove their economic engine or motive for improvement. For the social sector, Collins (2005a) determined that the economic engine was not an appropriate indicator of success given that the missions were not profit oriented. Instead, he broadened this motivational goal to include time, money, and brand. Time was defined as how well the organization could attract the time and support of talented people. Money

was defined as the cashflow needed to continue the work. Brand was defined as the ability of the organization to cultivate goodwill and reputation in the minds of potential supporters (Collins, 2005a). He called this focused vision and effort the Hedgehog Concept in reference to the simple, but effective protagonist in the fable of the hedgehog and the fox.

With an initial review, the findings demonstrated that of all seven themes, the Hedgehog Concept theme was possibly the least applicable theme to the G2G College context. This would make sense given the context of a complex educational organization. As a modern comprehensive community college, G2G College had many missions to address including transfer education, developmental education, continuing education, vocational training, and contract training for business and industry. The findings suggested that they also had a multitude of perceptions regarding organizational passions, what they could be the best in the world at, and what they used as an indicator of success. Although most of the participants could provide answers to the questions, and other data sources supported their perceptions, there was not a shared understanding of Collins' (2001) three criteria, nor a focus on the intersection between them. Instead of having the simple and focused qualities of a hedgehog, G2G College appeared to embody the more scattered and complex qualities of the fox.

As such, on an initial review of the data, there seemed to be little alignment between Collins' (2001, 2005a) Hedgehog Concept theme and the perspectives shared by the participants at G2G College. However, even Collins acknowledged that the concept of strategic and tactical simplicity did not always apply to all of the good-to-great companies. In his analysis of General Electric (GE), Collins (2001) found that the company was an exception to his theme in that the company was a large corporate conglomerate with a broad and diverse portfolio of businesses. However, Collins suggested that GE still had a Hedgehog Concept with the three circles that unified the corporation across the diversified business entities, but he asserted that it was more unusual and subtle. For defining what GE could be the best in the world at, Collins suggested their ability to develop "first-rate general managers" (Collins, 2001, p. 215). For their organizational passion, Collins suggested GE took pride in having the best set of general managers in the world. For the economic engine, Collins suggested that GE

utilize profit per top-quartile management talent. Collins posited that when evaluating business opportunities, those opportunities that required the lesser amount of management talent from the top quartile of the organization to obtain the greatest profits would be the more attractive choice.

With a broader perspective and with closer analysis, there did appear to be some applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Hedgehog Concept theme at G2G College. Like GE, the applicability was focused at the broad conceptual or philosophical level rather than at the strategic or tactical levels. As indicated previously, the participants did not respond with a shared perspective when asking the questions about passion, indicator of success, and best in the world. However, through an analysis of all the interviews, each of the participants did describe a perspective that aligned with a common ethos for G2G College. Specifically, the participants saw G2G College as having a can-do work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. This can-do work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit appeared to serve as a common passion at G2G College. Similarly, for what G2G College could be the best in the world at, the findings indicated the can-do work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit allowed G2G College to create innovative solutions to achieve the educational needs of community. For their resource engine and indicator of success, G2G College utilized the intended outcomes of respective initiatives.

Proposed alteration of Collins' Hedgehog Concept theme

It was clear from the findings that the G2G College participants clearly did not have the required "deep understanding of three intersecting circles translated into a simple, crystalline [Hedgehog] concept" (p. 118). However there was a general understanding of what made G2G College special. In some cases, this appeared so imbedded in the culture that it was difficult for the participants to articulate it. As such, I propose the essence of the Hedgehog Concept still applies to the community college context in that it includes the cultivation of: (a) the college's greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) the sources of the college's greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization, and (c) the identification of various indicators of success. In altering the theme, I propose that the Hedgehog Concept does not have to be a tactical or strategic understanding of the three circles. Instead it can be experienced at a shared conceptual understanding by the organization. Table 43 provides a proposed altered definition of

Collins’ Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles theme for the community college context.

Table 43

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity Within the Three Circles Theme for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Focus organizationally on one big concept. Specifically the intersection of: (a) their greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) what can financially support or excel their efforts, and (c) the source of their greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.	Instead of focusing on an economic engine based financial outputs, the social sector should broaden the concept to a resource engine that focuses on resources (e.g., time, money, and brand) utilized to accomplish the social sector mission. Time is defined by how well managers attract talented people to support the mission given limited financial incentives. Money is defined by the cash flow needed to continue the work. Brand is defined as the ability to “cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters” (p. 18).	Develop a shared conceptual understanding of the college’s: (a) greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) indicators of success, and (c) sources of greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.

First Who...Then What

Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies began their transition by first selecting the right people to fill the right roles in the organization. This was done before deciding on what to do as an organization. The findings demonstrated that at times this fit the G2G College context and at other times did not. The clearest example of the applicability of the First Who...Then What theme was in the recruitment and selection of

the CEO. The Board sought a new energetic visionary first. They knew the college had to change, but did not dictate what the CEO would do. Collins also suggested that selecting the right person had “more to do with character traits and innate capabilities than with specific knowledge, background, or skills” (p. 64). The findings demonstrated that when hiring G2G College employees, the basic ability to perform the job was important, but there was also an intentional and disciplined search for specific attitudes, ability to enhance relationship internal and external to the college, and ability to assist in continuously improving the college.

In support of the concept of having the right people in the organization and in the right roles, Collins (2001) also found that the good-to-great companies were rigorous, but not ruthless, when it came to keeping or promoting people in the organization. For the social sector, Collins (2005a) acknowledged that the ability to hire and fire people was more difficult. Therefore, he suggested being even more diligent with the selection process and focusing on changing the culture over time. This was in alignment with what occurred at G2G College. As the college began to grow, the leader started hiring a number of new people. Over time the cultural norms shifted and people who did not embody the G2G College cultural characteristics were ultimately not successful and would leave the college. At times, this separation from the college occurred by the employee not feeling comfortable with the climate and leaving on their own volition and at other times by the employee not performing at the expected level and being fired or not receiving tenure.

Although there were elements of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) First Who...Then What theme that applied to the G2G College, there were others that did not. For example, Collins found that one of the good-to-great companies, Kimberly Clark, demonstrated the First Who...Then What theme to such a degree that they even shifted their mission, sold off their mills, and got out of the paper business which had been at the core of their traditional organizational purpose. Not surprisingly, the findings revealed that unlike a corporation, the leadership of the public community college could not legally change their core mission. They were held to organizational mandates codified in law.

At the strategic and tactical levels, Collins (2001) also suggested that the good-to-great companies would work to hire the right people first, then decide what they would do as an organization. Although this occasionally occurred, more often at G2G College, the findings suggested that either a general or specific sense of the what was needed or what was to be done was known first (i.e., a new training program, a new administrative initiative, a new educational unit), and then G2G College went out to hire the right people.

Finally, Collins (2001) found that there was no correlation between executive compensation and the performance of the good-to-great companies relative to the direct comparison companies. Instead, he found that the executives of the good-to-great companies made slightly less than the comparison companies in terms of total cash compensation ten years after the transition. In contrast, at G2G College, the senior executive cabinet members received their base salary plus a merit percentage every year which resulted in them receiving some of the highest compensation in the state. Although the finding suggested this was not a source of motivation for the leaders, it was seen as a way to remain focused on what was important to the college.

Proposed alteration of Collins' First Who...Then What theme

As seen from the findings, elements of Collins' (2001, 2005a) First Who...Then What theme for the corporate sector and of the social sector appeared to fit the G2G College environment and some did not. As such, I propose that the definition of the First Who...then What theme for the corporate sector and the adapted theme for the social sector be combined and altered to reflect that, although hiring the right people is critical, many times the strategy and tactics can come before the who. As a result, I would suggest an alteration of the name of theme to a Both Who...And What theme for the community college which would allow for both the identification of what needs to be done to come before or after the identification of who would do the work. In both cases, a community college should strive to hire the best people who will fit the organizational culture and will bring the best thinking to forward the mission of the college. I also propose that the altered theme reflect that the community college can compensate the executive leadership by rewarding performance in achieving organizational goals. Table 44 provides a

proposed altered definition of Collins’ First Who...Then What theme for the community college context.

Table 44

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ First Who...Then What Theme for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Hire the best people first. Then decide what the organization should focus on and where the organization should go.	Focus on: (a) immediate span of control without having executive powers, (b) creating high standards in hiring practices when openings occur, and (c) rigorously utilizing early-assessment mechanisms available to keep the best people and terminate or separate from those who do not meet the high expectations.	Both Who...And What Theme - Hire the best people who will fit the organizational culture and will bring the best thinking to forward the mission of the college and then reward performance.

