

From Student Access to Student Success:  
Exploring Presidential Views of the Evolving Community College Mission

by

Christopher Aaron Baldwin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Education)  
in the University of Michigan  
2013

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Michael N. Bastedo, Chair  
Associate Professor Emeritus Richard L. Alfred  
Assistant Professor Peter Riley Bahr  
Assistant Professor Vilma M. Mesa

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As with any large undertaking, there are many people who have contributed to the completion of this dissertation and the Higher Education doctoral program at the University of Michigan. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family for their constant love, inspiration, and support as I worked through the various stages of the program. To my loving wife, Rachael, you and I started on this journey eight years ago not really knowing what to expect or how long it would take to finish. Thank you for your endless patience and encouragement. I know this has not been easy and I love you for being such an amazingly supportive partner. To my three children—Erin, Hannah, and Benjamin—I love you dearly. Thank you for sharing your dad all these years with the seemingly limitless piles of books and papers. I’m quite sure you would each be hard pressed to remember a time when I was not in “school” or having to spend some part of a weekend working.

Second, I would like to thank my dissertation committee members and all the faculty of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. With your expertise and direction, I have gained an enormous amount of knowledge and understanding about our field. I finish this program with a much deeper appreciation for the role of education in all of our lives and a sincere desire to ensure that all citizens have access to the transformative effect it can have. I want to specifically single out Dr. Michael Bastedo. Mike has been my advisor and mentor since I began in the program and

I have tremendous respect for him as a scholar. Throughout my doctoral work, he has had an innate ability to know when to give me a push or to let me explore on my timeframe as appropriate. Thank you for your guidance and support.

Having worked full-time through most of the program, I would also like to thank my colleagues at Owens Community College, Jobs for the Future, and the Michigan Community College Association. In each instance I have had the pleasure to work with thoughtful, dedicated individuals who have challenged my thinking about the field of higher education. Through these experiences I have been able to apply the theoretical knowledge I gained at the University of Michigan and my colleagues have indulged my exploration along the way.

Finally, I would like to thank the Ohio community college presidents and other individuals interviewed for this study. Without them this dissertation would not have been possible. I thank them for taking time from their busy schedules to talk with me and for sharing their honest opinions about the challenges and opportunities they face. The role of a college president can be a difficult and unappreciated post and I have been inspired by the professionalism and dedication these individuals bring to their work.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Introduction of the Conceptual Approach .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Context for the Emerging Completion Agenda.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Research Questions.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Plan for the Dissertation.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<b>CHAPTER 2 – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>21</b>
INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS .....	22
<i>Connection to Institutional Theory .....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Defining Institutional Logics .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Changing Institutional Logics.....</i>	<i>34</i>
COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION HISTORICALLY DEFINED BY AN ACCESS LOGIC .....	46
<i>Brief Overview of the Development of Community Colleges.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Contemporary Views on the Community College Access Mission .....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>A Unified Framework for the Comprehensive Mission .....</i>	<i>56</i>
THE EMERGING COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUCCESS LOGIC IN CONTEXT.....	59
<i>Defining Success in the Context of Student Intent and Preparation.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Education Attainment of Students Attending Community Colleges.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Institutional Characteristics and Practices That Contribute To Student Success....</i>	<i>67</i>
OVERARCHING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	72
<b>CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<i>Research Paradigm/Philosophical Orientation.....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Interviews and Data Collection .....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Study Population.....</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Ohio Community Colleges: Presidential Background and Institutional Context.....</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Ohio Community Colleges: Policy and Philanthropic Context .....</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Data Analysis .....</i>	<i>98</i>
<b>CHAPTER 4 – SHIFTS IN SOCIETAL LOGICS .....</b>	<b>104</b>

ANTECEDENTS TO CHANGE IN FIELD-LEVEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE LOGICS .....	106
<i>Global Competition Is Changing the Role of Education</i> .....	106
<i>Increased Accountability Pushing for A Return on Public Investments</i> .....	119
AGENTS FOR CHANGE .....	130
<i>Influence of Foundations on the Completion Agenda</i> .....	131
<i>Appropriate Role of Policymakers</i> .....	136
<b>CHAPTER 5 – IMPLICATIONS OF COMPETING FIELD LOGICS .....</b>	<b>143</b>
THE DILEMMAS OF COLLEGE FOR ALL UNDER A COMPLETION AGENDA .....	146
<i>Student Intent and Preparation as Obstacles to Success</i> .....	151
<i>Challenges of Comprehensiveness, Resources, and Quality</i> .....	162
<b>CHAPTER 6 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONAL LOGICS.....</b>	<b>183</b>
PRESIDENTS’ POSITIONING OF STUDENT SUCCESS .....	185
MOBILIZING ALLIES FOR DIVERGENT CHANGE.....	190
<i>Creating a Culture of Evidence and Learning in the Organization</i> .....	191
<i>Improving Crucial Practices and Procedures</i> .....	198
<i>Strengthening External Collaborations</i> .....	204
<b>CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>212</b>
REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	218
STUDY IMPLICATIONS .....	225
<i>Implications for Policy and Practice</i> .....	225
<i>Implications for Theory</i> .....	236
<i>Limitations and Future Research</i> .....	239
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>247</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		
2.1	Model of the Process of Institutional Entrepreneurship	42
2.2	Nested Model of Community College Institutional Logics	75
6.1	Model of the Process of Institutional Entrepreneurship	184

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1.1	Labor Market Demand, Educational Attainment and Graduation Rates	7
1.2	Major U.S. College Completion Initiatives	11
2.1	Inter-institutional System Ideal Types	31
2.2	Institutional Practices Contributing to Student Success	71
2.3	Competing Institutional Logics in the Community College Field	74
3.1	Professional Profile of Ohio Community College Presidents	85
3.2	Ohio Community College Student Characteristics	88
3.3	Ohio Community College Institutional Characteristics	89
3.4	Student Success and College Completion Initiatives in Ohio	97
3.5	Crosswalk of Emergent Interview Themes to the Conceptual Framework	101
4.1	Competition between the State and the Market Societal-Level Logics	105
5.1	Competing Institutional Logics in the Community College Field	144
7.1	Summary of Key Findings	215

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### Appendix

A	Informed Consent Form	244
B	Interview Protocol	246



## ABSTRACT

Community colleges are recognized as flexible, efficient institutions. A core trait of these colleges is accessibility. However, a growing emphasis on student outcomes accompanied by increasingly prescriptive accountability is pushing colleges to make choices that may limit access. This study examines community college presidents' views on student access and success and how their beliefs are shaping the direction of their institutions. The underlying idea motivating this inquiry is that college leaders, due to shifting expectations toward increased completion, are being forced to make decisions that challenge fundamental aspects of the college mission.

This qualitative study borrows from neo-institutional theory employing the concepts of competing institutional logics—namely student access and student success—and institutional entrepreneurship to explore shifting organizational expectations. The study involves interviews with nineteen of the twenty-three community college presidents in Ohio. Ohio is one of a handful of states that has garnered significant national attention for reform efforts in the two-year sector in recent years.

Findings suggest presidents are deeply committed to aspects of the college mission indicative of the access logic—open door admissions, comprehensive offerings, and affordability. However, they cite several dilemmas to sustained accessibility and increased student success including growing percentages of underprepared students and continued demands for a broad array of quality offerings in an environment of

constrained resources. Exploring the implications of the completion agenda the presidents embrace efforts to improve student outcomes, but also contest the classification of student success narrowly defined as credential attainment. Many presidents have taken an aggressive position in navigating the institutional shift from student access to success. Nearly all presidents indicate the need for more emphasis on partnerships with other education sectors.

This study makes an important contribution to research in higher education. There is considerable literature that highlights the questionable outcomes of students attending community colleges; yet, these institutions continue to garner significant attention as affordable alternatives to promoting increased educational attainment. Scrutiny of student progression and success will lead to questions about the sustainability of the long-held belief that community colleges should provide open access for students regardless of their backgrounds and academic preparation.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Community colleges are widely recognized as the most flexible and efficient sector of postsecondary education. Historically, the defining traits of these two-year institutions have been accessibility with low tuition, open admissions, diverse programming with convenient scheduling, and relatively small class sizes (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty, 2001). Today, there is a growing emphasis on student success—the completion of a certificate or degree and/or transfer to a four-year university—that is accompanied by increasingly prescriptive accountability policies, such as performance metrics and funding. As a result, community colleges are being pushed to make strategic choices that may limit access.

This qualitative study involves in-depth interviews with nineteen community college presidents in Ohio that are supplemented by interviews with two key state policy actors and two leaders from national organizations promoting the college completion agenda. Understanding the perspectives of presidents on issues of institutional mission and effectiveness is critical due to their leadership role in shaping the direction of their own colleges and their proximity to external pressures emerging from shifting expectations from policymakers, philanthropic organizations, and others.

This inquiry focuses on colleges in a single state to control for inconsistencies resulting from different state policy and demographic contexts. Ohio is a fitting state to

conduct this study for two important reasons. First, improved student outcomes and increased educational attainment have become a priority for Ohio's political leadership. This focus has resulted in new policies such as a revised performance funding formula intended to encourage colleges to adopt practices that will increase student completion. Second, community colleges in Ohio have garnered considerable interest from national philanthropic organizations as one of a handful of states to be involved in multiple student success initiatives such as Achieving the Dream, Complete College America, and others, which are also exerting significant pressure for reform (Hall & Thomas, 2012).

This study examines institutional leaders' views of the community college mission and institutional effectiveness, how these beliefs are effected by the shifting expectations in the policy environment, and the extent to which presidents are positioned to serve as change agents in an evolving organizational context. A core contention in this inquiry is that with an unyielding fiscal environment of diminished resources and increased pressure for results (i.e. improved student outcomes), college leaders will be forced to make decisions to protect their institution's legitimacy that will challenge fundamental aspects of the community college mission.

### *Introduction of the Conceptual Approach*

Over the past several decades, community colleges have become an affordable access point for people entering postsecondary education in the United States. Given the rising cost of higher education in general, this trend is likely to continue. However, in recent years, there have also been extensive calls—by policymakers, business leaders, and major foundations—for increased education attainment that have resulted in a greater

focus on the outcomes of students at colleges and universities. Community colleges in particular have been the subject of increasing scrutiny about how their students ultimately fare. The focus on student progression and completion is challenging fundamental assumptions about how these colleges operate, what their core mission and functions are, and how they will meet the growing demand for improved outcomes.

To better understand how the shifts in external expectations are impacting community colleges, this study will employ aspects of neo-institutional theory—namely institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship—as the conceptual framework guiding the inquiry. These concepts will be explored in detail in the next chapter, but it is useful to briefly define some terms at this point.

Friedland and Alford (1991) were the first scholars to identify institutional logics in their examination of central values guiding Western society. They suggested that Western institutions have “a central logic—a set of material practices and symbolic constructions—which constitutes its organizing principles and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate” (1991, p. 248). According to Friedland and Alford, Western society operates based on a series of institutions including capitalism, the bureaucratic state, democracy, family, and religion. Each of these institutions has a logic that is “symbolically grounded, organizationally structured, politically defended, and technically and materially constrained” (p. 249). In their work, Thornton and Ocasio (1999) applied the concept of institutional logics to organizational fields stating they are:

Both material and symbolic—they provide the formal and informal rules of action, interaction, and interpretation that guide and constrain decision-makers in accomplishing the organization’s tasks and in obtaining social status, credit, penalties, and rewards in the process. These rules constitute a set of assumptions and values about how to interpret organizational reality, what constitutes appropriate behavior, and how to succeed (p. 804).

In the context of this study, institutional logics will be used to understand how community colleges are adjusting to a different set of rules and practices that guide organizational and individual action to support student success and completion, in contrast to the historical emphasis on access. It is important to note that institutional logics operate on several levels with implications for broad society, institutional fields, organizations, and even individuals. This inquiry will also examine conflicting logics at the societal-level that have contributed to a clash of beliefs and practices within the field of community colleges.

Ultimately, this study examines organizational responses to the conflicting logics of student access and success in community colleges. The concept of institutional entrepreneurship is coupled with logics to explore the role that community college presidents play as possible change agents in navigating the shifting expectations. Institutional entrepreneurship is a notion first articulated by DiMaggio (1988) to answer critiques that institutional theory did not adequately address the issue of agency in the context of institutional change. Defined as “activities of actors who have interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004, p. 257), institutional entrepreneurship is a concept that provides a theory of action for individuals or groups within an organizational field.

Taken together, institutional logics and entrepreneurship form the theoretical foundation for this study that will illuminate how community colleges in Ohio, and the presidents that lead them, are dealing with an evolving environment that is challenging central aspects of the colleges’ mission and purpose. The conceptual framework for this

inquiry will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. Before delineating the research questions and the plan for the dissertation, the next section will set the context for why the completion agenda is emerging at this point and how it has manifested among policymakers, prominent education foundations, and postsecondary leaders.

### *Context for the Emerging Completion Agenda*

It is difficult to question that community colleges have fulfilled their traditional access mission. These colleges serve as an important entry point for millions of students who otherwise may not enroll in postsecondary education. When measured by increased enrollment over the past several decades, the effectiveness of community colleges is nothing short of extraordinary. Between 1963 and 2006, public two-year college enrollments increased by 667 percent from approximately 740,000 students in 1963 to more than 6.2 million students in 2006 (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). However, when the lens of effectiveness shifts to student outcomes—namely the completion of a credential—community colleges have considerable room for improvement. Only 22.5 percent of students attending public two-year colleges nationally graduated within three years (Knapp, Kelley-Reid, & Ginder, 2012).

Before delving into the specific manifestations of the completion agenda, it is important to first understand the factors that have contributed to its emergence. The underlying dynamic is a changing domestic economy and increased global competition. Economic realities have led to a near consensus that at least some education beyond high school is required for individuals to find family-sustaining employment and realize a reasonable quality of life. A recent analysis by researchers at Georgetown University

buttresses this point by indicating that more than 60 percent of all jobs by 2018 will require some postsecondary education and many will require at least an associate's degree (Carnevale, Smith, & Stohl, 2010). When these projections are compared to current levels of education attainment, the impetus behind the completion agenda becomes clear.

Table 1.1 below provides a snapshot of key data points across the fifty states that show current and future trends and set the stage for this study. Carnevale and his colleagues conducted a study of labor market demand in relation to educational attainment (Carnevale et al., 2010). They found, as the data in the first column of the table indicates, a range of the proportion of jobs that will require at least some postsecondary education from 49 percent of the positions in West Virginia to 70 percent in Minnesota and North Dakota.

Based on U.S. Census data (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2012), the second column in Table 1.1 is somewhat encouraging because it shows most states have a percentage of adults 25 to 64 years old with some college that meets or exceeds the demand Carnevale, et al (2010) forecast will be required by 2018. However, moving across the table the story is less optimistic. The third column indicates that 22 percent of adults 25 to 64 years nationally have some college but no degree. On



Table 1.1: Labor Market Demand, Educational Attainment and Graduation Rates

	(1) % Jobs by 2018 Requiring Postsecondary Education	Percent of Population with				2008-09 Graduation Rates	
		(2) Some College or Higher	(3) Some College No Degree	(4) Associates or Higher	(5) Associates Degree	(6) 2-Year Public Colleges	(7) 4-Year Public Colleges
Alabama	55%	55%	23%	31%	8%	21%	47%
Alaska	63%	67%	30%	37%	9%	13%	27%
Arizona	61%	62%	27%	35%	9%	15%	56%
Arkansas	52%	52%	24%	28%	7%	21%	39%
California	61%	61%	23%	39%	8%	27%	65%
Colorado	67%	69%	23%	46%	8%	23%	53%
Connecticut	65%	65%	19%	46%	8%	10%	60%
Delaware	59%	59%	21%	37%	8%	11%	64%
Florida	59%	58%	22%	36%	10%	40%	50%
Georgia	58%	58%	22%	36%	7%	24%	46%
Hawaii	65%	66%	24%	42%	11%	14%	42%
Idaho	61%	62%	27%	35%	9%	21%	37%
Illinois	64%	63%	22%	41%	8%	20%	60%
Indiana	55%	55%	22%	33%	9%	8%	52%
Iowa	62%	63%	23%	40%	12%	32%	68%
Kansas	64%	65%	25%	40%	8%	32%	55%
Kentucky	54%	51%	21%	30%	8%	25%	45%
Louisiana	51%	50%	22%	28%	6%	15%	38%
Maine	59%	60%	21%	39%	10%	25%	47%
Maryland	66%	65%	21%	45%	7%	13%	63%
Massachusetts	68%	67%	17%	51%	8%	17%	55%
Michigan	62%	62%	26%	36%	9%	15%	59%
Minnesota	70%	69%	24%	46%	11%	27%	56%
Mississippi	54%	54%	24%	30%	10%	25%	53%
Missouri	59%	59%	24%	36%	8%	22%	54%
Montana	62%	66%	26%	40%	9%	25%	44%
Nebraska	66%	67%	25%	42%	10%	28%	56%
Nevada	54%	56%	27%	29%	7%	13%	37%
New Hampshire	64%	65%	19%	46%	11%	25%	65%
New Jersey	64%	63%	18%	45%	7%	16%	66%
New Mexico	58%	59%	26%	33%	8%	13%	40%
New York	63%	61%	17%	44%	9%	20%	51%
North Carolina	59%	61%	23%	38%	10%	20%	59%
North Dakota	70%	70%	25%	45%	14%	39%	47%
Ohio	57%	57%	22%	36%	9%	17%	51%
Oklahoma	57%	57%	25%	32%	8%	29%	42%
Oregon	64%	66%	28%	39%	9%	14%	53%
Pennsylvania	57%	56%	18%	39%	9%	15%	61%
Rhode Island	61%	61%	20%	41%	8%	9%	56%
South Carolina	56%	57%	22%	35%	9%	11%	60%
South Dakota	62%	63%	22%	41%	12%	61%	44%
Tennessee	54%	54%	22%	32%	7%	32%	47%
Texas	56%	57%	23%	34%	7%	12%	46%
Utah	66%	68%	28%	40%	10%	34%	41%
Vermont	62%	63%	19%	44%	9%	12%	61%
Virginia	64%	65%	21%	44%	7%	18%	68%
Washington	67%	68%	26%	43%	10%	25%	65%
West Virginia	49%	46%	20%	26%	7%	19%	45%
Wisconsin	61%	61%	22%	39%	11%	34%	57%
Wyoming	62%	66%	28%	37%	12%	30%	55%

Note. Sources for Columns: 1 – (Carnevale et al., 2010), 2-5 – National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2012), and 6 & 7 – The Institute for College Access and Success (2012).

the surface this seems a promising indication of individuals who are engaging in postsecondary education. However, the literature suggests that individuals only realize the benefits of higher education if they attain a credential not just attend college (Adelman, 2006; Belfield & Bailey, 2011; Carnevale, 2007; Carnevale et al., 2010; Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006; Marcotte, Bailey, Borkoski, & Kienzl, 2005; Romano, 2011).

The next two columns in Table 1.1 continue to substantiate the case for a greater focus on degree completion. Column 4 highlights the percentage of adults (25-64 years old) with any postsecondary degrees, and the second (column 5) is those with just an associate's degree. While there is continuing debate about the labor market value of postsecondary certificates below the associate-level, the fourth column includes only adults with an associate's degree *or higher* with a range from 26% in West Virginia to 51% in Massachusetts. What is important to note is that, even when baccalaureate and graduate degrees are included (column 4), these rates are well below the attainment levels Carnevale and his colleagues advocate will be needed by 2018 (2010). The fifth column begins to depict why community colleges have been receiving such intense focus from policymakers and foundations. These data highlight that associates degrees constitute only 8% of the degrees adults 25 to 64 years olds current hold nationally. This is a stark number when you consider that nearly half of all undergraduates now enroll in community colleges (Provasnik & Planty, 2008).

To draw out the distinction between two- and four-year public institutions further, the final two columns in Table 1.1 (columns 6 and 7) provide a snapshot of community college and university graduation rates in the 50 states from the 2008-09 academic year (The Institute for College Access & Success, 2012). These data, which originally came

from the U.S. Department of Education, reflect the percentage of first-time, full-time students who graduate within 150 percent of normal time. For community colleges, 150 percent of normal time is three years. This compares to six years for four-year institutions. In all but three states, graduation rates in two-year colleges are under 35 percent. An even more glaring fact is that 37 states have community colleges graduation rates that are 25 percent or less. A handful of states have graduation rates at four-year colleges fewer than 40 percent, but the majority of states are above 50 percent. While only a snapshot in time, these percentages are indicative of graduation rates in the past for both sectors. The low graduation rates have directly resulted in increased calls for improvement across all higher education institutions. While there are some legitimate reasons why community college rates are low, the focus on the two-year sector has been particularly intense for obvious reasons.

With this state comparative data as a backdrop, it is useful to briefly explore the evolution of the “completion agenda” over the last 8 to 10 years. It is difficult to isolate a single event that led to the increased focus on educational attainment, but unquestionably the publication of a national best seller—*The World is Flat* (Friedman, 2005)—followed closely by the release of a U.S. Department of Education Commission report—*A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* (U.S. Department of Education, 2006)—crystalized opinion leaders’ views of the waning position of the United States in terms of global economic competitiveness and educational achievement. While neither publication focused solely on increasing degree attainment, both pointed to an alarming stagnation in U.S. educational attainment compared to emerging economies such as China and India and the implications of this trend for the country’s economic

competitiveness. Other lesser-known reports from organizations such as the National Academies of Science (2005) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) confirmed what the mainstream prognosticators were saying—if the United States does not increase the educational attainment of its citizens, the country will fall behind economically and Americans’ standard of living will decline.

In the years immediately following these reports, state policymakers, national higher education associations, and other advocacy groups began to adopt a more aggressive stance toward college completion by pressing goals to increase educational attainment (Collins, 2006; Dougherty & Reid, 2007). However, it has been the role of several major foundations and the validation of the “completion agenda” from the Obama Administration that have served as the key catalysts for considerable action at all levels. Table 1.2 below summarizes several of the major national initiatives that have emerged in the past decade to promote increased college completion. It is important to note that all but two of these initiatives were launched with funding from major national foundations. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education have been the primary funders of most of these initiatives, but they have also partnered with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation in several instances (Russell, 2011).

The efforts of the key foundations were reinforced when President Barack Obama was sworn in 2009 and strongly embraced the college completion agenda early on in his administration. President Obama set two goals for education attainment: “by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world,

Table 1.2: Major U.S. College Completion Initiatives

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Year Launched
Achieving the Dream	To help more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree	2004
Access to Success	To cut the college-going and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by 2015.	2007
College Completion Agenda	To increase the proportion of 25-to34-year-olds who hold an associate degree or higher to 55 percent by the year 2025 in order to make American a leader in education attainment in the world.	2008
College Completion Initiative	To increase significantly the numbers of students who complete career certificates and associate's and bachelor's degrees, so that 60 percent of each state's adults ages 25 to 64 will have one of these credentials by 2025.	2008
Adult College Completion Network	To unite organizations and agencies working to increase college completion by adults with prior credits but no degree in a collaborative learning network.	2010
College Completion Challenge	To promote the development and implementation of policies, practices, and institutional cultures that will produce 50 percent more students with high quality degrees and certificates by 2020, while increasing access and quality.	2010
Complete College America	To significantly increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential of value and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations	2010
Complete to Compete	Goals: 1) Raise national awareness about the need to increase college completion and productivity, 2) Create a set of common higher education completion and productivity measures, 3) Develop a series of best practices and a list of policy actions to increase college completion, 4) Provide grants to states to design policies and programs that increase college completion, and 5) Hold a learning institute for key advisors on successful strategies to graduate more students.	2010
Ensuring America's Future by Increasing Latino College Completion	To inform, engage, and sustain efforts to promote the role of Latinos in making the U.S. the work leader in college degree completion.	2010
ACE Commission on Education Attainment	To assess the needed for improved college retention and attainment and to chart a course for improvement.	2011
Boosting College Completion in a New Economy	To work with legislative and higher education leaders to improve their state economies by increasing the number of residents with a postsecondary credential.	2011
National Coalition for College Completion	To mobilize a diverse, non-partisan voice in support of college completion that speaks for the collective interests of the American public by demanding a policy agenda that encourages higher education institutions to provide better support to underrepresented students.	2011

Note. Adapted from American Association of State Colleges and Universities (Russell, 2011)

and community colleges will produce an additional 5 million graduates” (President Barack Obama, 2009). The Obama Administration viewed increased education attainment as critical for not only addressing the country’s slipping economic position globally, but also for addressing the shorter-term recession. To this end, the President proposed the American Graduation Initiative in July 2009, which called for an investment of \$12 billion dollars over 10 years to support community colleges and the completion goals he set (President Barack Obama, 2009). While funding for the American Graduation Initiative was eventually scaled back to \$2 billion, the Obama Administration signaled an unprecedented commitment to community colleges coupled with a view that these two-year institutions were critical to reaching national educational attainment goals.

The completion focus of the Obama Administration and numerous philanthropic initiatives evolved in parallel with state policymakers pressing many of the same policy changes. Encapsulating the reforms of several leading states, the College Completion Toolkit (U.S. Department of Education, 2011) articulates seven strategies for governors to consider when promoting college completion: 1) Set goals and develop an action plan; 2) Embrace performance-based funding; 3) Align high school standards with college entrance and placement standards; 4) Make transfer easier for students; 5) Use data to drive decision making; 6) Accelerate learning and reduce costs; and 7) Target adults, especially those with “some college, but no degree.” Most of these strategies are also key components of foundation initiatives such as Complete College America and Achieving the Dream, which are urging state policymakers to enact legislation and rules that create conditions that are more conducive to college completion.

The synergetic relationship between higher education policymakers—at both the state and federal levels—and the philanthropic community is indicative of a much more aggressive foundation role that has been labeled “advocacy philanthropy” (Hall & Thomas, 2012). Major education foundations are funding multi-pronged initiatives to influence policymakers through efforts like those described above as well as through the national organizations of office holders such as the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislators (Russell, 2011).

The growing influence of foundations has not only focused on policymakers to push colleges to change, but it has also sought to influence major national associations such as the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). For example, AACC, ACCT, and several other national community college organizations came together in 2010 in response to the pressure from policymakers and foundations to announce the *College Completion Challenge*. This challenge pledges to increase student completion rates by 50 percent over the next decade (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012). Further, in the summer of 2011, AACC launched the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative, with an explicit goal of increasing by five million the total number of students with credentials by 2020. This work, which was funded by the Gates and Kresge foundations along with ACT and the Education Testing Service, culminated in the publication of *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation’s Future* (21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012). Given that the publisher of the report represents community college presidents, it is unusually blunt in its critique of community colleges

and calls for a redesign of students' educational experiences, a reinvention of institutional roles, and a reset of the entire system to improve student outcomes.

Taken together, policymakers and national foundations are promoting community colleges as affordable alternatives to increase education attainment and enhance workforce preparation. And by doing so, they are also applying considerable pressure on institutions to improve student outcomes.

### *Research Questions*

Community colleges are often cited as the most responsive of the higher education sectors (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Grubb, Badway, & Bell, 2003; Levin, 2001; McCartan, 1983; Osterman, 2010; Shaw & Jacobs, 2003). Whether balancing local needs with workforce demands caused by globalization (Levin, 2004) or acting as a “bridge between the K-12 educational sector and higher education” (Shaw & Jacobs, 2003, p. 7), the hallmark of the community college mission and philosophy has been the open-door approach to enrollment (Bailey & Morest, 2006b; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Dowd, 2003). One result of this open access is that community colleges have become the entry point to higher education for significant numbers of low-income and minority students, many of whom are unprepared for college-level work (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Bahr, 2010b; Bailey, 2009; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2002; Horn, McCoy, Campbell, & Brock, 2009; Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011; Kozeracki, 2002; Perin, 2006). This enrollment pattern is leading to a growing stratification in higher education with minority students attending two-year colleges in greater percentages



(Bastedo & Gumport, 2003; Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011; Dowd & Melguizo, 2008; Dowd, 2007; Gumport & Bastedo, 2001; Shaw & Jacobs, 2003). The reasons for these trends are many, but the disparity raises questions about the capacity of community colleges to serve the least prepared students, and their ability to provide social equity and promote educational attainment.