Level 5 Leadership

Collins (2001) found that the CEOs from the good-to-great companies had a strong professional will for the company. Specifically he found that they were “incredibly ambitious, but ambition first and foremost for the institution, not themselves” (Collins, 2001, p. 21). There was consensus from the data that the G2G College CEO not only had a strong dedication, but also a strong ambition for the success of G2G College.

Collins (2001) also found that the leaders of the good-to-great companies had an unwavering resolve to do whatever needed to be done to make the companies great. He indicated the leaders were “fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce sustained *results*” (Collins, 2001, p. 30). The G2G College CEO also demonstrated this same characteristic of being driven to continuously improve the college. This was evidenced by the CEO’s leadership in developing a disciplined iterative process that included the creation of an organizational vision and strategic goals, development of specific strategic and tactical plans, execution of the plans, and then measurement and

communication of the results to again inform the modification of the organization's vision, goals, and plans.

An additional trait found by Collins (2001) in the CEOs of the good-to-great companies was the apportionment of credit for their institution's success and blame for the institution's failure. Where the CEOs of the comparison companies tended to take personal credit for success and cast blame to others for failures, the CEOs of the good-to-great companies did the opposite. As Collins stated, "Level 5 leaders look out the window to attribute success to factors other than themselves. When things go poorly, however, they look in the mirror and blame themselves, taking full responsibility" (Collins, 2001, p. 39). In alignment with Collins' research, the G2G College CEO was intentional to give credit to those internal to the institution for the successes instead of claiming it for herself. She was also described as someone who would not blame staff when mistakes were made in good faith, but instead focused on asking about the plan to resolve the given issue.

In Collins' (2005a) adaptation of the Level 5 Leader theme for the social sector, he acknowledged that given the nature of social sector organizations, leading by directives or, what he called, executive leadership style, was not always effective nor appropriate. He suggested that leaders needed to adopt a legislative leadership style utilizing persuasion, convincing others, and identification of shared interests as the ways to lead. Collins went on to hypothesize that the most effective leaders would likely demonstrate a blend of both executive and legislative leadership skills. "[T]hey will have the knack of knowing when to play their executive chips, and when not to" (Collins, 2005a, p. 12). It was clear that the G2G College CEO utilized both executive and legislative leadership styles for leading G2G College. Although a legislative leadership style was adopted to provide broad input for decisions, the CEO also retained final decision rights for directing and leading G2G College. The findings revealed that the CEO was perceived at her best when the legislative style was employed.

Collins (2001) defined the Level 5 Leader as one who had the strong professional will for the organization as described above, but also a "compelling modesty" or "self-effacing and understated" quality (p. 27). Collins' researchers used words like mild-

mannered, quiet, humble, and shy to describe the good-to-great company CEOs. Although the G2G College CEO did not demonstrate the “gargantuan ego” ascribed to the CEOs of the direct comparison companies, the findings did not suggest the G2G College CEO had a compelling modesty nor did the participants ascribe any of the adjectives used by Collins’ team to the CEO. From my interpretation of all data sources, the CEO instead had a confidence and strong sense of self which was utilized to engender confidence in her leadership, her employees, and in her college by internal and external stakeholders. Collins also found a negative correlation between the good-to-great companies with CEOs that were larger than life and had enjoyed a celebrity status. In contrast, the findings suggested that the G2G College CEO was very popular, almost to the point of celebrity status, both on the campus and in the community. Finally, the CEOs of 10 of the 11 good-to-great companies had risen up from within their respective organizations to assume the chief executive role. In contrast, the G2G College CEO had not been hired from within the organization, but instead had been recruited from another institution.

Proposed alteration of Collins’ Level 5 Leadership theme

Again, the findings suggested that there were elements of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Level 5 Leadership theme, as developed for the corporate sector and adapted for the social sector, that applied to the G2G College CEO while others did not. I then propose that the combined definitions of the Level 5 Leadership theme, as Collins developed for the corporate sector and adapted to the social sectors, be altered for the community college context. This alteration would affirm Collins’ assertion that leadership is accomplished by a professional will focused on the college’s success and that legislative leadership is needed given the social sector. However, the altered Level 5 Leadership theme would also suggest that final decision rights are always retained by the CEO and that a compelling personal humility is not required. Table 45 provides a proposed altered definition of Collins’ Level 5 Leadership for the community college context.

Table 45

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ Level 5 Leadership for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Theme	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Provide leadership that authentically embodies a mix of both personal humility and professional will focused on the company’s success.	Leadership is accomplished more through persuasion, convincing others, and identification of shared interests (e.g., “legislative” leadership) than making directives (e.g., “executive” leadership).	Leadership is accomplished by a professional will focused on the college’s success. Legislative leadership is utilized, but final decision rights are retained by the CEO.

A Culture of Discipline

In describing the Culture of Discipline theme, Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies did not need to rely on overly bureaucratic rules to control the employees, but instead created organizational cultures where employees were largely self-disciplined and self-motivated in conducting their work. Although G2G College had numerous systems and structures to support the effort of the institution, the findings suggested that they were not seen as bureaucratic in the sense of being rules or barriers to progress. Instead these systems and structures were seen as tools or pathways for innovation and getting things done. At G2G College, there also were many employees who were self-disciplined and self-motivated. Many of the participants saw G2G College employees having both the freedom and responsibility to act within the systems and structures created as Collins’ posited. However, the findings also revealed that there were times where the G2G College leadership felt that employees needed to be motivated or even pushed to meet the organizational goals and objectives.

Collins (2001) also found that the good-to-great companies had a discipline of thought where they would not attempt to do everything or be everything to everyone. Instead they would carefully discriminate between what opportunities to engage in. He indicated that the good-to-great companies were disciplined in thought to such a degree

that they had a “willingness to shun opportunities that fall outside the three circles [of the Hedgehog Concept]” (Collins, 2001, p. 142). At G2G College, the culture was not to shun opportunities, but instead to say yes to as many things as possible. Decisions were made using discrepancy analysis based on a clear understanding of where the organization wanted to go and then how the new opportunities might help them achieve their desired end state. However, explicit criteria was not used to evaluate the opportunities. Instead, G2G College employed an empirical research or experimental approach where they would try many things and keep those that worked.

In alignment with this ability to choose whether or not to engage in new opportunities, Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies created lists of what not to do as way to help maintain their focused thought, energy, and effort on the highest priorities of the organization. The findings revealed that G2G College did not have such mechanisms in place to decide what to stop doing.

Proposed alteration of Collins’ Culture of Discipline theme

The findings suggested that some of the elements used to create the Culture of Discipline theme applied at G2G College and others did not. Although Collins (2005a) did not adapt the Culture of Discipline from the corporate to the social sector, I propose that this theme be altered to better apply to the community college context. This alteration would affirm Collins’ (2001) assertion that stultifying bureaucracies and disciplinarian managers are not needed to control employees. It would also maintain Collins’ concept of self-disciplined employees. Specifically where employees are encouraged to navigate systems and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of those systems. However, it would be altered to acknowledge that occasionally people need additional motivation. For the altered theme, I would also propose that the stop doing lists are not required as Collins indicated, and instead would include the concept of experimentation. This would result in a theme that I would call, the Culture of Disciplined Experimentation. Interestingly, in *Built-to-Last*, Collins and Porras (1994) posited that the built-to-last companies identified in the book all had this experimentation culture. In the Try a Lot of Stuff and Keep What Works theme, the built-to-last companies created new and innovative opportunities by encouraging experimentation resulting in purposeful evolution of the organization. Table 46 provides

a proposed altered definition of Collins’ Culture of Discipline theme for the community college context.

Table 46

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ Culture of Discipline Theme for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definitions in Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Create a culture where self-disciplined employees adhere to a consistent system and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.	No adaptation for social sector.	Culture of Disciplined Experimentation Theme – Create a culture of experimentation where self-disciplined employees adhere to consistent systems and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.

Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)

In Collins’ (2001, 2005a) *Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)* theme, he found the good-to-great companies had developed the capacity to dispassionately and honestly review the facts of their given situation, have difficult conversations when needed, and not slip into cycles of despair. They instead maintained the belief that they would be able to prevail and overcome any adversity. The good-to-great companies would encourage their employees to engage in and provide input to the decision making process. At G2G College, employees were also solicited and supported to bring innovative ideas forward. There were many formal and informal pathways and opportunities for G2G College employees interested in helping improve the college such as through committees, individual meetings, and electronic means. At G2G College, there was also evidence of many examples where the college had been confronted with and had overcome adversity.

Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies had also developed a culture where they could tell the truth about the facts, even if negative, without fear of

being blamed. For G2G College, the findings suggested, however, that while the truth of a given situation was usually welcome, the way negative facts, or what one participant called uncomfortable facts, were shared, to both the leadership and to the employees, made a difference in how those facts were received and acted upon by the respective audiences. In some cases the findings suggested that the college had too much emphasis on the positive aspects of the college and not enough attention on the challenges facing the institution.

As indicated in the Culture of Discipline theme, Collins (2001) also found that the good-to-great companies did not spend time motivating their employees. Instead, they found having the right people confront the brutal facts was self-motivating. In contrast, the CEO and other leadership of G2G College spent considerable amount of time and effort in continuously motivating the college's employees.

Proposed alteration of Collins' Confront the Brutal Facts theme

Although Collins (2005a) did not adapt the Confront the Brutal Facts theme from the corporate to the social sector, the findings suggest that the theme should be altered to better fit the community college context. This alteration should maintain Collins' (2001) assertions that the facts of a given situation should be confronted honestly and regularly and that there is a belief that the organization can overcome any adversity. The theme should also maintain Collins' finding that uncomfortable facts should be able to be shared without fear of blame. However, based on the findings of my study, I propose that the theme should be altered to reflect the nuance that how the facts are shared impacts how they are received. If framed in a productive manner, the facts can be shared regardless of how uncomfortable they may be. The altered theme should also acknowledge that occasionally people need additional motivation as suggested previously in the Culture of Discipline theme. Since the findings suggested that the facts do not need to be viewed as negative or brutal, I propose altering the name of theme to Addressing the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith. Table 47 provides a proposed altered definition of Collins' Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith theme for the community college context.

Table 47

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith Theme for the Community College Context.

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured. Even when the truth is negative, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.	No adaptation for the social sector.	Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith Theme - Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured when productively framed. Even when the truth is uncomfortable, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.

Technology Accelerators

Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies used technology only as a tool to leverage their existing work instead of trying to adapt their work to new technology. The good-to-great companies first asked how the use of technology would benefit customers and the organization. The findings suggested that for the most part, this was the case at G2G College. Although many of the participants found that technology played a major factor in their success, the majority of participants viewed the use of technology as a support to the strategic and tactical efforts of the college as opposed to a

catalyst. Collins found that many of the good-to-great companies moved slowly and methodically to adopt new technology and then chose to do so only after careful consideration. This too was in alignment with the G2G College context as they did not first start to deliberately move toward adopting technology until the development of their first technology master plan in 1996. Collins also found that after adopting a crawl, walk, run approach to technology, many of the good-to-great companies became pioneers of new technology once they had determined an organizational need. Similarly, once the organizational need was understood, G2G College developed technological solutions that included audits of student transcripts and a comprehensive data warehouse used for planning and tracking of intended outcomes. Unlike Collins' presentation of the Technology Accelerators theme, the findings at G2G College also suggested that technology was occasionally viewed as a catalyst for new and innovative thinking as well as a driver for enhanced skill sets of the college employees utilizing the technology.

Proposed alteration of Collins' Technology Accelerators theme

Again, Collins (2005a) did not adapt the Technology Accelerators theme from the corporate to the social sector. Collins' (2001) theme largely applied as written to G2G College, however, the findings suggested that the theme could be slightly altered to better fit the community college context. Although technology was primarily a support to the existing efforts of G2G College, it also played a driving role at times. I would propose that the Technology theme be altered to acknowledge the nuance that technology can also have catalytic value in how it drives innovation, new thinking, and requires the skill set of the employees to be improved. Table 48 provides a proposed altered definition of Collins' Technology Accelerator theme for the community college context.

Table 48

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ Technology Accelerator Theme for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definition in Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Use technology only to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort in achieving the organizational goals.	No adaptation for the social sector.	Use technology to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort as well as a catalyst for innovation in achieving the organizational goals.

The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

Collins (2001) found that the good-to-great companies did not transition from good to great based on single defining program or process. Instead they followed a continuous improvement approach where they developed programs and processes that accumulatively reinforced their core mission. Although, there was considerable effort at first, over time the momentum of the effort became easier to reinforce. In alignment with Collins, the findings suggested that G2G College’s transition from good to great was also a gradual shift over time. As described in the Culture of Discipline theme, G2G College used discrepancy analysis as a way to organize their efforts and focus on their end state of their mission, vision, and philosophy.

Collins (2001) also found that for the comparison companies, this gradual build-up of momentum did not occur and instead, they developed specific fad programs or initiatives looking for quick solutions. The companies created the programs without fully understanding how it supported their mission and were often disappointed with their results creating a doom loop effect. Although G2G College did not experience the doom loop, the findings suggested the CEO used the potential challenges associated with the doom loop as both a way to caution the organization of the pitfalls of not being diligent and a way to drive and motivate the employees to maintain momentum.

For the social sectors, Collins (2005a) posited that organizations needed to find something other than financial rewards as the output indicator of greatness and suggested that their brand or reputation may be the output that managers in the social sector should focus on. From this focus on brand reputation, Collins suggested momentum of organizational effectiveness could be built. At G2G College, they made it a priority to change their reputation over time by focusing on serving the educational needs of the community. They also saw the need to acquire financial resources on behalf of the organization to maintain growth. The improvement in reputation created a cyclical process for the college where they were able to acquire more resources, which in turn allowed them to better serve the community, which again helped them improve their reputation, and the process continued.

Collins (2001) also found that, from the perspective of the employees of the good-to-great companies, the transition from good to great felt unremarkable, natural, and organic. The findings revealed that this was largely the case for the participants at G2G College. However, one participant perceived the transition as a sudden shift. Although described as a 20 year process, the participant indicated the change in trajectory of the college from good to great was noticeable and sudden although the outcomes or external indicators (i.e., transfer rates, completion rates, financial resources) may have not provided evidence of a shift at that time.

Finally, Collins (2001) suggested that the good-to-great companies exerted very little effort trying to motivate or create alignment with the employees. Instead, they found that employee alignment was a natural outgrowth of the results generated by the companies' momentum. As presented earlier, this was not the case at G2G College. Again, considerable amount of effort was exerted motivating and soliciting alignment from the employees of the college.

Proposed alteration of Collins' Flywheel and Doom Loop theme

The findings suggested that Collins' (2001, 2005a) Flywheel and Doom Loop theme for the corporate sector and as adapted for the social sector applied to the G2G College better than the rest of the themes. However, there were two exceptions of note. The first was that momentum was measure by both reputation as Collins (2005a)

suggested for the social sector, but also by financial resources needed to create and maintain the success of the college. The second exception was the perceived need for G2G College leadership to continue to motivate their employees. I then propose that the combination of the definitions for Flywheel and Doom Loop theme as Collins’ defined for the corporate sector and social sector be altered to incorporate the nuance of momentum measures including financial resources and the need for occasional motivation of staff. Table 49 provides a proposed altered definition of Collins’ Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme for the community college context.

Table 49

Proposed Altered Definition of Collins’ Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Themes	Working Definition for Corporate Sector	Adaptation of Working Definition for Social Sector	Altered Definition for the Community College Context
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Focus on long term success by consistently employing the previous six themes yielding greater momentum over time.	Momentum is measured by reputation or brand of organization instead of financial outputs.	Support employees to consistently employ the previous six themes to create momentum over time. Measure momentum by reputation and acquisition of financial resources.

Summary

A summary and discussion of the findings in response to Research Questions #1 and #4 was presented in relation to the relevant literature. Although all of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) themes were described as having some degree of applicability to the G2G College context, none were found to be without the need for alteration to better fit the community college context. Guided by the findings, an alternative definition for each of Collins’ themes was proposed. Table 50 provides a summary of the altered working definitions of Collins’ themes for the community college context.

Table 50

Summary for Altered Working Definitions of Good-to-Great Themes for the Community College Context

Good-to-Great Themes	Altered Definitions for the Community College Context
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Leadership is accomplished by a professional will focused on the college’s success. Legislative leadership is utilized, but final decision rights are retained by the CEO.
Both Who...And What	
Theme 2 – First Who...Then What	Hire the best people who will fit the organizational culture and will bring the best thinking to forward the mission of the college and then reward performance.
Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith	
Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith	Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured when productively framed. Even when the truth is uncomfortable, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Develop a shared conceptual understanding of the college’s: (a) greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) indicators of success, and (c) sources of greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.
Culture of Disciplined Experimentation	
Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline	Create a culture of experimentation where self-disciplined employees adhere to consistent systems and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Use technology to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort as well as a catalyst for innovation in achieving the organizational goals.
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Support employees to consistently employ the previous six themes to create momentum over time. Measure momentum by reputation and acquisition of financial resources.