A review of the literature points to numerous studies that highlight a troublesome connection between attendance at a community college and bachelor's degree attainment (Adelman, 2006; Alfonso, 2006; Anderson, Alfonso, & Sun, 2006; Bahr, 2008a; Brint & Karabel, 1989b; Clark, 1960, 1980; Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006; Hilmer, 1997; Lee, Mackie-Lewis, & Marks, 1993; Leigh & Gill, 2003; Long & Kurlaender, 2009; Melguizo, 2009; Melguizo & Dowd, 2009; Melguizo, Kienzl, & Alfonso, 2011; Roksa, 2006, 2010; Rouse, 1998; Townsend, 2007b; Wang, 2009). Equally disconcerting is a series of recent studies that indicates students attending community colleges are failing to successfully progress through the two-year institutions—let alone move on to a four-year university (Attewell, Heil, & Reisel, 2010; Bahr, 2008a, 2009; Calcagno, Crosta, Bailey, & Jenkins, 2007a; Dowd, 2006; Greene, Marti, & McClenney, 2008; Marti, 2008; Shulock & Moore, 2005; Summers, 2003; Wells, 2008; Wirth & Padilla, 2008).

A regular theme in literature examining inadequate student outcomes relates to the long-standing controversy about the multiple missions of community colleges and questions as to whether the diverse functions ascribed to these institutions diminishes their overall effectiveness (Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 2001; Osterman, 2010). For some, public two-year institutions represent an accessible source of vocational education (Clowes & Levin, 1989; Grubb et al., 2003;

Levin, 2001). Others see community colleges as having a more collegiate function promoting affordable entry points for individuals to prepare for and transfer to a four-year institution (Cohen & Brawer, 1987; Eaton, 1994). These are but two of several missions of community colleges (Bailey & Averianova, 2001; Dougherty, 2001; Downey, Pusser, & Turner, 2006; Morest, 2006; Young, 1977; Zigerell, 1970) that have been embraced by institutional leaders and advanced at different times by policymakers.

The reality is that constraints on resources—financial, personnel, space, and expertise—inevitably have led to functional trade-offs within institutions (Alfred, 1997; Askin, 2007; Bailey & Morest, 2004; Desai, 2012; Dougherty, 1991; Kane & Rouse, 1999; Katsinas, D'Amico, & Friedel, 2011; Levin, 2000; Mullin & Honeyman, 2008). Cross (1985) observes that, in spite of the desire of many to accommodate the conflicting demands placed on their institutions, the leaders of two-year colleges emphasize one aspect of the mission over another. A recent report from the American Association of Community Colleges entitled *Rebalancing the Mission: The Community College Completion Challenge* (Mullin, 2010) highlights the issues the two-year sector is encountering in this evolving context. The tension between breadth of mission and quality of service notwithstanding, policymakers value community colleges' versatility and efficiency and encourage these divergent functions. Of course, institutional leaders seeking to maximize resources and support continue to take on additional roles to satisfy market demands (Gumport, 2003).

The challenge is that enrollments at community colleges are burgeoning and greater numbers of students are arriving at the doors of these institutions academically unprepared to pursue their stated educational goal. Community colleges, by their very

nature and frugal reputation, operate on shoestring budgets with a growing percentage of courses taught by adjunct faculty and administered by a stretched staff. Fiscal realities at these institutions restrict them from providing adequate support to the diverse needs of their students. Adding the emerging national imperative of improved student outcomes has the potential to make an already difficult situation on campuses even more tenuous.

The preceding narrative briefly highlights the growing tension between ideals—sustaining the open access that has been the hallmark of community colleges—and the reality—acknowledging the emerging consensus regarding the critical importance of students’ success in obtaining a credential. This study is an examination of how college leaders are responding to this dichotomy to find the right course for their institutions. The overarching research question, which emerges from this tension, is: *How are presidential logics about community college mission and institutional effectiveness shaped by their personal background, the characteristics of their institution, and the evolving policy context?* Further, this study will explore the following additional questions:

- 1) How do presidents define the mission of community colleges?
- 2) How do presidents characterize institutional effectiveness and high performance?
- 3) How do the previous experiences and professional backgrounds of presidents influence these views about their institutions?
- 4) What are the presidents’ views of the emerging student completion agenda?
- 5) What do presidents see as the factors contributing to the emphasis on the completion agenda?
- 6) Has the completion agenda impacted presidents’ conceptions of community college mission and institutional effectiveness?

By attempting to answer these questions, this study makes an important and timely contribution to the field. In spite of the research literature that highlights the

questionable outcomes of students attending community colleges, these two-year institutions are garnering significant attention from state and federal policymakers, national foundations, and others as affordable alternatives to promote increased educational attainment and enhanced workforce preparation (Collins, 2006; “Investing in Education: The American Graduation Initiative,” 2009; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2009; Mullin, 2010; The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009; “The Completion Shortfall,” 2010). The focus on these colleges is occurring while many two-year institutions are experiencing dramatic increases in enrollments and decreases in state support. Many of the additional students are arriving at these institutions unprepared for college-level work and fiscal realities stretch the college faculty and administrators’ abilities to provide adequate service and support for the diverse needs of their students.

Closer examination of student progression and success will inevitably lead to questions about the sustainability of the long-held belief that community colleges should provide open access for students regardless of their backgrounds and academic preparation. The urgency around improved completion rates will bring focus to how much these institutions should take on in terms of their organization mission (Alfred, Shults, Jaquette, & Strickland, 2009; Alfred, 2002; Bailey & Morest, 2006a; Beach, 2011; Boggs, 2011; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Levin, 2000; Morest, 2006; Osterman, 2010; Shannon & Smith, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). With policymakers, philanthropic organizations, and local communities expecting community colleges to produce more graduates and improve student outcomes, colleges may have to change the way they do business. They will have to have discussions about their core functions—and how resources will be distributed to support them—and what activities

are better left to some other organization. This study will provide a timely exploration of these tensions from the perspective of Ohio community college presidents who grapple with them every day.

### *Plan for the Dissertation*

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters including this introduction. The second chapter situates the study in relevant literature to help understand how the concepts of institutional logics and entrepreneurship apply to this inquiry. The literature review will begin with an exploration of research on institutional logics—particularly competing logics—that offers insights into how college leaders can make sense of the tension between the traditional access focus of their campuses and the growing emphasis on success. The relevant literature on institutional entrepreneurship will also be reviewed to incorporate this concept into the framework as a means of gauging the presidents’ possible role as agents of change at their colleges. To properly connect the concepts from institutional theory to this study, the literature on community college mission is examined with a special focus on efforts to integrate the various roles the colleges play. Finally, to illuminate the challenge that the completion agenda presents for community colleges, the research on community college education attainment and institutional characteristics that may contribute to student success is also explored.

In chapter three, an overview of the research methodology is provided, including a brief discussion of research paradigms, the study population, and the data analysis procedures. The balance of the dissertation is dedicated to the findings of this study and is divided into four chapters. The first set of findings—in chapter four— analyzes how

presidents view the shift in broad, societal-level institutional logics that are compelling parallel swings in the field-level logics for the community college sector (which will be explored in chapter five). Chapter four will also examine how presidents view the role of policymakers and foundations in the environment of changing expectations and accountability. Chapter five will delineate the dilemmas presidents perceive in the field of community colleges as a result of the shift from an institutional logic centered on student access toward one that emphasizes success. The last set of findings presented in chapter 6 will examine the role of presidents as potential institutional entrepreneurs leading their organizations' responses to the competing logics of student access and success. The final chapter of this dissertation returns to the research questions posed for this study and a discussion of the implications for practice, policy, and theory as well as areas of possible future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past several decades community colleges have become an affordable access point for people entering postsecondary education in the United States. Given the rising cost of higher education in general, this trend is likely to continue. However, in recent years, there have also been calls—by policymakers, business leaders, and major foundations—for increased education attainment that have resulted in a greater focus on the outcomes of students at colleges and universities. Community colleges in particular have been the subject of increasing scrutiny about how their students ultimately fare, and this focus on progression and completion is challenging fundamental assumptions about how these colleges operate, what their core mission and functions are, and how they will meet the growing demand for improved outcomes.

The conceptual framework articulated in this chapter borrows from the concepts of institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship to understand the organizational tensions community colleges face and how presidents may guide their campuses to resolve the divergent expectations. The literature reviewed in this chapter begins with an overview of the concept of institutional logics to ground the emerging friction between the focus on student access and student success. This review includes research on institutional entrepreneurship to situate the role of the target population of this study—community college presidents—as possible agents for divergent change in their

institutions. Adding to this, the extent literature about the development of the access mission of community colleges is reviewed, followed by a discussion of the research on the efficacy of these colleges in promoting student completion and education attainment. Also explored is the limited literature on institutional characteristics that contribute to student success in community colleges and the promising practices and interventions emerging to improve outcomes. This final section of the literature review serves as an important backdrop to the findings chapters that follow and highlights issues that presidents—as possible agents of divergent change at their colleges—need to consider to reorient their organizations toward improving student completion rates.

### Institutional Logics

This inquiry is guided primarily by the concept of competing institutional logics, which is useful to understanding the diverging beliefs and practices stemming from the shifting organizational environment from access to success for community college students. This section will first explore the theoretical origins of logics, which is derived from the larger body of literature in institutional theory. Next, this section will explore the defining characteristics of institutional logics including their influence on individual and organizational action, the multiple-level nature of how they operate, and the means by which logics can change. On this final point, competing logics and the role of institutional entrepreneurs will be examined in detail as two features of changing institutional logics.



### *Connection to Institutional Theory*

Before delving into the literature on institutional logics further, a brief look at the theoretical lineage of this concept will help to situate it within this study. The concept of logics emerged from neo-institutional theory of the 1970s and 1980s, which emphasized the importance of the external environment in shaping organizational expectations that, in turn, are reflected in formal practices, structures and characteristics. As leading scholars in the development of neo-institutional theory, Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggested that the formal structures in institutionalized organizations are myths that are ceremoniously adopted to placate external expectations. These structures, they continue, are decoupled from core functions of an organization to shield it from rigorous assessments of performance. This perspective also suggests that organizations in highly institutionalized environments are more legitimate if they copy the behavior of their peers in the field and adopt these rationalized formal structures. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) expanded on this work suggesting that three types of isomorphism—coercive, mimetic, and normative—lead organizations to become more similar over time in their search for legitimacy. Overall, the emphasis of both Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) was on organizational legitimacy and the ways in which organizational structures become more similar.

Brint and Karabel (1991) suggested that formal structures of American community colleges are reflective of concepts espoused by new institutional theory. Using Meyer and Rowan's (1977) lens of organizational structure and legitimacy, Brint and Karabel (1991) observed that during the 1960s and 1970s two-year institutions were garnering greater public support at the very time that the colleges' effectiveness in terms

of student outcomes (i.e. the technical core) were rapidly declining. Further, they suggested the widespread adoption of a comprehensive model of the community college mission (described in more detail later in this chapter) has been a textbook example of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) isomorphic organizational tendencies.

While endorsing the utility of neo-institutionalism in explaining the formal structures and characteristics of community colleges, Brint and Karabel (1991) questioned the value of this perspective in explaining why specific organizational structures emerge initially, given other options, and how these structures change over time in particular directions. They argued that the new institutional theory neglects an analysis of the origin of particular institutions and harken back to "old institutionalism" to fill this gap. In their examination of the increase of vocational training in the community college curriculum, Brint and Karabel suggested that the colleges have separate interests that "can take on an autonomous logic" (p. 344) that may distract them from the initial mission or goals. They argued further that the "mental sets of organizational elites" (p. 350) play a prominent role in shaping these organizational interests. This point underscores a fundamental aspect of this study—namely the role of community college presidents as potential institutional entrepreneurs in divergent organizational change. This idea also highlights the utility of institutional logics as a conceptual device to understand the beliefs and values operating in community colleges that guide organizational practice and behavior.

### *Defining Institutional Logics*

Friedland and Alford (1991) first articulated their view of institutional logics in their examination of central values guiding Western society. They suggested that Western institutions have “a central logic—a set of material practices and symbolic constructions—which constitutes its organizing principles and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate” (p. 248). According to Friedland and Alford, Western society operates based on a series of institutions including capitalism, the bureaucratic state, democracy, family, and religion. Each of these institutions has a logic that is “symbolically grounded, organizationally structured, politically defended, and technically and materially constrained” (p. 249). In their work, Thornton and Ocasio (1999) applied this concept to organizational fields suggesting institutional logics are:

Both material and symbolic—they provide the formal and informal rules of action, interaction, and interpretation that guide and constrain decision-makers in accomplishing the organization’s tasks and in obtaining social status, credit, penalties, and rewards in the process. These rules constitute a set of assumptions and values about how to interpret organizational reality, what constitutes appropriate behavior, and how to succeed (p. 804).

A sampling of research building on Friedland and Alford’s work has interpreted institutional logics as rules, or norms, that bridge the gap between organizations and broader societal expectations (Townley, 1997); belief systems that articulate values that, in turn, delineate organizational forms, practices, and priorities (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006); and parameters for social actors that help determine legitimacy (Vurro, Dacin, & Perrini, 2010).