Research Question #2: What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?

This section presents a summary and discussion of the findings in response to Research Questions #2 in relation to the relevant literature. As the additional themes emerged from the interviews and were not present in Collins’ (2001, 2005a) work,

additional sources will be consulted to ground the emergent themes in the literature. This section will be organized by the three themes that emerged: (a) Context Matters, (b) Enduring Leadership, and (c) Creating the Reality We Need. Finally, a summary of the discussion in response to the second research question will be provided.

Context Matters

As described in the findings chapter, the context in which G2G College was situated contributed to the transition from good-to-great. The findings indicated that G2G College was in a unique environment where they experienced a community: (a) that served a growing population, (b) that was very supportive of education in general and supportive of G2G College specifically, and (c) where they had a relative physical advantage being the only accessible higher education option in the community.

In reviewing the literature, many authors have suggested that community college leaders utilize such techniques as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis to evaluate not only the internal conditions of the institution, but also to scan the external context in which their institutions are situated in an effort to understand and leverage the external opportunities and threats (Balamuralikrishna & Dugger, 1995; Gorski, 1991; Lorenzo, 1998). Lorenzo (1998) posited that community college leaders must be able to “more fully explore and interpret the impacts of their changing social and organizational context” (Lorenzo, 1998, p. 338) if they are to transform their organizations to be able to effectively respond to today’s rapidly changing environment. Lorenzo suggested that community college leaders can gain insight into navigating the turbulent environment by scanning the changes areas such as demographics, public policy, public opinion, and the changing work environment and then seeking areas of opportunity. “The future will require that institutions value relationships and interdependence more than independence. Colleges must come to view themselves as part of a much larger socioeconomic and geopolitical system, rather than as independent and semiautonomous entities” (Lorenzo, 1998, p. 339).

The findings of my study were in alignment with the related literature. The leaders of G2G College understood their external context and mitigated the threats and leveraged the opportunities to the advantage of the college. The population growth was

initially seen as a threat to the institution before they were able to acquire needed funding. Once funding was secured, the growth became an opportunity to exploit.

Enduring Leadership

The findings from this study indicated that the enduring and stable leadership of the CEO, other senior leaders, and Board of Trustees had been a contributing factor to G2G College's success. One of the benefits was that the relatively long tenure and lack of churn of the leadership at G2G College allowed the organization to have the long term and consistent perspectives needed to implement Collins' (2001, 2005a) Flywheel theme as opposed to short-term and episodic perspectives. This provided the opportunity for them to take the time to nurture initiatives and establish strong relationships needed to see the benefits of some of their efforts. Eckel, Hill, and Green (1998) posited that transformational change many times is evolutionary and "change that is sufficiently pervasive and deep to qualify as transformational change requires changing process, values, rewards, and structures throughout an institution; all of which takes time" (Eckel et al., 1998, p. 6).

In the review of the literature, there are many cases where stable and enduring leadership was mentioned as an important factor that enhanced the ability of schools and colleges to have sustained reform efforts (Constas & Sternberg, 2006; Melaville, 1998; Naylor, 2002; Rouk, 1999; Sullivan, 1995). For higher education institutions, the literature described the benefit of stable leadership in developing the trusting relationships needed for long term transformation (Boggs, 2006; Kezar & Eckel, 2000; Solis, 1995). Boggs (2006) posited that the relationships between CEO and the Board need to be nurtured in an effort to create common philosophies and objectives for the institution. As such, the community colleges "require capable and stable leadership" (Boggs, 2006, p. 41) if they are to be able to form these relationships. The findings echoed this sentiment suggesting that the relationships that had developed over time at G2G College allowed for a greater sense of mutual understanding and trust.

The literature also described the impact of enduring leadership on the employees of the community college. Solis (1995) posited that in his study of impact of change on all employee groups at the community college, faculty were most sensitive to the stability

of leadership and specifically the CEO of the institution. As a result, in times of instability the faculty were more pessimistic and risk averse than when they experienced stable leadership. The findings demonstrated that the employees of G2G College, including the faculty, were able to develop an ethos of innovation and can-do spirit. I would suggest that the ability to take risks could have been enhanced in part due to the enduring stability of the leadership.

Agreement was found between the findings of my study and the related literature. The methodical and steady leadership allowed for the focus and development of long term strategies and relationships to transform G2G College.

Creating the Reality We Need

The findings indicated that, as a contributor to the college's success, G2G College created a great deal of influence and control of their own destiny. When they encountered the inevitable challenges and barriers of leading a comprehensive community college, the participants felt their ability to choose their response and create the reality they wanted was unique. As evidence of G2G College's Creating the Reality We Need theme, the participants discussed: (a) the ability of the CEO to influence the state decision makers to change the formula for funding growth, (b) the ability of G2G College to attract diverse funding sources for the college which allowed them to try many things, and (c) their perception that their choice in attitude created a frame or paradigm for their successful efforts.

From the literature, Kotter (1996) posited that one of the most common errors organizations make in their quest to transform is that they permit obstacles to block their vision of what is possible.

New initiatives fail far too often when employees, even though they embrace a new vision, feel disempowered by huge obstacles in their paths. Occasionally, the roadblocks are only in the people's heads and the challenge is to convince them that no external barriers exist. (Kotter, 1996, p. 10)

Kotter also suggests that even when the barriers are real, it is important to be active in addressing the challenges directly if the organization hopes to transform themselves. "Whenever smart and well-intentioned people avoid confronting obstacles, they disempower employees and undermine change" (Kotter, 1996, p. 11).

Freire (1970) posited that the social world is a created and transformable reality which is constantly in process of being shaped by our thinking and efforts. He suggested that oppressed individuals should identify and challenge their self-imposed limitations including their “fear of freedom” (p. 21) and utilize critical thinking combined with action as a way to create new possibilities and transform their reality.

Likewise, in relation to the education context, McGregor (2003) described the critical science approach as one where people are encouraged to be conscious of the internally and externally imposed social realities that dominate them in an effort to become liberated. With the ability to recognize these dominant realities, the individual can move from a passive dependent role to an active independent role in an effort to improve their situation in life. “The core of this idea is that if societal structures and conditions can be altered, then human happiness and social autonomy can be attained” (McGregor, 2003, p. 2).

In the analysis of G2G College, there were multiple instances where the leadership of the institution reflected on and confronted the self-imposed and external powers that dominated them. They understood that the internal and external systems were constructed and believed that they could be altered given enough time, effort, and energy. They demonstrated a belief that focusing on the possibilities of their future provided more power than focusing on the limitation of their past or present. Whether it was in regard to changing the funding model at the state, diversifying the other funding sources for the college, or embracing a can-do ethos, it was clear that there was an intolerance of external or internal limitations to creating the reality they wanted and moving towards stated goals.

The emergent Creating the Reality We Need theme from my study was supported by the literature. The leadership of G2G College had the ability to identify and overcome real and perceived barriers and then create a perspective of possibilities which helped move the college forward.

Summary

In summary, it was revealed that in response to the second research question, G2G College had three themes that were not presented in Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Good-

to-Great theory. These included: (a) the Context Matters theme, (b) Enduring Leadership theme, and (c) the Creating the Reality We Need theme. The findings suggested that these additional themes may be needed to help a community college transition from good-to-great in terms of organizational effectiveness.

Research Question #3: What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great?

In this section, a brief summary and discussion of the findings are presented that address the third research question: What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? The rationale for this question was to gain an understanding of not only the presence of Collins' themes, but also the prioritized degree to which the participants felt they contributed to the transition of G2G College from good to great.

The findings suggested that the participants could not prioritize either Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes or the emergent themes developed for the college. The struggle appeared to be caused by two main issues. First, none of the participants had read nor were familiar with *Good-to-Great* (Collins, 2001) and therefore only had the brief working definitions I had provided to make a judgment. Second, even when the participants were asked about the relative importance of the emergent themes that they had produced, they still struggled with identifying the relative importance of the themes in helping G2G College transition from good to great. The participants could identify specific themes as important, but they struggled to prioritize them in any way.

The findings also revealed that based on the frequency of occurrences were the findings suggested Collins' (2001, 2005a) themes applied to the G2G College context, the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme was most important and the Hedgehog Concept was least important. Based on the frequency of participants mentioning element of Collins' themes in describing the factors that contributed to G2G College's success, the Level 5 Leadership was the most important. Although the frequency of themes or elements of the themes occurring in the data can reveal importance, it does not adequately allow for analysis of relative importance to other themes.