In a recent literature review, Thornton and Ocasio (2008) suggest that institutional logics share with institutional theory “a concern with how cultural and cognitive structures shape organizational structures” (p. 100). The idea that distinguishes

institutional logics from neo-institutionalism is that the emphasis is no longer on how organizations become more similar through isomorphic pressures. Instead the focus is on the effect of disparate institutional logics on the actions of organizations and individuals. The next section explores the relationship between logics and action.

*Logics' influence on individual and organizational action*

In their study examining the role of rhetorical strategies for navigating the competing logics in newly-created organization forms, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) found a circular connection noting that, “logics enable actors to make sense of their ambiguous world by prescribing and proscribing actions” (p. 38). On the other hand, they indicate the actions taken under the guise of a dominant logic reinforce the established set of beliefs and practices.

Neo-institutional theory focuses on the legitimacy of organizations through the lens of their similarity to others in the same field. The emphasis is on the organization and the agency of the individual actor is largely discounted. In the context of institutional logics, the action of individuals is elevated. Legitimacy is still important, but it is driven more by the adherence of the actors to “assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules” (Vurro et al., 2010) which, in turn, help define what actions are appropriate (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999).

Thornton and Ocasio’s review of the research literature highlights several mechanisms through which logics shape individual and organizational action. Institutional logics establish collective identities, create the rules of the game in contested power struggles, provide categories of order and structure, and dictate the amount of

attention an organization may devote to a particular issue or problem (2008). Each of these mechanisms, explored briefly below, represents a way to understand the mindset and behavior of community college practitioners, particularly presidents.

Adherence to institutional logics helps define what is appropriate behavior and activity within an organizational field, but it is the interplay between the individual actors' views and beliefs and those of their social context that validate what is proper (Currie & Guah, 2007; Scott, Ruef, Mendel, & Caronna, 2000). The collective identities established by dominant institutional logics are, "an important theoretical construct because they help to explain connections that create a sense of common purpose and unity within an organizational field" (Reay & Hinings, 2009, p. 629). The collective "social identity" (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003, p. 797) that logics create for individual actors—which clarify how individuals view their role and the decision-making process in the organization—also defines the field and helps those external to that field or industry understand the larger group (Herremans, Herschovis, & Bertels, 2009; Rao et al., 2003; Reay & Hinings, 2009). For example, community colleges are widely viewed to have open admissions and this implies a certain approach to students that is understood within and beyond the field.

In their study examining the role of institutional logics in shaping stakeholder preferences, Mattingly and Hall (2008) argue that the influence of actors in the field can be better understood through the lens of the dominant logic. Because the underlying assumptions and beliefs in a field shape what is expected and acceptable, Mattingly and Hall suggest that "alliances" (2008, p. 70) of actors emerge that utilize common rationales to advocate for policies and procedures to reinforce the dominant logic or to

challenge it. In their work, Alford and Friedland (1985) note that the logics are “defended by politically organized interests” (1985, p. 11), which in turn can define power relationships within an organization or field based on the position of individual actors and their association with the dominant logic (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006). This is a point that will be explored later in this chapter when the concept of institutional entrepreneurship is examined in more detail.

The alliances (Mattingly & Hall, 2008) and organized interests (Alford & Friedland, 1985) that affect the power structure within an organization or field are reinforced by the practice, procedures, and norms that are defined by institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Institutional logics also determine the classification of social actors within the organization, which in turn align with the practices and beliefs of the individuals that constitute the field (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006). For example, in higher education there are categories of individuals that work for these institutions such as administrators and faculty. Organizational categories can be broken down further, for instance, from academic affairs staff to student services. These categories carry with them certain expectations and roles in the form of official job descriptions, and they also shape the mindset and beliefs of the individuals who fill these positions. For the individual actors, institutional logics shape how they interrelate to the others based on the broader values of the organization and the field (Currie & Guah, 2007; Friedland & Alford, 1991).

The extent to which an organizational issue or problem is given attention is an additional mechanism determined by the dominant logic (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Institutional logics not only guide the action of individuals, but they also point out,

“which issues, contingencies, or problems have to be considered as relevant in the interaction among actors” (Vurro et al., 2010, p. 43). An additional example will help to illuminate this point. In the historical context of the community college access mission, the emphasis of staff has been to maximize the number of students who enroll each term. As a result, there is significant attention paid to the marketing and outreach to potential students and simplifying and accelerating the admissions processes for prospects. If the dominant logic were focused on student success, a different focus of attention may, in fact, be more prevalent. Referring back to previous discussion about the role of logics in framing power structures within organizations, the question of which problems receive attention are likely to be those that are more important to the senior management (Herremans et al., 2009; Lounsbury, 2007; Vurro et al., 2010). Again, this point will be explored in more detail below.

To summarize, institutional logics influence the actions of individuals and organizations within a field. Logics frame the collective identity of actors and what constitutes appropriate behavior. As a result of competing logics in a given field, those that adhere to the dominant logic may enjoy more influence relative to others. Logics also help define processes and practices and therefore, have an important influence on the classification of actors in the organization and the categorization of the work they do. Finally, institutional logics dictate the problems and issues that receive attention in the organization. It is crucial to understand the relationship between institutional logics and the actions of individuals and organizations as a baseline for appreciating the further role competing logics play in a changing organizational field such as community colleges.

Before turning to a deeper analysis of competing logics and their role in institutional change, the next section explores how logics operate on multiple levels.

*Logics operate at multiple levels*

Friedland and Alford's (1991) influential work emphasized societal-level logics that guide Western civilization. In their literature review, Thornton and Ocasio note that researchers have utilized logics at a variety of other levels including "organizations, markets, industries, inter-organizational networks, geographic communities, and organizational fields" (2008, p. 106). In their own work on the higher-education publishing industry, Thornton and Ocasio examine the interplay between societal-level logics and those that operate at the level of the organizational field (Thornton, 2002; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Several other scholars note that fields, organizations, and even individuals have logics at the respective levels, but in each case the lower-level logics are nested within societal-level logics (Currie & Guah, 2007; Greenwood, Díaz, Li, & Lorente, 2010; Herremans et al., 2009; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Thornton and company identified an inter-institutional system that includes seven institutional orders: family, community, religion, state, market, profession, and corporation (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012).

Table 2.1, which is adapted from Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury's (2012) recent book about institutional logics, is a matrix that outlines the seven institutional orders, or logics, across the horizontal axis and the attributes of each order along the vertical axis. These societal-level logics are in constant competition and flux with certain perspectives elevated to prominence at different times or in different contexts. More



Table 2.1: Inter-Institutional System Ideal Types

Categories	Family	Community	Religion	State	Market	Profession	Corporation
<i>Root Metaphor</i>	Family as firm	Common boundary	Temple as bank	State as redistribution mechanism	Transaction	Profession as relational network	Corporation as hierarchy
<i>Sources of Legitimacy</i>	Unconditional loyalty	Unity of will; Belief in trust & reciprocity	Importance of faith & sacredness in economy & society	Democratic participation	Share price	Personal expertise	Market position of firm
<i>Sources of Authority</i>	Patriarchal domination	Commitment to community values & ideology	Priesthood charisma	Bureaucratic domination	Shareholder activism	Professional association	Board of directors; Top management
<i>Sources of Identity</i>	Family reputation	Emotional connection; Ego-satisfaction & reputation	Association with deities	Social & economic class	Faceless	Association w/ quality of craft; Personal reputation	Bureaucratic roles
<i>Basis of Norms</i>	Membership in household	Group membership	Membership in congregation	Citizenship in nation	Self-interest	Membership in guild & association	Employment in firm
<i>Basis of Attention</i>	Status in household	Personal investment in group	Relation to supernatural	Status of interest group	Status in market	Status in profession	Status in hierarchy
<i>Basis of Strategy</i>	Increase family honor	Increase status & honor of members & practices	Increase religious symbolism of natural events	Increase community good	Increase efficiency of profit	Increase personal reputation	Increase size and diversification of firm
<i>Informal Control Mechanisms</i>	Family politics	Visibility of actions	Worship of calling	Backroom politics	Industry analysts	Celebrity professional	Organization culture
<i>Economic System</i>	Family capitalism	Cooperative capitalism	Occidental capitalism	Welfare capitalism	Market capitalism	Personal capitalism	Managerial capitalism

Note. Adapted from Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012).

pointedly, this study centers on the conflicting pressures on community colleges, which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 4. The tensions colleges are experiencing are best encapsulated in the societal-level conflict between the institutional order of the “state” to provide democratic access to education and the emergent completion or success

agenda that has at its core the pressures of a “market” orientation. This contest of ideal types has a cascading impact on the community college field and individual colleges.

While most researchers acknowledge the hierarchical nature of institutional logics articulated by Friedland and Alford (1991), some also argue that the connection is not linear because lower-level logics can influence higher order logics. For example, in their work examining differing logics within the Canadian petroleum industry, Herremans, Herschovis, and Bertels (2009) point out that organizational-level logics of more environmentally conscious firms have had a significant influence on the entire industry, pushing lagging companies to modernize their environmental practices. Similarly, in a study of the implementation of a national program for information technology within the United Kingdom’s National Health Service, Currie and Guah (2007) indicate that individuals within the NHS, and even patients, had an important impact on policies and procedures that became pervasive in the field.

Beyond the recognition that logics operate on multiple levels and that there appears to be a two-way relationship between the various levels, some researchers have been able to explain variations in the behavior of individual organizations in the same field by looking at logics operating on multiple levels (Greenwood et al., 2010; Herremans et al., 2009). For example, looking again at Herremans, Herschovis, and Bertel’s (2009) work studying the Canadian petroleum industry, they made the following observation:

One population of firms was aligned with increasing pressures from its stakeholders for improved environmental performance, and the other was influenced by local cultural, political, and economic ideals less demanding of environmental actions. Our results reveal that several factors both at the institutional field level and the organizational level affected how these two populations reacted to a changing societal logic. (p. 449).

This is a particularly important finding in the context of this study about how community colleges respond to the external pressure of societal-level and field-level shifts around improving student success. Greenwood, et al (2010) argue that local context is critically important to consider because despite some of the common pressures organizations in the same field may experience, individuals within different organizations respond differently because of variations in how “organizational forms and managerial practices” have manifested themselves.

In their study of the institutional logics in the consolidation of U.S. community banking, Marguis and Lounsbury (2007) found that geography played an important role in how local community banks responded to mergers with larger national banks. In another important finding that parallels community colleges, Marguis and Lounsbury (2007) ascertained that there was resistance among local banking actors to the “national” logic of governance that sought more standardized industry practices and policies in favor of the greater autonomy and flexibility through the “community” logic of governance. This research has clear implications for community colleges that are being pressured to adopt “proven” practices leading to improved student outcomes while also maintaining an emphasis on the needs of the communities they serve.

As the discussion in this section suggests, an important dynamic of institutional logics is their operation on multiple levels—which further enhances their theoretical utility in the context of organizational theory. The focus of this study will be on the interplay between societal-level logics and those within the institutional field of community colleges. Additionally, the organizational response by individual community colleges to the changing logics in the institutional field will be considered. To better

understand how logics operating at different levels impact organizational and individual behavior, it is important to also have an appreciation for how logics change. The next section briefly profiles the literature about the process of changing institutional logics and the mechanisms that often trigger a shift.

### *Changing Institutional Logics*

Over time, institutional logics can change. These changes, as suggested in the previous section, can occur at the societal level, within an institutional field, or within an individual organization. The interconnectedness of the various levels, or units of analysis, also means that change can start on any plane and ultimately reverberate throughout. In their study of nouvelle cuisine in France, Rao and Durand (2003) indicated that this change occurs when “activists gain control of professional societies, critique the traditional logic, and proffer a solution hinging on a new institutional logic” (p. 835). When these changes occur the previous dominant logic is challenged and a new set of beliefs and practices begins to emerge that guide the behavior of the individual actors or organizations (Reay & Hinings, 2009).

Thornton and Ocasio (2008) indicate that the relationship between logics and action is circular and, as a result, organizational and individual behavior can contribute to changes in the dominant logic. Institutional entrepreneurs can promote new logics, historically distinct organizations can be forced into overlapping roles, and events may unfold in ways that “dislocate, rearticulate, and transform the interpretation and meaning of cultural symbols and social and economic structures” (p. 116). As these dynamics

play out, Thornton and Ocasio suggest there is a cognitive dissonance between the existing and emerging logics.

Two of the four mechanisms Thornton and Ocasio (2008) point to for changing logics—competing logics and institutional entrepreneurs—are central to this study and will be discussed in greater detail below. However, a brief description of the other two mechanisms for changing institutional logics—structural overlap and event sequence—is also in order. As the name implies, structural overlap deals with situations where organizations and/or individuals are forced to share a functional space that had been discrete. The example Thornton and Ocasio (2008) use is mergers and acquisitions in the private sector. These circumstances require two separate organizational cultures to fuse, which can have significant impacts on the dominant logic. This change dynamic has limited relevance in the context of this study of community colleges.

Event sequencing is defined as a set of unique events that “dislocate, rearticulate, and transform the interpretation and meaning” of existing beliefs and practices (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 116). The difficulty of applying the concept of event sequencing to this study, and in fact in any setting, is isolating specific events that have caused the change in perspective. As subsequent chapters will illustrate, the change in logics for community colleges has been more organic with actions by many players at multiple levels that have contributed to the shift.

In the next two sections, the literature on competing institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurs will be reviewed to highlight these two key conceptual tools for understanding the current dynamic for community colleges in Ohio and the role of their presidents.

### *Competing institutional logics*

Several researchers have contributed to the literature about competing logics by examining changes in various organizational contexts including corporate take-overs (Green, Babb, & Alpaslan, 2008), environmental standards in the Canadian petroleum industry (Herremans et al., 2009), the nonprofit housing sector (Mullins, 2006), professional practices in the mutual fund industry (Lounsbury, 2007), consolidation in the community banking industry in United States (Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007), and higher education publishing sector (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). In each case the scholars examined how individuals or organizations contend with conflicting value and belief systems that in turn shape—or more appropriately re-shape—the practices within their organization or field.