In reviewing Collins' (2001, 2005a) research, he also did not prioritize the importance of his themes in relation to each other. Instead he viewed the seven themes as demonstrating a "process of build up followed by breakthrough, broken into three stages: disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action" (Collins, 2001, p. 12). The interplay of all seven themes was described as important to the Good-to-Great theory.

Summary

In summary, a brief summary and discussion of the findings associated with the third research question were presented, specifically, What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great? The findings suggested, and the literature supported, that evaluating the relative importance of any of the themes was challenging. Instead there appeared to be an interplay of all of the themes contributing to the transitioning of G2G College.

Summary

This section summarized and discussed the major findings in relation to Collins' (2001, 2005a) research for the Research Questions #1, #3, and #4, and to the current literature for Research Question #2. The findings for Research Questions #1 and #4 revealed a continuum of applicability to Collins' themes with the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme having the greatest application to the community college context and the Hedgehog Concept having the least. An alteration of the Collins' themes was proposed guided by the findings of my study. The findings in relation to the three emergent themes presented in response to Research Question #2 were demonstrated to have agreement with the current literature. For Research Question #3, the challenge in determining relative importance to Collins and the emergent themes was revealed to be in alignment with Collins' research.

The primary new perspective offered by this study was possible alterations needed to apply Collins' (2001, 2005a) Good-to-Great theory to the comprehensive community college. Although all seven themes had some level of applicability to G2G College, they could also all be altered to better fit the community college context. In

addition, the study revealed the addition of three emergent themes that could added to Collins’ themes. This study also provided voice to the G2G College leaders in how they felt their institution transitioned from good to great. Table 51 provides a summary of the working definitions of the 10 altered Good-to-Great themes and emergent G2G College themes for the community college context.

Table 51

Summary for Working Definitions of Altered Good-to-Great Themes and Emergent Themes for the Community College Context

G2G College Themes	Definitions of Themes for the Community College Context
Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership	Leadership is accomplished by a professional will focused on the college’s success. Legislative leadership is utilized, but final decision rights are retained by the CEO. Compelling personal humility is not required.
Theme 2 – Both Who...And What	Hire the best people who will fit the organizational culture and will bring the best thinking to forward the mission of the college, then reward performance.
Theme 3 – Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith	Create an organizational culture where the truth about the reality of where the organization is or should go is courageously welcomed and nurtured when productively framed. Even when the truth is uncomfortable, maintain the belief that the people in the organization have the ability to overcome the adversity.
Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles	Develop a shared conceptual understanding of the college’s: (a) greatest opportunity for high performance, (b) indicators of success, and (c) sources of greatest intrinsic motivation as an organization.
Theme 5 – A Culture of Disciplined Experimentation	Create a culture of experimentation where self-disciplined employees adhere to consistent systems and have the freedom and responsibility to act within the framework of that system.
Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators	Use technology to reinforce and enhance the ability to leverage effort as well as a catalyst for innovation in achieving the organizational goals.
Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop	Support employees to consistently employ the previous six themes to create momentum over time. Measure momentum by reputation and acquisition of financial resources.
Theme 8 – Context Matters	Identify contextual opportunities and leverage them to the benefit of the community college.

G2G College Themes	Definitions of Themes for the Community College Context
Theme 9 – Enduring Leadership	Provide effective, consistent, and enduring leadership.
Theme 10 – Creating the Reality We Need	Create a culture of possibilities where internal and external limitations to progress are challenged and overcome by leveraging the creativity, relationships, and initiative of the organization.

Figure 7 represents a proposed alteration of Collins’ Good-to-Great theory that better fits the community college context.

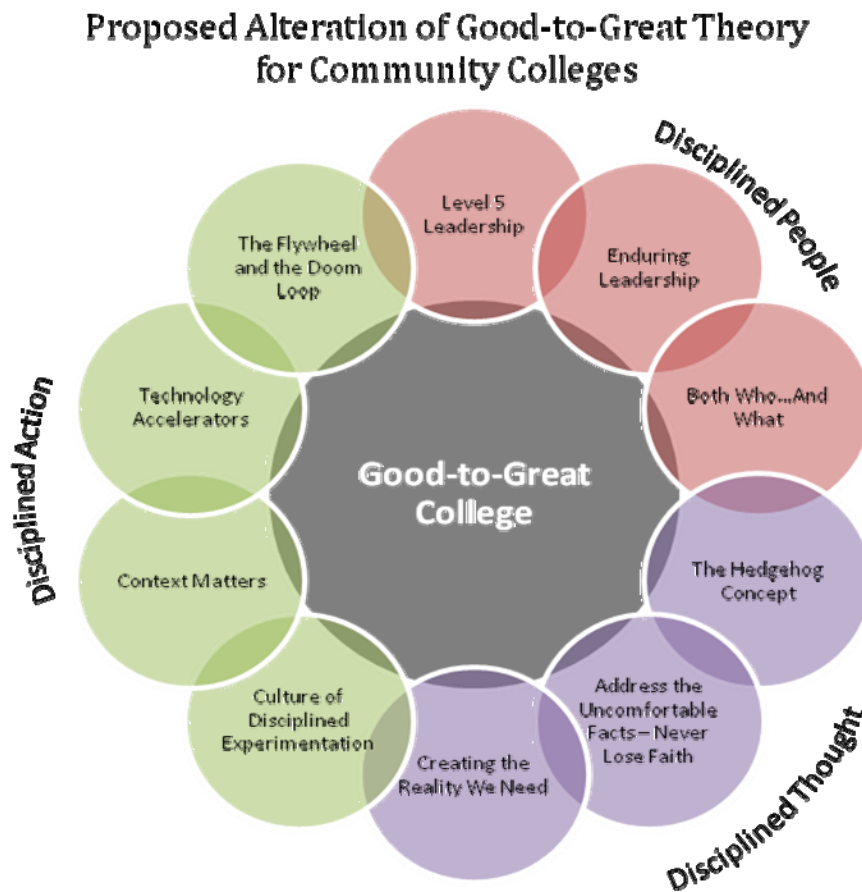


Figure 7. Proposed alteration of Collins’ Good-to-Great theory for community colleges.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The purpose of this study was to explore the applicability of Collins' (2001, 2005a) Good-to-Great theory to the community college context. The motivation for this study arose out of a curiosity about how comprehensive community college leaders can develop strategies to transition from good to great in terms of organizational effectiveness and whether Collins' business sector-based theory and associated themes had relevance in the community college setting. With increasing demand and accountability in the face of reducing resources, I was interested in gaining clues as to how community colleges leaders could lead their institutions to meet these challenges? What are strategies that work in transitioning a community college from good to great? The insights gained through the findings of a good-to-great college provided possible lessons for other community college leaders to consider when developing their own strategies for improving organizational effectiveness. The findings from this instrumental case study provided an understanding of the reflective thinking, policies, and practices employed by community college leaders at one college that contributed to their success.

Given the interpretive science methodology of this study, the reader is encouraged to determine for her/himself the implications and insight from this study to be gleaned for their context. However, from my perspective, there were several implications for policy and practice from the findings and discussion described in the study that can provide insight to community college leaders developing strategies for improved organizational effectiveness. The implications from my study may be useful for: (a) community leaders, (b) those responsible for selecting and supporting community college leaders, and (c) those who provide education and training for community college leaders. This section is organized by the implications for policy and practice for these three groups. Although I have provided implications for policy and practice based on the synthesis of the findings and discussion, as with any interpretive study, readers may come to different conclusions based on their analysis of the findings.

Community College Leaders

Across the eight interviews and supported by the other data, the response to the four research questions provided possible insight into the context and strategies that contributed to G2G College's transition from good to great. As suggested by the findings,

the interplay of all ten themes (seven themes from Collins (2001, 2005a) and three emergent themes) was important for G2G College to transition from good to great. In alignment with Collins' research, I have organized the implications around the three concepts of: (a) disciplined people, (b) disciplined thought, and (c) disciplined action.

Disciplined people

The participants in this study had very different roles and responsibilities from each other with regard to their relationships to G2G College. However, with an analysis across all of the interviews, they shared similar perspectives when identifying the characteristics of leadership provided by the CEO of the college. All of the good-to-great community college leaders recognized the impact that the G2G College CEO had on the transition of the institution. Their perspectives affirmed Collins' (2001) assertion that leaders must be fanatically driven and have a strong ambition for the success of the organization and not for themselves and that success was determined by results and accomplishment, not only by inputs and activity. The findings also implied that a legislative and collaborative leadership style is warranted in the community college context, but that leaders should not give away all decision rights for those things for which they are held accountable. In addition, the findings suggested that the ability to impact the culture, systems, and structures for lasting change required enduring and stable leadership over time. In alignment with the Level 5 Leadership, and Enduring Leadership themes, the implications from this study are that CEOs and other leaders of community colleges are more likely to be effective in transitioning their institutions if: (a) their motivation for the leadership roles are truly to improve the institution, (b) they solicit as much input as possible for the direction and decisions of the institution, (c) they take an active and visible role in the organizations' success, and (d) they are in their roles long enough to see substantive change through to implementation.

The findings also suggested that when hiring G2G College employees, there was a disciplined search for specific characteristics that transcended specific knowledge, skills, and abilities of the given positions. G2G College also sought specific individual values that would be in alignment with the articulated organizational values. These included abilities to contribute to a team environment, enhance relationships with stakeholders external to the college, and to continuously improve their respective

program. The findings also demonstrated that those employees who did not embody the G2G College cultural characteristics were ultimately not successful at G2G College and would often leave the organization. The stories from G2G College imply that, in alignment with the Both Who...Then What theme, during the hiring process, aligning personal values with the institutional values will provide additional support to the organization and will allow the employees to be and feel more appreciated and productive.

Disciplined thought

Another possible insight from this study is that there may be little value in ascribing emotionally charged adjectives such as good or bad, positive or negative to facts. Instead, in alignment with the Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith theme, there is an implication that leaders should recognize some facts may make people uncomfortable and thereby require sensitivity in communicating the facts. In alignment with Collins (2001), it was also clear that a full range of facts should be sought out so that there is a stronger understanding of the organizations' progress. Where needed, the facts should also be firmly and creatively addressed, so that the organization can be best positioned to maintain progress. The implication for community college leadership is that if they address uncomfortable facts and maintain the confidence to move forward and then succeed, they can continue to enhance their skill and confidence to address new challenges in the future, thereby helping move their institution from good to great.

The findings also described a common and reinforced ethos that G2G College had an entrepreneurial spirit and was a can-do college. This ethos became a passion that moved the employees to think of themselves as innovators and problem-solvers. In alignment with the Hedgehog theme, there is an implication for community college leaders that there is power in nurturing a culture where the employees understand their ability to be creative and accomplish goals.

Disciplined action

In addition to their entrepreneurial spirit and can-do ethos, all of the participants shared that G2G College had created a culture where there was a healthy intolerance for

internally or externally imposed structural barriers or limitations. The leaders were keenly aware that the structures, processes, and even laws impacting the institution were malleable and adaptable if not working to produce desired results. They also scanned their external context to better understand the associated opportunities and threats that may impact the college. Beyond this conceptual understanding was the associated action that allowed G2G College appropriately confront the systems that challenged their progress. They were able to convert challenges into opportunities and leverage their context to the institution's benefit. G2G College also created disciplined systems and cultural norms where employees were given the freedom and responsibility to experiment with new programs, processes, and initiatives that would be in alignment with their mission, vision, and philosophy. The insight generated from the respective Creating the Reality We Need, Context Matters, Technology Accelerators, and the Culture of Disciplined Experimentation themes implies that in addition to community college leaders needing to nurture a common ethos and beliefs, they should also develop strategies and expectations to act on these beliefs. With some effort, the leaders will then be able to adapt their situation to better serve their institutions and their constituencies.

It was clear from the findings that the transition from good to great for G2G College took a number of years to develop. In alignment with Collins (2001), G2G College did not engage in short term programs or initiatives to improve their college, instead they maintained a long term approach. They developed a clear and compelling vision of where they wanted to be and then used discrepancy analysis to develop the numerous possible pathways to achieve their vision. The institution was also disciplined in their tracking and reporting of results. Finally they utilized this information to: (a) communicate with and motivate the employees, (b) to inform their developing visions, and (c) to inform their practice that, again, was in alignment with the vision. Informed by the Flywheel and Doom Loop theme, the study findings imply the need for community college leaders to have a long term perspective and to understand that a disciplined and deliberate approach to a clear vision will likely be more successful than will be an episodic and varied approach without a clear direction.

Those Selecting and Supporting Community College Leaders

The findings may also be useful to those in the role of selecting and supporting community college leaders. Boards, senior executive leaders, and others in personnel decision-making roles have an important responsibility to hire employees who will contribute to improving their institutions in terms of organizational effectiveness. Understanding the qualities in candidates that can increase the likelihood of this intended outcome can serve the institution well. Once hired, it is also important to support the leaders in ways that provide for the greatest possible success. Although there are a number of possible implications throughout the findings that might be constructive, I have chosen to highlight three of the themes found at G2G College, specifically: (a) Level 5 Leadership, (b) Enduring Leadership, and (c) Both Who...And What.

Level 5 leadership

The findings demonstrated that the CEO had both a deep commitment to the institution and was a dynamic driving force for change. She was also able to strike a balance between legislative and executive leadership within the institution. Without this commitment and focus of the CEO, it may have been very challenging to implement many of the other themes. Boards of Trustees have tremendous ability and responsibility to seek out these characteristics of CEO candidates that can help transition the community colleges from good to great.

Enduring leadership

The participants all acknowledged that the CEO's length of time at the institution contributed to their organizational success. In fact, most of the senior executive leadership and board members had also been in leadership roles at G2G College for a long time. For those who support community college leaders, the implication is that transformation that includes shifting of structures, culture, relationships, and reputation is not something that happens quickly. Instead, the community college leaders need to be allowed time to implement strategies that can have the desired deep long term impacts on the institution.

Both who...and what

There was agreement across most of the participants that at times, what to do was known before the identification of the employees needed implement the initiatives and at other times, the identification of the employees came before the development of the initiatives. In all cases, the selection of G2G College employees focused on attracting talent that embodied the desired and articulated cultural norms to leverage the organization. The candidates were not selected merely for their knowledge, skills, and abilities, but also their character, motivation, and work ethic. An implication for those who select community college leaders was that when hiring new staff, it will likely be easier to hire people who are intrinsically aligned with the values of the institution and develop their skill sets, than to hire for their skill sets and attempt to convince them to adopt the organizational values.

Educators and Trainers of Community College Leaders

There are numerous academic and professional development programs, workshops, and sessions that focus on educating and training community college leaders to become more effective and efficient in their respective roles. The mission of these learning opportunities, presumably, is to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of leaders in an effort to enhance the individual and organizational capacity to meet the educational needs of their communities. The question is, are these efforts helping the current and future community college leaders become good at what they do, or are they helping them become great?

Based on the findings of this study, I offer some possible implications for educational and training opportunities designed for community college leadership. The primary insights are: (a) that good community colleges can become great, and (b) it requires an interplay of disciplined people, disciplined thought, disciplined action to transition the institution. Based on the findings and the ten associated themes, I have provided a list of possible characteristics and competencies that I feel would be important for those who train and educate community college leaders to address along with associated themes:

Characteristics and Competencies	Relevant G2G College Themes
Reinforcing a deep sense of character and commitment to the institutional mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Leadership theme • Both Who...And What theme • Enduring Leadership theme
Creating a clear and compelling vision, mission, and philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgehog Concept theme • Creating the Reality We Need theme
Creating systems for broad input and ideas, but not always decision rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Leadership theme • Culture of Disciplined Experimentation
Being intolerant of self-imposed or external limitations in both people and systems and instead focusing on action that nurtures creativity and possibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith theme • Creating the Reality We Need theme • Culture of Disciplined Experimentation theme
Maintaining a deliberate long term perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enduring Leadership theme • Flywheel and the Doom Loop theme
Being clear and planful about what success looks like (e.g., intended outcomes) and tracking it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of Disciplined Experimentation theme • Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith theme
Learning to leverage what you have, where you are (e.g. reputation, community support, demographics, systems, talent, relationships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context Matters theme • Technology Accelerators theme • Creating the Reality We Need theme • Address the Uncomfortable Facts – And Never Lose Faith theme

In summary, this section suggested the implications for policy and practice with focus on three groups of practitioners, specifically: (a) community college leaders, (b) those who select and support community college leaders, and (c) those who educate and train community college leaders.

Implications for Further Research

As I explored the applicability of Collins’ (2001, 2005a) Good-to-Great theory and emergent themes to G2G College, I was continuously interested in learning more

about the transitioning of G2G College, specifically, and of all community colleges, in general, from good to great. The study can serve as a foundation for future research on the applicability of Collins' Good-to-Great theory to the community college context. More broadly, it can also serve as a contribution to the literature to better understanding strategies for improving organizational effectiveness for community colleges. Along with the insights provided by this study, the methods, findings, and implications also illuminated opportunities for additional research. This section identifies four areas in which studies are recommended for further research including: (a) application of the altered and emergent themes at other good-to-great college, (b) sustainability of G2G College's success after the current CEO departs, (c) criteria for selection of the good-to-great college, and (d) replication of Collins' initial research methods.