In previous research applying competing institutional logics to community colleges, Gumport (2003) found that college presidents are guided by one of two value systems. The first is an industry-oriented logic that emphasizes the economic value of two-year institutions, and the second focuses on the college as an educational enterprise with broader social value. While not directly related to this study, Gumport's findings are important in that they suggest that the local context for the community college looms large in driving college priorities and that there are multiple, often competing, external constituencies that college leaders are often seeking to satisfy.

In a more recent case study about institutional logics in public higher education in Massachusetts, Bastedo (2009) found convergence among policymakers and board members “on particular lines of choice and thinking that lead to similar policy conclusions” (p. 229). This study suggests that the conflict among logics is ultimately

resolved. In the context of this study, Bastedo's research sheds light on how the views of policymakers in many states are converging around an institutional logic that emphasizes educational attainment and student success. This is not to suggest that there are not policymakers and others who are still focused on student access, but rather that there is a growing consensus at the state and national levels about the need to improve student outcomes. The contested ground between the access and success logics appears to be more pronounced at the college level, where presidents must contend with the shift in values and beliefs in practical context.

Thornton and Ocasio (2008) stress that there is not a causal relationship between competing logics and institutional change, but rather the competition between dominant and emergent beliefs and practices creates the conditions for institutional change. They continue suggesting a combination of factors that contribute to changes in logics that lead to institutional change—market-oriented pressures, the influence of actors within the organization or the field, and shifts in the societal logics. It is worth noting that changes to logics at the societal level have rarely been specified in previous research (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008), but this study on community colleges will explicitly discuss changes in societal expectations as an antecedent for the shifting logics at the field level.

Some researchers have argued it is difficult to define, “the process by which the assumptions that define institutional logics are contested and changed” (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 36) and that relatively little is known about the organizational response to multiple logics (Greenwood et al., 2010). However, a review of the literature on competing logics alludes to factors in the change process. More specifically, research

points to shifts in social identity and the temporary nature of the competition between logics as important attributes of the process of changes institutional logics.

As noted previously, one of the ways that institutional logics guide individual action is through the establishment of a collective identity. Several studies suggest that the emergence of competing logics begins to diminish the shared identity within a field or organization that had previously been stable as a result of the dominant logic. For example, in his study of the nonprofit housing sector, Mullins (2006) argues that conflicting logics create “field fragmentation” (p. 21) and it is this deterioration of a common identity that provides the opportunity for new approaches to emerge.

Building on the idea of fragmentation, other studies indicate that individual actors will actively exploit the gaps between existing and emerging social identities to promote institutional change (Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Rao et al., 2003). This is a point that will be revisited below, but the idea that individuals manipulate the conflicting perspectives to push for change is an important feature of institutional entrepreneurship. Again, the opportunity to influence the organizational environment and identity is made possible by the emergence of competing institutional logics that challenge the legitimacy of dominant beliefs and practices (Greenwood et al., 2010; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Mullins, 2006; Pache & Santos, 2010; Rao et al., 2003). In the context of this study, the emergence of the competing logic of student success creates an environment for individual or organizational actors to contest the access logic that has been predominant within community colleges for the past several decades.

In addition to the role diminished collective identities play in creating the conditions for shifting institutional logics and change, the literature on logics also



suggests that conflict between logics tends to be temporary and that divergent logics are resolved over time (Bastedo, 2009; Currie & Guah, 2007; Lounsbury, 2007; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Reay & Hinings, 2009). For instance, in their study of the health care system in Canada, Reay and Hinings (2009) found that competing logics are a “temporary phenomenon” (p. 631) that is ultimately settled when a new dominant logic emerges. They indicate that the new dominant logic may be a hybrid of the previously dominant logic and the emergent competitor, but the conflict between logics at the field or organizational level is rarely sustained over a long period of time.

Much of the literature about competing or divergent institutional logics underscores the central role of organizational or individual actors in resisting or promoting the conflict (Herremans et al., 2009; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). These actors can be powerful individuals who seek to maintain the status quo (Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007; Reay & Hinings, 2009) or insurgents who are taking advantage of emerging inconsistencies among existing beliefs or practices (Herremans et al., 2009; Seo & Creed, 2002). Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) note that individuals who want institutional change are more cognizant of organizational contradictions and are motivated to act on inconsistencies. In institutional theory, the actors who promote divergent change from the dominant logic are called institutional entrepreneurs and this concept is explored in detail in the next section.

### *Institutional entrepreneurs*

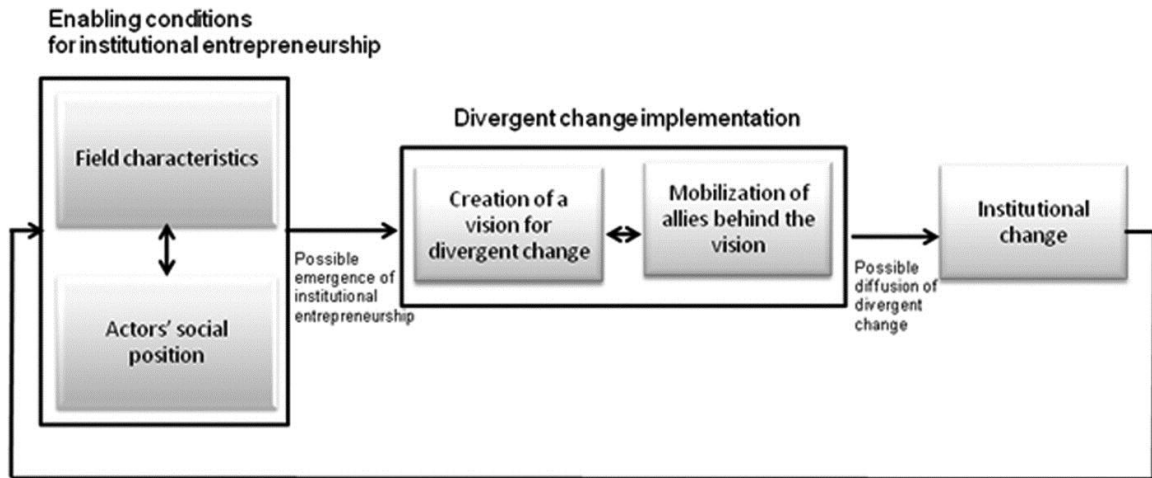
The concept of institutional entrepreneurship emerged in response to the critique that the agency of actors within organizations was absent from neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio, 1988). Entrepreneurship in an institutional setting is defined as the “activities of actors who have interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, p. 198). Thornton and Ocasio (2008) note that, by definition, entrepreneurs are able to drive institutional change based on the position they hold with an organization or field and their ability to manipulate the environment, create fragmentation, and to marshal resources (both material and symbolic). Currie and Gauh (2007) indicate in their study of the implementation of a program for information technology in the British health care industry that the success of institutional entrepreneurs promoting change is dependent on their ability to delineate the winning institutional logic.

In their work to develop a theory of institutional entrepreneurship, Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum (2009) contend that entrepreneurs, “whether organizations or individuals, are agents who initiate, and actively participate in the implementation of changes that diverge from existing institutions” (p. 72). The two key criteria for being an institutional entrepreneur are that the individual (or organization) fully *intends* to promote and actively participates in efforts to drive *divergent* change. An institutional entrepreneur, according to Battilana and company, is not someone who seeks to make adjustments on the margins. Their explicit goal is to bring pronounced change to existing institutions (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). In the context of this study,

institutional entrepreneurs in the community college field are those who actively, purposefully promote a change in the colleges' behavior that, in this instance, leads to increased educational attainment and improved student outcomes. It is important to note that, as the definition above suggests, entrepreneurs can be organizations (i.e. national foundations) or individuals (i.e. college presidents). This is a point that will be explored in more detail below.

To further specify their theory, Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum (2009) articulated a process for institutional entrepreneurship (see Figure 2.1), which involves enabling conditions and divergent change implementation. The enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship are field characteristics and an actor's social position. Field-level characteristics represent shifts in the external environment that can create circumstances for institutional change. For example, in their study of changing practices among law firms, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) note that, "exogenous jolts such as technological or regulatory discontinuities" (p. 38) are important factors that must be present for institutional entrepreneurship to occur. Others point out that scarcity of resources can lead to instances where entrepreneurs promote change (Battilana et al., 2009; Clemens & Cook, 1999; Durand & McGuire, 2005). In the current environment of Ohio community colleges, constrained state subsidies for postsecondary education and higher expectations from a new funding model promoting increased degree completion indicate that conditions are ripe for change to occur in the field.

Figure 2.1: Model of the Process of Institutional Entrepreneurship<sup>1</sup>



Field characteristics, by themselves, are not sufficient to create the circumstances for institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009). The second decisive enabling condition relates to the entrepreneur's position within the organizational field or individual organization. As was noted in the previous discussion, the connection between the influence of an actor and their endorsement of the dominant logic is very important in terms of their legitimacy (Mattingly & Hall, 2008; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006). Where a person is situated within an organization can greatly impact their ability—and willingness—to promote change (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). Several studies note that entrepreneurship is a reflection of an actor's ability to manipulate the organizational context and promote an emerging institutional logic to compel change (Clemens & Cook, 1999; Dillard, Rigsby, & Goodman, 2004; Fligstein, 2001; Green et al., 2008; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006).

---

<sup>1</sup> Figure adapted from Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum (2009).

Some research suggests that institutional entrepreneurs emerge from the periphery of an organization or field (Haveman & Rao, 1997; Kraatz & Moore, 2002; Leblebici, Salancik, Copay, & King, 1991) and are “less privileged by existing arrangements” (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 38). There are also several studies that indicate the opposite is true, with entrepreneurs holding established leadership positions (Bastedo, 2005; Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Phillips & Tracey, 2007; Rao et al., 2003). Regardless of where the institutional entrepreneur is positioned within the organization or field, it is clear that considerable social skill is required on the part of these individuals promoting change (Bastedo, 2005; Clemens & Cook, 1999; Fligstein, 1997; Green et al., 2008; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Again, looking at this concept in the context of community colleges, the notion that an “insurgent logic” (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 38) focused on student success rather than access is being driven with considerable social skill. Central to this study are the individuals and organizations operating at both the periphery (i.e. national foundations and policymakers) and the core of the field (i.e. community college leadership) that are pushing the emergent success logic.

As Figure 2.1 illustrates, creating the enabling conditions is only the first part of Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum’s (2009) theory of institutional entrepreneurship. To implement divergent change, entrepreneurs must also create a vision for transformation and mobilize allies and resources to promote it. To create a vision for divergent change, actors must have the social skills to take advantage of inconsistencies or contradictions in the field to further a new institutional logic (Bastedo, 2005; Clemens & Cook, 1999; Green et al., 2008; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). This process of creating a vision must challenge the existing collective identities of the dominant logic and establish legitimacy

for the emerging logic (Creed, Scully, & Austin, 2002; Durand & McGuire, 2005; Glynn & Abzug, 2002; Haveman & Rao, 1997; Lounsbury, 2002; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). The entrepreneur's role, often through rhetoric and discourse, is to establish a rationale (Creed et al., 2002; Déjean, Gond, & Leca, 2004; Hardy & Phillips, 1999) and trust (Sonpar, Handelman, & Dastmalchian, 2009) for supporting a change in the underlying beliefs and practices of the current logic. In this respect, the theory of institutional entrepreneurship draws on the significant sense-making literature (Weick, 1995). Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) describe rhetorical strategies as "the ways in which the meaning systems that underpin institutions are manipulated." They continue stating that, "institutional vocabularies amplify contradictions of meaning inherent in institutional logics in efforts to displace or affirm the dominant logic" (p. 60).

The final component of the process of institutional entrepreneurship is the ability of actors to mobilize resources and allies in support of the newly created vision for divergent change (Battilana et al., 2009). The resources are both material (i.e. financial) and symbolic (i.e. social capital). The process of mobilizing symbolic resources is closely related to the discussion of discursive strategies in the previous paragraph and speaks directly to the ability of the entrepreneur to convince others to follow them (Bastedo, 2005; Green et al., 2008; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006). As one study notes, "new institutional logics do not simply get adopted without negotiation. Rather, they are challenged, contested, entrepreneured, and modified within the confines of an organization" (Sonpar et al., 2009, p. 357). In one of the few studies in the higher education field to employ institutional entrepreneurship, Bastedo (2005) notes in his study on activist governing boards in Massachusetts that it was the "use of leadership

skills and social capital” (p. 568) by a particular board chair that led to changes in areas where attempts by others had failed to garner support.

Finally, the ability of individuals to marshal the financial resources that must be brought to bear is also critical. It is on this point that the authority, or the lack thereof, of the institutional entrepreneur within the organization or field becomes critical (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). An entrepreneur without control of the purse strings can influence the symbolic resources, but without some control of the financial means it is difficult to promote change. Within the community college context, presidents have access to both the symbolic and material resources with which to make change, if they choose to do so.

In summary, institutional logics constitute the beliefs and practices within an organization or field that guide action through collective identities and categories of behavior. These logics operate on multiple levels such as the societal-level, organizational field or industry, or within an individual organization or firm. Dominant institutional logics, on any plane, are not stable and can be challenged by competing logics promoted by institutional entrepreneurs. Competing logics disrupt incumbent beliefs and social identities through the intentional actions of individuals or organizations seeking divergent change. To be successful, the institutional entrepreneur must leverage enabling conditions—including environmental shocks and their own standing within the organization or field—to create a vision for change that will mobilize allies and other resources to their cause.

These concepts are particularly relevant to the examination of shifting logics within the community college field. Colleges are being pressed by foundations and

policymakers (i.e. societal-level institutional entrepreneurs) to improve student outcomes. The focus on education attainment (i.e. emergent institutional logic) is challenging the long-held emphasis on access (i.e. dominant field-level institutional logic) at these traditionally open admissions colleges. The outstanding question to be examined in later chapters is if the college presidents will become institutional entrepreneurs in their own organizations in response to the external pressure. The remainder of this chapter examines the research literature about the historical access orientation of community colleges on the one hand and the emerging success agenda on the other.

#### Community College Mission Historically Defined by an Access Logic

To understand the emerging tensions community colleges face in regard to improving student outcomes, it is important to briefly tracing the origins of functions that are now commonplace at most two-year institutions and have a characteristic emphasis on student access. Further, it is also important to examine the historical development of community colleges themselves.

#### *Brief Overview of the Development of Community Colleges*

As a uniquely American creation (Brint & Karabel, 1989b; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Hutcheson, 1999), community colleges have not only evolved to meet changing societal demands, but they have also grown to be a major option for accessible postsecondary education. From their origins, the undeniable philosophy behind these institutions has been to provide a path to upward mobility for a broad cross-section of American society. According to Thornton (1972), there are three fundamental and interrelated factors in the development of community colleges—the idea of creating the



“people’s college,” the need to generate economic wealth, and the credo of the American Dream. With the emergence of junior colleges in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Ratcliff traces several distinct streams of community college development (1994). He points out that each developmental stage reflects the wider social and political environment and specific innovations in education. These streams can be summarized in three general time periods which span the last 150 years

The first period of community college development, which roughly comprised the second half of the nineteenth century, was characterized by both local communities and research universities calling for the creation of junior colleges (Ratcliff, 1994).

Community leaders felt that locally funded and controlled colleges would facilitate opportunities for all people in the community not just those who could afford to go to a university (Morrison, 1961). For their part, leaders at research universities sought to situate the first two years of higher education at junior colleges. According to Ratcliff (1994), the presidents of several prominent universities of the time—including California, Michigan, Stanford, and Chicago—wanted to differentiate between the “collegiate work” of the first two years and “university education” in the later years of higher education (p. 7). It was clear from the start that the emerging junior colleges were viewed as an accessible steppingstone within the formal education system.

The next broad period in Ratcliff’s (1994) typology of the development of community colleges represented a relatively short period of time—1900 through 1916—and encapsulated the Progressive Era, which significantly influenced American society on many fronts. In this context the first continuously operating junior college was created in Joliet, Illinois, in 1901 under the guidance of William Rainey Harper, president of the

University of Chicago (Hutcheson, 1999; Koos, 1925; Ratcliff, 1987; Thelin, 2004; Tillery & Deegan, 1985). Junior colleges emerged during this period to address the growing demand for postsecondary education by an increasing number of high school graduates (Frye, 1992; Thornton, 1972; Tillery & Deegan, 1985). It is also worth noting that many of the early community colleges were initially technical institutes focused on occupational and semiprofessional training that was terminal in nature. The existence of a vocational focus even in the early junior colleges demonstrates that the dual role of transfer and occupational programming was present from the beginning (Thelin, 2004).

The final developmental period for community colleges began with the end of World War I and gained considerable momentum after the end of World War II (Ratcliff, 1994). This period included two themes—the evolution toward open access to higher education and the emergence of adult and continuing education and community service activities. As stated previously, the open-door admissions policy has been a fundamental part of the community college mission from inception (Tillery & Deegan, 1985). In the post-war period this democratic approach to higher education drove enormous growth in the number of two-year institutions. The growth of enrollments was fueled by the passage of the GI Bill and the endorsement of community colleges by the Truman Commission (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947) as critical to providing access to postsecondary education (Medsker, 1960; Thelin, 2004; Thornton, 1972). Tillery and Deegan (1985) refer to this period as the “golden age of financial support” (p. 13) with strong backing in many states for funding community colleges and significant federal infusions in the form of financial aid and dollars for capital construction to make increased enrollments possible.

The second major advance in the post-war period was the integration of community services into the growing number of community college missions (Ratcliff, 1994). Thornton (1972) indicates that it was not until the two-year sector began to offer this type of programming that it truly earned the mantle of “community” college. Much of the occupational training that was provided by these institutions had shifted during the war to focus on the needs of defense-oriented employers. This versatility proved valuable to the community and after the war the institutions continued to tailor their offerings to the needs of local employers (Dougherty, 2001; Thornton, 1972). Some argued that these new services were simply add-ons that distracted from the core mission of occupational training and academic transfer, while others believed that community services were an important aspect that distinguished community colleges from other postsecondary institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

In summary, the story of two-year colleges began in the second half of the nineteenth century with the first institutions formally established in the early 1900s. From the very beginning, proponents assigned multiple missions to the institutions, and the missions have evolved over subsequent decades based on societal demands. The overarching emphasis during these development periods was on the different functions and offerings at community colleges and extending access to postsecondary education to a broader population. It is important to highlight that there was very little attention throughout the colleges’ developmental stages to the notion of student completion or success. Having explored the historical development of community colleges and the early views of institutional mission, the next section will analyze contemporary views of

community colleges and their roles in American higher education over the past two decades.

*Contemporary Views on the Community College Access Mission*

The historical development of community colleges is characterized by multiple missions and contrasting goals which have evolved in emphasis over time. Part of this experience stems from the emergence of these institutions to address a gap in the educational system between the two established sectors—primary and secondary education and four-year colleges and universities. Early junior colleges were referred to as “isthmian institutions” in that they connected secondary education to universities in the same way that a narrow strip of land—an isthmus—might connect two larger land masses (Koos, 1925). It has been suggested that, because of their close connection to high schools, the emergent two-year colleges were not higher education institutions at all (Hutcheson, 1999). Yet, even contemporary critics acknowledge that community colleges are postsecondary institutions, albeit subordinate in form and function to four-year universities (Brint & Karabel, 1989b; Morrison, 1961).

There has been a persistent identity crisis for these institutions from the emergence of the early junior colleges to the expansion of contemporary community colleges (Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Girardi & Stein, 2001; Levin, 2004; McCartan, 1983; Young, 1977; Zigerell, 1970). Cross and Fideler (1989) indicate that community colleges have a Janus-like quality in that they are constantly trying to balance the “flexibility and responsiveness to social change with institutional integrity and continuing commitment to the communities which they serve” (p. 216). Dowd (2007) describes

community colleges as both gateways and gatekeepers—allowing access to higher education for a broad swath of students who otherwise would not go beyond high school while also filtering out students who are not capable of/prepared for advanced studies at universities. It is crucial to note that community colleges have been plagued over time with the dual challenge of maintaining an open door while also preserving academic standards (McCartan, 1983).

To elucidate the factors contributing to the perpetual identity crisis, Levin (2000) categorizes four themes in the discourse about community college mission. These are: 1) an emphasis on the curricular functions; 2) a characterization of the broader purpose of the community college within society; 3) the place of the two-year institution within the educational pipeline; and 4) a more recent emphasis on the workforce preparation role of the colleges resulting from global economic competition. While these dialogues are not mutually exclusive, Levin's loosely-defined typology on community college functions provides a useful tool to discern the nuisances and debates about the mission of these institutions.

Much of the literature about community college missions focuses on the theme of curricular functions—academic preparation and transfer, vocational education, and remedial education—(Askin, 2007; Bogart, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Lorenzo, 1994) and accentuates the divergence between the academic transfer function and the focus on occupational training (Almeida, 1991; Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Dougherty, 2001; McCartan, 1983; Zigerell, 1970). One recurrent argument is that the shift toward a focus on vocational education undermines the traditional academic transfer function (Brint & Karabel, 1989b; Shaw & Jacobs, 2003). The trend toward technical

programming has left some to question if two-year colleges are “leaving higher education” (Clowes & Levin, 1989, p. 349).

Several authors argue that transfer should be the primary function of community colleges and suggest this role is critical to providing an affordable and accessible entry point to higher education and a bachelor’s degree (Bailey & Morest, 2006b; Bogart, 1994; Cohen, 1985; Pincus, 1994; Shannon & Smith, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Vanwagoner, Bowman, & Spraggs, 2005). Cohen (1985) suggests that a strong transfer function is imperative if two-year advocates want to preserve the place these institutions have within the formal education system. He warns that focusing too heavily on vocational training and continuing education will move the colleges to the system’s periphery.

Complicating the success of either the transfer or vocational functions at community colleges are the challenges created by the ongoing need for remedial or developmental education. States are increasingly looking to community colleges as the primary providers of remedial education (Dougherty, 2002; Jenkins & Boswell, 2002; Perin, 2006; Shaw, 2001b). While remediation, or salvaging (Eells, 1931), has always been a focus of the two-year institutions, the growing number of individuals entering higher education overall is resulting in a corresponding increase in the number of students who have academic deficiencies (Dougherty, 2002; Perin & Charron, 2006; Shaw, 2001b). The central issue with development education, similar to the broader discourse about the other functions of community colleges, is a question of limited resources. Disparate activities spread limited resources more thinly and may limit the

effectiveness of the institutions in any area (Askin, 2007; Bailey & Morest, 2004; Hendrick, Hightower, & Gregory, 2006; Kane & Rouse, 1999).

A second theme about the mission of the community college focuses on the role of the institutions in the broader society. Levin (2000) characterizes this narrative as one that examines the role of two-year institutions in promoting individual and community development, social and economic mobility, and social stratification and/or reproduction. At the heart of this dialogue is the view of community colleges as open access institutions (Ayers, 2005; Bailey & Morest, 2006a; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Dowd, 2003; McPhail & McPhail, 2006; Morest, 2006; Shannon & Smith, 2006; Townsend, 2005).

As noted previously, the open admissions approach at these institutions is very democratic in that it allows individuals from all backgrounds and levels of preparation to attend, receive an education, and move up the economic ladder (Dowd, 2003, 2007). Some critics argue that this access, while positive for some, may actually divert others from universities (Ayers, 2005; Brint, 2003; Brint & Karabel, 1989a, 1989b; Pincus, 1994; Shannon & Smith, 2006). A fuller discussion of the implications of community college attendance for educational attainment will come later in this chapter, but it is important to mention that these institutions may serve as gatekeepers (Clark, 1960; Dowd, 2007) for students unprepared for the more rigorous four-year degree and there is evidence that some students are indeed diverted from a bachelor's degree (Brint, 2003; Brint & Karabel, 1989b).

Closely related to the narrative about the societal role of community colleges, Levin (2000) indicates that there has been a third, more limited, theme about the position

of the community colleges within the broader education system. Often referred to as the educational pipeline, this line of thought highlights the crucial place community colleges hold along the pathway to a bachelor's degree or technical certification. This line of reasoning is distinct from the literature about curricular functions because the emphasis is on educational outcome (i.e. degrees or certifications) rather than the type of programmatic offerings at community colleges.

Some have suggested that the concept of the educational ladder or pipeline in the context of the community college is at odds with the notion of education for job preparation (McCartan, 1983). Others indicate that if the appropriate educational pathways are articulated, even the non-credit courses and seminars—which may or may not lead to a certificate—offered by community colleges can help individuals work toward a degree (Grubb et al., 2003). Foreshadowing a future focus of policymakers and philanthropic organizations, Cohen (1990) argued that the movement toward degree completion from either the academic or the occupational pathway would be strengthened if states would adopt policies that give incentives to colleges to push students toward degrees.

The fourth, and final, theme about community college mission articulated by Levin (2000) emerged in more recent years and emphasizes the role of these institutions as sites for workforce preparation. Job preparation and occupational education has consistently been a part of the identity of community colleges, yet Levin suggests that the current discussion about workforce preparation is centered on economics rather the individual student and/or the local community. He argues that the dialogue about workforce has shifted to an emphasis on economic competitiveness in response to



changes in the global economy. This shift has been referred to as a triumph of the educational gospel by vocationalism (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005). This discourse, which will be examined further in Chapter 4, is largely devoid of any reference to the betterment of the individual or community and instead characterizes workforce preparation to meet labor market demands (Ayers, 2005).

This shift in emphasis occurred over the past three decades as community colleges became increasingly deferential to the needs of the business community (Brint & Karabel, 1989b; Hutcherson, 1999). Hutcherson (1999) indicates that while early community colleges were initially focused on the transfer function to support the needs of universities, this changed in the 1970s when the business community began to pressure policymakers to support greater roles for these institutions in vocational training. Supporting this argument, others suggest that the close relationship between community colleges and the business community have created a situation where the colleges have become “the training arm of the employment sector” (p. 14) to the detriment of all other functions (Shaw & Jacobs, 2003)

This section has examined several interconnected views of the community college held by contemporary scholars and practitioners. These perspectives serve as context for the tasks and challenges facing two-year college leaders as they try to balance the often-divergent missions of the community colleges. What is clear from Levin’s typology specifically is that contemporary views, following the historical perspectives reviewed previously, are predominantly focused on accessibility and program diversity rather than student success and credential attainment. The next section provides a more unified approach for thinking about the comprehensive mission of the community college.

### *A Unified Framework for the Comprehensive Mission*

The most commonly-used typology for community college mission was delineated by Cohen and Brawer (2008) and includes the five following components: 1) academic transfer preparation; 2) vocational-technical education; 3) continuing education; 4) developmental education; and 5) community service. This typology is reflected in a significant portion of the related literature and represents a comprehensive view of community college missions that has been relatively stable over the past few decades. However, some have argued that this may be an overly simplistic view of the college mission (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Cross, 1985).

Cross (1985) indicates that during the 1970s and 1980s, community college leaders began to embrace a comprehensive approach to the mission of their institutions rather than explicitly specializing in one area or another. The subsequent challenge for colleges has been balancing the desire to offer the diverse functions and ensure that services provided in each area are high quality. Cross makes the following observation about comprehensiveness:

The problem with the comprehensive mission is that carrying it out with excellence suggests that all the basic functions that constitute the comprehensive community college must be done well: The transfer program must prepare students just as well as the university does for upper division work. Vocational programs must prepare students for entry-level jobs, as well as for advancement in their chosen occupations. Remedial programs must actually ameliorate past educational inequities and prepare students for citizenship, family life, cultural and esthetic appreciations, and lifelong learning. Community education must respond appropriately to the educational needs of a wide range of people and organizations (p.35).