Application of Altered and Emergent Themes at Other Good-To-Great College

From my study, Collins' (2001, 2005a) seven themes were found to have ranged from partial application to mostly applying to G2G College. All seven then were altered to better fit the community college context. In addition three additional themes emerged from the study. An implication from my perspective for future research would be to explore if, and how well, these 10 altered and new themes would apply at another community college that had transitioned from good to great.

Sustainability of G2G College's Success after the Current CEO Departs

In my study, the CEO and much of the leadership had been present before, during, and after the period studied of 1998 to 2007. This stability of leadership was even presented as a significant contributor to G2G College's success resulting in Enduring Leadership theme. In Collins' (2001) study, he had purposefully selected companies that had stock returns at or below the respective industry average for at least 15 years, made transitions, and then consistently had outperformed the market for at least 15 years. Collins indicated that he did this, in part, to transcend the impact of individual leaders. With the G2G College CEO being such a dynamic leader and driver of change, and if confidentially would not be breached, future research might consider looking at the same college once the current CEO has departed to see what impact that would have on the college's success and ability to implement any of the other themes.

For future research that investigates other colleges that have transitioned from good to great, an additional criterion for selection could be intentionally identifying a college that had a CEO in her/his leadership role for several years and had left the institution. The research could then explore the impact a long term effort had on the institution's ability to be great.

Criteria for Selection of Good-to-Great Community College

The modern comprehensive community colleges has many missions to serve the educational needs of their communities including development education, general and transfer education, technical training, continuing education, and training for business and industry. Although the literature demonstrated that the combination of completion and transfer rates, or academic success rates, was a legitimate indicator of a primary mission of the community college, as the sole indicator of overall organizational effectiveness, it had some significant limitations. Future research might utilize different definitions and indicators for organizational effectiveness that could include the other missions of a comprehensive community college and explore whether the findings from my study would be affirmed given new site selection criteria.

In addition, Collins' (2001) site selection criteria for the good-to-great companies included a 30 year window of average or below average performance and then a transition to above average performance. In addition to transcending specific leaders, this 30 year span of time allowed Collins to have greater credibility that his selected sites had truly transitioned from good to great and were not merely short term improvements. Even if the same indicators of academic success rates were utilized, with additional data being acquired by the national Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), future research will have more data to consider.

Replication of Collins' Methods

Collins (2001) utilized his criteria in *Good-to-Great* to look across the country to identify 11 companies that had transitioned from good to great. Collins also identified 11 companies in the same industries that had not made the transition from good to great and instead had stock returns that performed consistently at the industry average. In addition to being able to find themes common to all 11 good-to-great companies, Collins was also

to compare and contrast these companies to the paired sets of comparison companies. This comparison and contrast allowed for the exploration and development of themes across several cases to see what was common and unique for the good-to-great companies. My study explored the good-to-great contributors of one good-to-great community college in one state without the benefit of a comparison to a good-to-good community college. Future research might consider more closely replicating Collins study for the community college by expanding my effort to a national scale and identifying a number of good-to-great community colleges along with a paired comparison of good-to-good community colleges. This comparison and contrast could explore the degree to which Collins' themes were present, if any, and whether the altered themes and the three themes that emerged from my study were relevant in other institutions. The research could also explore what other themes might emerge from the good-to-great colleges that I did not present.

Based on findings in my study and the related literature, the implications for further research focused on exploring: (a) the application of the altered and emergent themes at other good-to-great colleges, (b) the sustainability of G2G College's success after the current CEO departs, (c) the criteria for selecting the good-to-great college, and (d) suggesting full replication of Collins' initial research methods. As this study hoped to make a contribution to the literature, my recommendation is to continue to investigate the applicability of Collins' work for the community college context.

Final Thoughts

This study was inspired by a desire to understand what community college leaders could do to improve the organizational effectiveness of their institutions. In our times of rapid change, increasing demand and accountability, and decreasing resources, the pressures to meet these expectations and become great can feel daunting for today's educational leaders. In seeking clues for organizational transformation, community college practitioners and other stakeholders may seek insight from the literature targeted to and generated from the business sector. Advocates of this approach may take the extreme perspective of simply adopting the principals and practices on their face value and without critical analysis. Critics may simply reject the principles and practices

outright because they were not developed with the context of the academe in mind. Current and future community college leaders may be wise to reject either extreme.

It is hoped that exploration of Collins' themes in relation to the experiences of G2G College as represented in this study will provide insight and illuminate pathways for others interested in transitioning their community colleges from good to great.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Code Labels from Good-to-Great

Coding Category 1-Organizing Arrangements: "Hard" items such as organization structure, policies and procedures, systems, rewards and incentives, ownership structure.

Coding Category 2-Social Factors: "Soft" items such as the company's cultural practices, people policies and practices, norms, rituals, mythology and stories, group dynamics, management style, and related items.

Coding Category 3-Business Strategy, Strategic Process: Primary elements of the company's strategy. Process of setting strategy. Includes significant mergers and acquisitions.

Coding Category 4-Markets, Competitors, and Environment: Significant aspects of the company's competitive and external environment-primary competitors, significant competitor activities, major market shifts, dramatic national or international events, government regulations, industry structural issues, dramatic technology changes, and related items. Includes data about the company's relationship to Wall Street.

Coding Category 5-Leadership: Leadership of the firm-key executives, CEOs, presidents, board members. Interesting data on leadership succession, leadership style, and so on.

Coding Category 6-Products and Services: Significant products and services in the company's history.

Coding Category 7-Physical Setting and Location: Significant aspects of the way the company handled physical space-plant and office layout, new facilities, etc. Includes any significant decisions regarding the geographic location of key parts of the company.

Coding Category 8-Use of Technology: How the company used technology: information technology, state-of-the-art processes and equipment, advanced job configurations, and related items.

Coding Category 9-Vision: Core Values, Purpose, and BHAGs: Were these variables present? If yes, how did they come into being? Did the organization have them at certain points in its history and not others? What role did they play? If it had strong values and purpose, did they remain intact or become diluted?

Coding Category 10A (for Direct Comparisons Only) –Change/Transition Activities during Transition Era of Corresponding Good-to-Great Company:

Major attempts to change the company, to stimulate a transition, during the ten years prior and ten years after the transition date in the corresponding good-to-great company.

Coding Category 10B (for Unsustained Comparisons Only)-Attempted Transition Era: For the ten years leading up to and then during the "attempted transition era," major change/transition initiatives and supporting activities undertaken by the company.

Coding Category 11 (for Unsustained Comparisons Only) – Post-transition Decline: For the ten years following the attempted transition era, major factors that seem to have contributed to the company not sustaining its transition.

Appendix B

Interview Questions from Good-to-Great

1. Could you briefly give an overview of your relationship to the company – years involved and primary responsibilities held?
2. What do you see as the top five factors that contributed to or caused upward shift in performance during the years [ten years before transition] to [ten years after transition]?
3. Now let's return to those five factors, and I'd like you to allocate a total of 100 points to those factors, according to their overall importance to the transition (total across all five factors equals 100 points).
4. Could you please elaborate on the [top two or three] factors? Can you give me specific examples that illustrate the factor?
5. Did the company make a conscious decision to initiate a major change of transition during this time frame?
 - a. [If a conscious decision:] To the best of your recollection, when did the company begin to make the key decision that led to the transition (what year, approximately)?
 - b. [If a conscious decision:] What sparked the decision to undertake a major transition?
6. What was the process by which the company made key decisions and developed key strategies during the transition era – not what decision the company made, but how did go about make them?
7. What was the role, if any, of outside consultants and advisors in make the key decisions?
8. On a scale of 1 to 10, what confidence did you have in the decision at the time they were made, before you know their outcome? (Ten means you had great confidence that they were very good decisions with high probability of success. One means you had little confidence in the decision; they seemed risky – a roll of the dice.)
 - a. [If had confidence of 6 or greater]: What gave you such confidence in the decisions?
9. How did the company get commitment and alignment with its decisions?
 - a. Can you cite a specific example of how this took place?
10. What did you try during the transition that didn't work?
11. How did the company manage the short-term pressures of Wall Street while making long term changes and investments for the future?
12. Many companies undertake change programs and initiatives, yet their efforts do not produce lasting results. One of the remarkable aspects of [good-to-great company's] transition is that it has endured – it was not just a short-term upswing.