The reality is that constraints on resources—financial, personnel, space, expertise, knowledge, etc.—inevitably have led to functional trade-offs within institutions (Askin, 2007; Bailey & Morest, 2004; Kane & Rouse, 1999; Mullin & Honeyman, 2007). Cross

(1985) observes that in spite of the desire to accommodate the conflicting demands placed on their institutions, the leaders of two-year colleges emphasize one aspect of the mission over another, often doing so in subtle ways.

Elaborating on the challenges of the comprehensive model, Cross (1985) identifies four approaches colleges use to narrow their mission: 1) a vertical focus that essentially reflects an emphasis on the transfer function; 2) a horizontal focus that emphasizes the connections with the community and business rather than the links to the formal education system (i.e. K-12 or universities); 3) an integrated focus which emphasizes general education in both the vertical and horizontal approaches but is directed at internal departments rather than external partnerships; and 4) the least popular approach, a remedial focus in which the institution primarily addresses the academic deficiencies of students.

Modifying Cross' typology of missions and functions, Bailey and Morest (2004) suggest that institutional missions at two-year colleges can be viewed in three ways: core, vertical and horizontal. They describe the core mission as focusing on "degree-granting programs that either lead to an academic associate degree, transfer to a four-year college or university, or result in a terminal-occupational degree or certificate" (p. 6). Bailey and Morest's notion of the core closely connects to Cross' (1985) discussion of integrated focus. Where Cross emphasizes a separate, yet unpopular, focus on remedial education, Bailey and Morest (2004) incorporate the developmental function within the core mission of the institution. They argue that remedial education should appropriately be thought of as a core function because the intent is to mitigate academic deficiencies in order to enable students to move toward a degree or certificate.

Emanating from the core mission, Bailey and Morest again borrow from Cross (1985) by characterizing the other functions of community colleges as either vertical or horizontal. The vertical mission is focused on relationships between and among secondary schools and universities—particularly the transitions between them. They emphasize the importance of the vertical mission within the context of the growing K-16 movement to align the formal education system. This view is also represented in the previous discussion about the educational pipeline (Cohen, 1990; Cross, 1981; Grubb et al., 2003; Levin, 2000; McCartan, 1983). The horizontal mission in Bailey and Morest’s (2004) framework is similar to Cross (1985) in that they emphasize the connection to the business community in terms of contract training and continuing education. Bailey and Morest (2004) expand the horizontal focus to include other functions such as “small-business development centers, off-campus GED and ESL classes, and summer camps for children” (p. 8).

Bailey and Morest (2004) indicate that core functions of the community college are largely focused on degree attainment either in the form of a technically-oriented associates degree or transfer to a four-year institution for a baccalaureate. The vertical mission ties the core community college functions—academic transfer, occupational education, and remedial education—to the K-12 system and four-year universities. The vertical mission in this context is best measured by the successful transition into and out of the two-year institution and is most closely related to the emerging completion agenda.

The emerging societal discourse for education is that the skills earned with a high school diploma are no longer adequate for an individual to find family-sustaining employment and enjoy a decent quality of life (Carnevale, 2007). The notion that at least

some college will be necessary for jobs in the future is driving calls for increased education attainment and the emerging completion agenda. In this environment the outcomes from core and vertical missions of community colleges articulated by Bailey and Morest (2004) are taking on greater importance in Washington, D.C., at state capitols, and in foundation board rooms. These external voices are promoting a student success logic that is likely to conflict with the traditional student access logic on community college campuses. The question that remains is whether colleges can meet the calls for improved student outcomes while also preserving their broader access mission characterized by availability to inexpensive, diverse programming. To provide additional context for this question, the next section will review the literature about education attainment for students who attend community colleges and the institutional characteristics and practices that may contribute to or hinder student completion.

### The Emerging Community College Success Logic in Context

To fully appreciate the implications of the emerging success logic for community colleges, it is important to review the extant literature related to student success and education attainment in these institutions. This section will explore a fundamental debate within the community college sector about how to best define student success in light of student intent and academic preparation. This section will also examine the limited literature about the prospects for credential attainment—whether a bachelor’s degree or less—for students who begin in community colleges. Finally, this section of the literature review will delve into research about community college characteristics that contribute to

student success and some of the promising practices that are emerging to support improved student completion rates.

*Defining Success in the Context of Student Intent and Preparation*

As community colleges grapple with the emerging student success logic, it is important to understand that the definition of student success is contested (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005; Bragg, 2001; Jones-White, Radcliffe, Huesman, & Kellogg, 2009). For the purposes of this study, student success is defined as the completion of a certificate or degree and/or successful transfer to a four-year institution. This definition is borrowed from the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count (2007) initiative and is reflective of the goals of several national organizations and foundations that are seeking to improve educational attainment (Complete College America, 2010; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2009; National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008; President Barack Obama, 2009; The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009).

While clearly articulating a definition of student success has been useful for national initiatives to focus attention and push for reform, some community college advocates suggest that such definitions are too narrow when considering the broader scope and mission of these dynamic institutions and the actual intentions of their students (Bragg, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Students enroll in community colleges for a variety of reasons including to prepare for a career, to transfer to a four-year institution, to upgrade skills, to change their career, and for personal enrichment (Alfred, 1992; Bahr, 2010a, 2013; Bailey, Jenkins, et al., 2005; VanDerLinden, 2002; Voorhees & Zhou, 2000).

It is also true that some students enter the college with no intention of earning a credential (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). As a matter of fact, one of the most frequently cited reasons—by practitioners—for community college students not attaining a credential is that they had no intention of doing so from the start. Consequently, it seems fair and appropriate to take student intentions into account when considering outcomes. If students' goals are in fact to take a few courses to upgrade their skills (Bragg, 2001; Hom, 2009) or to transfer to a university (Bailey, Jenkins, et al., 2005; Bragg, 2001; Calcagno, Crosta, Bailey, & Jenkins, 2007b; Hom, 2009), colleges should not be penalized for those that do not complete a degree. In a recent study that sought to create a typology of community college students, Bahr (2010a) identified six distinctive groupings of student behavior: transfer, vocational, drop-in, noncredit, experimental, and exploratory. Bahr's study extends previous attempts to categorize community college students (Hom, 2009; Horn & Weko, 2009; Katsinas, 2003; Merisotis & Shedd, 2003) using rigorous cluster analysis over a seven-year period to track student enrollment and course-taking patterns in California. The result is a clearer picture of how students use community colleges, which supports the notion that not all students come looking for a credential.

As the calls for improving outcomes grow louder, defining student success will require more clarity around the educational goals of students. Accurately capturing this information will also require more sophisticated methodologies to be in place (Bailey, Jenkins, et al., 2005; Jones-White et al., 2009). Regardless, we already know, based on a study by the National Center for Education Statistics (Hoachlander & Carroll, 2003) that approximately 90 percent of students who enroll in community colleges intend to earn a

credential. This same study found that only 51 percent of the students enrolled with the goal of garnering a certificate, degree, or transferring to a four-year institution actually did. There is little question that a significant number of students who enter community colleges with the intent of earning a credential are unable to do so. It is clearly important to understanding why students don't complete a degree or certificate if there is to be any improvement in outcomes.

Another often-cited factor that contributes to low completion rates at community colleges is the number of students with academic deficiencies requiring remediation before they can move into college-level coursework. College-readiness is a major national issue and the growing scope of development education is one of the most intractable problems facing community college practitioners (Almeida, 1991; Attewell et al., 2006; Bahr, 2008b, 2010b; Bailey, 2009; Bailey et al., 2010; Burley, Butner, & Cejda, 2001; Calcagno et al., 2007b; Calcagno & Long, 2008; Crews & Aragon, 2007; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2002; Horn et al., 2009; Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011; Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008; Perin, 2006). A recent study of developmental education by Bailey, Jeong and Cho (2010) points to varying analyses that suggest between 43 percent and nearly 60 percent of all entering community college students nationally require at least one remedial course.

The resources expended by students and colleges for remedial courses can be considerable (Breneman, 1998), but beyond the financial costs, a number of recent studies point to placement in developmental education courses as a significant structural barrier to student progression and success (Bahr, 2010b; Bailey et al., 2010; Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Bettinger & Long, 2005, 2007; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2002; Horn et



al., 2009; Hoyt, 1999; Hughes & Scott- Clayton, 2011; Ignash, 1997; Lesik, 2007; Mazzeo, 2002; Moss & Yeaton, 2006; Perin, 2006; Shaw, 1997; Shaw, 2001a).

Recognizing the obstacle this presents for students with academic deficiencies, a number of state and national initiatives have emphasized the redesign of developmental education as a key component of improving completion rates (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Complete College America, 2010; National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008).

Other challenges to defining student success include what some community colleges advocates argue are flawed performance metrics gauging student outcomes. The argument is that the graduation rate as calculated by the U.S. Department of Education through the Graduation Rate Survey is inadequate because part-time students, which make up a large percentage of community college enrollments, are excluded. Further, the federal approach to measuring graduation rates does not include students who successfully transfer to four-year colleges as an accomplishment for a community college student, notwithstanding that transfer is a core mission of these two-year institutions and goal of some students (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Leinbach, & Kienzl, 2006; Bailey, Jenkins, et al., 2005; Baldwin, Bensimon, Dowd, & Klieman, 2011).

The good news is that efforts are ongoing to improve the metrics used to gauge student progression and success (Committee on Measures of Student Success, 2011; Phillippe, 2011). The bad news is that improved metrics (that more accurately reflect the community college student population, as Table 1 in Chapter 1 illustrates) will not diminish the significant gap between the number of students completing credentials and the projected labor market demand for individuals with more education (Carnevale et al., 2010). It is this gap that is driving policymakers, foundations, and others to focus more

intently on improving student outcomes and pushing hard for increases in education attainment. The next section explores the literature about attainment by students who enroll in community colleges.

### *Education Attainment of Students Attending Community Colleges*

Brint and Karabel's seminal work, *The Diverted Dream* (1989b), which draws in part on the notion of "cooling out" first articulated by Clark (1960), is based on the premise that students who attend community colleges are redirected in their educational aspirations toward more technical occupations and away from the pursuit of a bachelor's degree. Brint (2003) revisited this argument and suggested that the reasons that led them to their original conclusion have only worsened with a growing percentage of community college students coming from the lower economic classes and institutional non-completion rates remaining very high. However, in a more recent study on the impact of community colleges on student educational attainment, Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person (2006) take exception with studies of the cooling out function. They indicate that many previous studies do not ask students what their education goals are and instead assume they are pursuing a degree. Given Bahr's (2010a) findings about the varied ways that students use community colleges, this omission in cooling out studies is quite problematic. Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person, after correcting for this problem, find that community colleges actually increase students aspirations through a process they call "warming up" (2006).

There have been a number of authors who have sought to resolve the debate about the impact of community college attendance on overall educational attainment. There is

little question that community colleges expand access to postsecondary education, and several studies have confirmed that states with a better developed network of community colleges enjoy higher participation levels in college (Dougherty, 2002; Grubb, 1989; Rouse, 1998). What has also been established through a series of studies is that students who begin their college experience at a community college face a diminished probability of attaining a bachelor's degree (Alfonso, 2006; Baker & Velez, 1996; Dougherty, 1991, 1992, 2001; Long & Kurlaender, 2009; Rouse, 1998).

To address the points made in the previous section about the impact of student intent, preparation, etc., on success and completion, several studies controlled for these characteristics and still found that students who started in community colleges were less likely to attain a bachelor's degree than those that began in four-year institutions (Alfonso, 2006; Long & Kurlaender, 2009). Long and Kurlaender's (2009) study specifically examined Ohio data and found that even when controlling for student and institutional characteristics like socio-economic status and college size that are frequently cited as reasons for non-completion, community college students were 14.5 percent less likely to complete a bachelor's degree after nine years.

There are persistent questions about the impact of enrolling at a community college first and the apparent "penalty" for starting at a two-year institution for students who are pursuing a bachelor's degree. However, the news is not all bad. A number of studies have also examined the success of community colleges students who do transfer to universities. These papers inspect the performance of native students, who begin their postsecondary work at a four-year university, compared to those students that transfer from a community college. The evidence from these studies is mixed, but it does suggest

that those students that make a successful transition from community colleges do as well as those that started at the university (Alfonso, 2006; Ishitani, 2008; Melguizo & Dowd, 2009; Wang, 2009). Another bright spot in this research is that students who enter community colleges perform better in terms of sub-baccalaureate completion rates than their counterparts who enter four-year institutions (Dougherty, 1987, 2001; Leigh & Gill, 2003; Roksa, 2006).

The open question is why does attendance at community colleges hinder bachelor's degree attainment? Brint and Karabel (1989a) argue that the expanding vocational emphasis has diverted capable students to the sub-baccalaureate technical programs. Roska (2006) asserts that the vocational focus itself is not the problem. He observes that the growing emphasis on short-term certificate programs could be diverting students from degree programs. This perspective is logical given that many community college students attend part-time, often work multiple jobs, and the pressure to move quickly toward a credential is considerable.

Another perspective on why attainment for those who attend community colleges is lower relates to the students "social know-how" (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003, p. 120). In their study, Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum argue that the knowledge needed to navigate life as a community college student is comparable to that required at a four-year institution, yet two-year institutions do little to impart this knowledge to those that enroll. They highlight seven obstacles many community colleges students face because they lack the appropriate knowledge and/or college-going experience via family or friends: (1) bureaucratic hurdles, (2) confusing program choices, (3) student-initiated guidance, (4) limited counselor availability, (5) poor advice from staff, (6) slow detection of costly

mistakes, and (7) poor handling of conflicting demands. These obstacles are associated with many of the emerging promising practices to better support students that are addressed in the next section.

### *Institutional Characteristics and Practices That Contribute To Student Success*

With the substantial pressure from foundations and policymakers to improve completion rates in postsecondary education—particularly in community colleges—one of the major outcomes of these efforts has been a considerable increase in research about the challenges facing the colleges and a delineation of institutional characteristics and promising practices that contribute to improved student outcomes. This section briefly explores this literature.