We find this extraordinary. What makes [good-to-great company's] different? What were the primary factors in the endurance of the transition far beyond the first few years?

13. We will be comparing [good-to-great company's] to [comparison companies], which was in your industry at the time of your transition but – unlike [good-to-great company's] – did not show a significant and lasting shift in performance. What was different about [good-to-great company's] that enabled it to make this transition? Other companies could have done what you did, but didn't; What did you have that they didn't?
14. Can you think of one particularly powerful example or vignette from your experience or observation that, to you, exemplifies the essence of the shift from good to great at [good-to-great company]?
15. Who else would you strongly recommend that we interview?
 - Inside management during and after the transition.
 - External board members or other key outside people.
16. Are there any questions we didn't ask, but should have?

Appendix C

Interview Questions Asked G2G College Leaders

Moving From Good To Great: How One Community College Made The Transition

ON-SITE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore the themes that contributed to the transition of a community college from lower than average academic success rates to a sustained above average academic success rate when compared to peer institutions.

[site institution] has been identified as an institution that transitioned from lower than average graduation and transfer rates (a.k.a. academic success rates) to higher than average rates compared to other community colleges in the state. We believe that members (or former members) of [site institution] can make a valuable contribution to the research study.

You have been identified as part of [site institution]'s senior leadership, board member, or other identified individual who was affiliated with the institution prior to and during the transition from lower than average graduation and transfer rates to higher than average rates for the state. The time period we are looking at exploring is specifically 1998-2007. We also believe that you are an individual who can make a valuable contribution to our research study.

1. Have you signed the informed consent document?
2. Could you share your story prior to arriving at [site institution]?
 - a. Educational background
 - b. Previous positions/experiences
 - c. Years in field
3. Could you briefly give an overview of your relationship to [site institution] ?
 - a. How you came to join [site institution]
 - b. Years associated with college
 - c. Current Position/Title
 - d. Primary responsibilities held

Research Question #1 - Which of Collins' themes, if any, were present for a community college that has transitioned from "good" to "great" in terms of organizational effectiveness?

Research Question #2 - What other themes, if any, were important for a community college moving from good to great?

4. What do you see as the top factors that contributed to or caused upward shift in performance in graduation and transfer rates during the years 1998 to 2007 [transition point in 2000]?
5. Now let's return to those factors, and I'd like you to allocate a total of 100 points to those factors, according to their overall importance to the transition (total across all factors equals 100 points).
6. Please elaborate on the top two or three factors? Can you give me specific examples that illustrate the impact of the factor?
7. Did [site institution] make a conscious decision to initiate a major change of transition during this time frame?
 - a. [If a conscious decision:] To the best of your recollection, when did [site institution] begin to make the key decision that led to the transition (what year, approximately)?
 - b. [If a conscious decision:] What sparked the decision to undertake a major transition?
8. What was the process by which [site institution] made key decisions and developed key strategies during the transition era – not what decision the [site institution] made, but how did [site institution] go about making them?
9. What was the role, if any, of outside consultants and advisors in making the key decisions?
10. On a scale of 1 to 10, what confidence did you have in the decisions at the time they were made, before you knew their outcome? (Ten means you had great confidence that they were very good decisions with high probability of success. One means you had little confidence in the decision; they seemed risky – a roll of the dice.)
 - a. [If had confidence of 6 or greater]: What gave you such confidence in the decisions?
11. How did [site institution] get commitment and alignment with staff and the Board with its decisions, or did they?
 - a. Can you cite specific examples of how this took place?
12. What did you try during the transition that didn't work?
13. How did [site institution] manage the short-term influence from external stakeholders (i.e., government officials, business leaders) while making long term changes and investments for the future?
14. Many community colleges undertake change programs and initiatives, yet their efforts do not produce lasting results. One of the remarkable aspects of [site institution]'s transition is that it has endured – it was not just a short-term upswing. What makes [site institution] different? What were the primary factors in the endurance of the transition far beyond the first few years?

15. There are many community colleges within the state of [Name of State] that did not show the same significant and lasting shift in performance. What was different about [study institution] that enabled it to make this transition? Other community colleges could have done what you did, but didn't; what did you have that they didn't?
16. Can you think of one particularly powerful example or vignette from your experience or observation that, to you, exemplifies the essence of the shift from good to great for [site institution]?

Research Question #3 - What was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes, for a community college moving from good to great?

1. Are you familiar with *Good-to-Great* by Jim Collins? If yes, did it have any influence on your thinking?

Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership

Theme 2 – First Who...Then What

Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith

Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles

Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline

Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators

Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

a. Level 5 Leaders

- Where did leaders come from? Were they home-grown or brought in from other places? If so, from where?
- How would you describe the *professional* characteristics of the executive leadership?
- How would you describe the *personal* characteristics of the executive leadership?

b. First Who then What

- Were the “right” people selected before deciding what to do or where to go?
- What was looked for when looking for/selecting the right people?
- Were the best people given the most challenging opportunities or the most rewarding opportunities?
- Regarding decisions, were different perspectives welcomed/encouraged?

- If so, how? [i.e., internal groups, external groups, “Council” concept, etc.]
 - What role did motivating the campus community (faculty, staff, students, board, etc.) have in the efforts?
 - If done, how was it accomplished? How did you keep from demotivating folks?
 - Did you have to lay people off during these years? If so, how was it done? What did you look for?
- c. Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)
- Did you experience adversity during the 1998-2007 years?
 - What were some major challenges?
 - How was it/where they handled?
 - Did you know you would make it through?
 - How did you determine success? How were results of efforts known/tracked?
- d. Hedgehog Concept
- Was there something that G2G College was clearly passion about as an organization?
 - What was your most important indicator of success as an organization?
 - Was there something G2G College felt they could do better than any other place?
- e. Culture of Discipline (in thought and action)
- What was the role of self discipline and bureaucracy? What was the balance of freedom and control?
 - How did you prioritize focus? What did you chose not to do, if anything?
 - What did/do you see as the mission(s) of G2G College?
 - How were budget decisions made? (who, what, how, why)
- f. Technology Accelerators
- What role, if any, did technology play in G2G College’s success?
 - Was technology a catalyst/creator or a support?
 - How were the technology needs determined?
- g. Flywheel and the Doom Loop
- Was the change gradual or quick?
 - If gradual, was there a sense of momentum generation?
 - Where you aware that you were in a period of change or you had made a transition?
2. [Show the participant a list of Collins’ themes] If you look at the seven themes found in Collins’ work, are there any themes that apply to [site institution]’ transition?

Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership

Theme 2 – First Who...Then What

Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith

Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles

Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline

Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators

Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

3. Are there any themes that specifically do not apply?
4. If applicable, what was the relative importance of Collins' themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes?

Research Question #4 - How should Collins' themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?

1. How would you alter Collins' themes to better fit the community college context? [Go through each theme.]

Theme 2 – First Who...Then What

Theme 3 – Confront the Brutal Facts – Yet Never Lose Faith

Theme 4 – The Hedgehog Concept – Simplicity within the Three Circles

Theme 5 – A Culture of Discipline

Theme 6 – Technology Accelerators

Theme 7 – The Flywheel and the Doom Loop

Theme 1 – Level 5 Leadership

2. What themes would you add based on the experience of [site institution]

Additional Information

1. What do you see as the core mission(s) of G2G College?
2. Who else would you strongly recommend that we interview?
 - Inside management during and after the transition.
 - External board members or other key outside people.
3. Are there any questions we didn't ask, but should have?

4. Can I contact you with additional questions? If so, what would be your preferred way of receiving the request?

Next Steps

1. Transcribe the tapes
2. Review the selections for themes and quotes
3. Send quotes and summaries back for confirmation of intent

Appendix D

Interview Protocol Form

Interviewer:	Institution:	Date:	Time:
Participant:	Role:	Years of Experience:	Date of Write-up:
Gender:	Ethnicity:	Age:	Thank you card:
Theta: [site institution] Transitioning from lower than average graduation and transfer rates (a.k.a. academic success rates) to higher than average rates compared to other community colleges in the state		Iota #2 - What themes were important for a community college moving from good to great? 1. 2. 3. Iota #1 - Which of G2G themes, if any, were present? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L5L • FWTW • CTBF • HHC • COD • TA • FATDL Iota #3 - What was the relative importance of the G2G themes, among themselves and in relation to other important themes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L5L • FWTW • CTBF • HHC • COD • TA • FATDL Iota #4 - How should the G2G themes be altered to better describe their relevance in a community college moving from good to great?	
Weather:	Space:	Senses: ST: SM: SD: P:	