In an article about the challenges and opportunities that community colleges face to increasing completion rates, Goldrick-Rab (2010) contends that reform efforts must occur on multiple levels if student outcomes are to improve. She suggests that the three levels are: 1) a macro-level opportunity structure that deals with issues of funding, governance, incentives, and other connected social policies that impact educational institution; 2) institutional or campus-level reforms that impact student outcomes such as access to credit-bearing coursework, pedagogical practices, the role of faculty, informational requirements, and organizational learning; and 3) individual student-level consideration of the social inequalities affecting student success such as at-risk student characteristics, academic challenges, economic challenges, social and information hurdles, and attendance patterns. Goldrick-Rab's approach to thinking about reform is useful and tracks with the multi-level aspects of the conceptual framework for this study.

The reforms at the macro-level opportunity structure and the institutional-level parallel the discussion in this chapter about the shifts of institutional logics at both the societal- and the field-level. The student-level considerations have been the subject of substantial research and are beyond the scope of this study. The dynamics of the opportunity structure reforms in Ohio and nationally are described in both the introduction for this study as well as the methodology chapter. College-level reforms that impact student progression and completion are at the heart of this study and the extant literature in these areas for community colleges are explored below.

Some of the first studies of campus-level factors that impact community college students outcomes were conducted by the Community College Research Center as part of their work for the early years of the Achieving the Dream initiative (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2005; Calcagno, Bailey, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2008). In these studies, they found several characteristics that adversely impact student success including a negative relationship between graduation rates and institutional size, the percentage of minority students enrolled, the percentage of students attending part-time, and the number of adjunct faculty at the community college. These studies also found a positive relationship between the amount of instructional and student services expenditures and graduation rates.

The negative relationships between institutional size, the percentage of minority enrollment, and success rates are not surprising given the propensity for large urban colleges to have greater numbers of minority students who are also more likely to be academically underprepared. Sadly, this reflects the conventional wisdom about the achievement gaps among various student subgroups. Encouragingly, the positive

relationship between expenditures and outcomes suggests that there is something that can be done about it. The next section will highlight a number of institutional reforms that are having an impact on student outcomes. Many of the interventions and practices profiled below not only seek to address the academic deficiencies of students, but also pointedly strive to address structural and organizational shortcomings that exacerbate the deficits in the social know-how of community college students (Deil-Amen, 2011; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003).

*Emerging evidence-based practices that contribute to student success*

In early 2011, the Community College Research Center published a series entitled the *Assessment of Evidence Series* to document efforts within the community college sector to improve student outcomes. After an exhaustive review of the literature describing colleges' promising practices and policies, a series of eight papers pointed to four broad steps institutions can take to improve the likelihood of student success (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2011):

1. Colleges should work to simplify the structures and bureaucracies that students must navigate.
2. Broad engagement of all faculty should become the foundation for policies and practices to increase student success. This should include active faculty involvement in student support activities.
3. Colleges should be encouraged to align course curricula, define common learning outcomes and assessments, and set high standards for those outcomes.
4. Colleges should collect and use data to inform a continuous improvement process.

One of the most important "innovations" advanced in this series is that it stated explicitly that community colleges, on the whole, are not student-friendly. College policies and practices are often too confusing and leave too much discretion to students

who are not familiar with the college-going experience. An article regarding promising practices in California community colleges (Levin, Cox, Cerven, & Haberler, 2010) suggest four criteria colleges need to adopt to better support students—more cohesion in programming, better cooperation between college departments, improved connections with students, and greater consistency in college policy and practice. In the *Assessment of Evidence* papers, Karp (2011) builds on this point, highlighting that programs associated with positive student outcomes seem to involve one or more of the following mechanisms: (1) creating social relationships, (2) clarifying aspirations and enhancing commitment, (3) developing college know-how, and (4) making college life feasible.

Operationalizing these mechanisms on individual campuses has been the focus of significant community college reform efforts of the past decade. Table 2.2 below provides an overview of many of the specific practices furthered as part this substantial reform movement. Some reforms have focused specifically on improving student supports or integrating these services with academic affairs through such practices as intrusive advising, learning communities, supplemental instruction, and student success courses (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; West, Shulock, & Moore, 2012). Other promising practices have focused on college-wide efforts to build commitment for student success through strategic planning and greater use of data to inform decision-making (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bailey et al., 2011; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010).



Table 2.2: Institutional Practices Contributing to Student Success

Category	Examples of practices	Citations
College commitment and focus on student success	Strategic plan focused on student success; collaborative environment between academic and student affairs focused on student needs; leadership commitment to improving student outcomes	(Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bailey et al., 2011; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012)
Use of data to improve programs and services	Using data to prioritize actions; institutional researchers track student outcomes; colleges collect data to inform a continuous improvement process	(Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bailey et al., 2011; Jenkins, 2007; West et al., 2012)
High-quality instruction with engagement from the faculty	Faculty have high expectations for students and help students see meaningful pathways to their goals; faculty development focused on improving teaching; accelerated or contextualized learning; experiential learning	(Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012)
Streamlined pathways to credentials and careers	Clear college readiness standards; coherent programs of study with roadmap to completion of programs; career pathways with stackable credentials	(Bahr, 2010a, 2012; Bailey et al., 2011; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012)
Ongoing advising and monitoring student progression	Colleges provide sufficient resources for core advising function to ensure adequate ratios between advisors and students; colleges streamline bureaucratic processes; mandatory advising and orientation are in place	(Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012)
Integrated student supports and services	Student success or life skill courses are mandatory for students with academic deficiencies, learning communities or paired courses establish cohort learning; early warning and intrusive advising systems are in place to support at-risk students promptly	(Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012)

A more recent focus of reform efforts has been to create greater clarity around the programs of study students enter (Bahr, 2012; Bragg, 2011; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012). Jenkins and Cho's (2012) research suggests that students should enter a defined program of study as soon as possible. They found that students "who do not enter a program within a year of enrollment are far less likely to ever enter a program and, therefore, are less likely to earn

a credential” (p. 3). The point of many of these pathway studies is to better understand when and where students fall out of the system, identify interventions to fix the problem, and streamline the overall student experience.

In the case of promising practices highlighted in this section, student progression and success requires that college leaders make it a priority. As has been noted several times, community colleges operate on very tight budgets and, by definition; decisions to adopt the practices described above will require reallocation of resources. The overarching focus of this study is on the ability and willingness of presidents to shift the material practices and the belief system in their colleges, which have functioned under the access logic since inception to one that is now focused on student success.

#### Overarching Conceptual Framework

In a fairly recent article, Terry O’Banion (2010), the president emeritus of the League for Innovation in Community Colleges, suggests that the emerging “completion agenda” signifies a “tectonic shift in the community college zeitgeist” (p. 1). He argues that, while improving student success is an important endeavor, there should be more consideration given to the unintended consequences of this national push. On the surface, a shift in focus from student access to success may seem minor. However, the implications in terms of governmental expectations and subsidies, program offerings, staffing, the type of students admitted, and the kinds of interventions employed to help students could be profound.

Likewise, a recent report from the American Association of Community College entitled *Rebalancing the Mission: The Community College Completion Challenge*

(Mullin, 2010) highlights the issues two-year colleges are encountering in this evolving context. The tension between breadth of mission and quality of service notwithstanding, policymakers and local community leaders value the colleges' versatility and efficiency and encourage these divergent functions. College leaders will be hesitant to walk away from aspects of their mission that have contributed to the support they enjoy. However, increased student success will likely require investments in more robust student supports. Tight revenue streams suggest internal reallocation will be the only way to create sustainable funding to meet this need. College presidents will have to make tough choices to strike this balance and this study will explore how they view these alternatives.

This chapter delineated the components of a conceptual framework to guide this inquiry. Institutional logics—which constitute the beliefs and practices within an organization or field that guide action through collective identities and categories of behavior—serve as the basis for the framework of this study. Previous research indicates dominant institutional logics are not stable and can be challenged. Competing logics disrupt incumbent beliefs and social identities through the intentional actions of individuals or organizations seeking divergent change. Table 2.3 below illustrates the competing logics within the community college sector.

The dominant access logic reflects the long-held view of community colleges as open admissions institutions that maximize convenience and a range of program choices and offerings. The shift of the community college sector toward the insurgent logic emphasizing successful student outcomes begins to raise questions about who the colleges serve, at what costs, and under what conditions. The lens changes to credential attainment, which will lead the colleges to consider a markedly different “set of material

practices” (Friedland and Alford, 1991, p. 248) and rethink their strategy and overall mission to maintain legitimacy.

Table 2.3: Competing Institutional Logics in the Community College Field

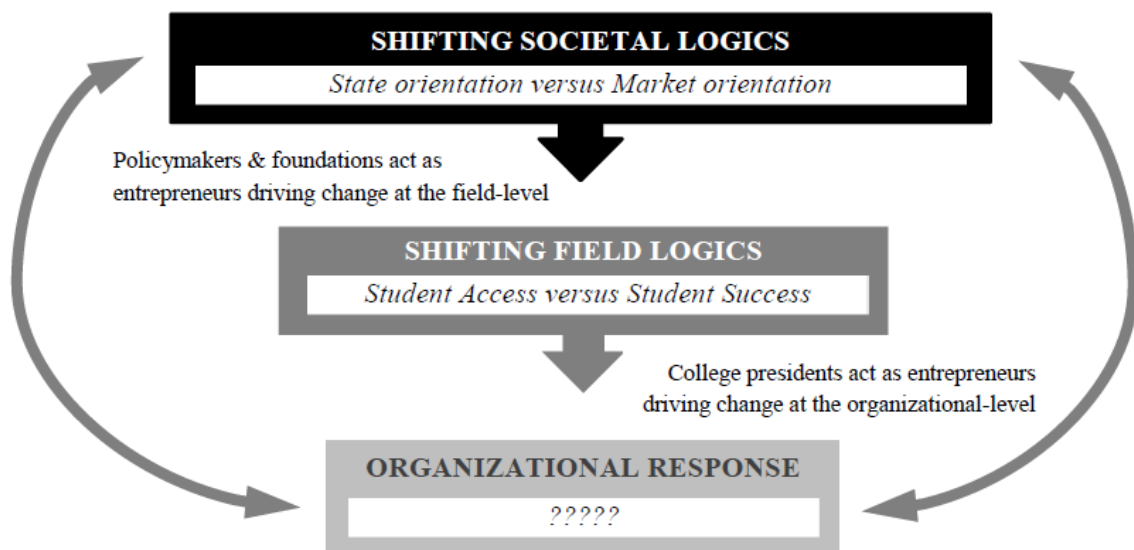
Characteristics	Access Logic	Success Logic
<i>Sources of Legitimacy</i>	Number of students enrolled and breadth of programs	Number of students receiving credentials
<i>Sources of Authority</i>	Board of trustees, presidents, and local stakeholders	Governors, legislators, and, foundations
<i>Sources of Identity</i>	Community college as a center of open opportunity	Community college as a purveyor of credentials
<i>Basis of Norms</i>	Increase enrollment & scope of programs	Increase the number of credentials awarded
<i>Basis of Attention</i>	Entry at the start of each academic term/year	Retention/completion at the end of each term/year/program
<i>Basis of Strategy</i>	Grow number of "customers" through marketing and recruitment	Grow through the retention of current "customers"
<i>Informal Control Mechanisms</i>	Local influence	State and national influence
<i>Economic System</i>	Welfare capitalism	Market capitalism

Note. Table adapted from Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012) and community college literature.

The dominant access logic reflects the long-held view of community colleges as open admissions institutions that maximize convenience and a range of program choices and offerings. The shift of the community college sector toward the insurgent logic emphasizing successful student outcomes begins to raise questions about who the colleges serve, at what costs, and under what conditions. The lens changes to credential attainment, which will lead the colleges to consider a markedly different “set of material practices” (Friedland and Alford, 1991, p. 248) and rethink their strategy and overall mission to maintain legitimacy.

As was stated earlier, logics operate on multiple levels. This is also the case in the community college field. The competing access and success logics did not emerge from within the community colleges themselves. Rather, they grew from external pressure driven by a move toward a market-oriented logic on the societal-level (see Table 2.1 earlier in this chapter). Figure 2.2 below demonstrates “lower” level units of analysis (i.e. organizational fields and individual organizations) and their corresponding logics as nested within “higher” levels.

Figure 2.2: Nested Model of Community College Institutional Logics



Dominant institutional logics, on any level, are challenged by emergent logics when promoted by institutional entrepreneurs. To be successful in the advocacy for change, the institutional entrepreneur must leverage enabling conditions—including environmental shocks and their own standing within the organization or field—to create a vision that will mobilize allies and other resources to their cause. The shift toward a market logic on the societal-level, which for the purposes of this study has manifested

itself in the near consensus about labor market demand for higher education levels, has been promoted aggressively by foundations and policymakers (i.e. the societal-level institutional entrepreneurs). As a result, the focus on education attainment (i.e. the emergent institutional logic at the field-level) is challenging the long-held emphasis on access (i.e. the dominant field-level institutional logic) at these traditionally open admissions colleges. The outstanding question is how community colleges will respond to these shifting logics and if presidents will become institutional entrepreneurs in their own organizations in response to the external pressure.

Three findings chapters will explore the levels illustrated in Figure 2.2 from the perspective of Ohio community college presidents. The first, Chapter 4, will examine more closely the presidents' views on shifting societal expectations about education and the role of foundations and policymakers as change agents (i.e. institutional entrepreneurs). Chapter 5 will delve into the presidents' perspectives of the emergent completion agenda and its implications for the field of community colleges. Chapter 6 will examine more closely how the presidents see their own colleges responding to these shifts and their individual role in the changes.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative exploration of how community college presidents view the tension between student access and success, and how their perspective shapes the positioning of their colleges. The research strategy for this study emerges from the conceptual framework presented in the previous chapter, which accentuates competing institutional logics and the role of institutional entrepreneurs in resolving or mitigating such divergence. Before writing more about the data collection process, the decisions made about study participants, and the analysis of interview transcripts and other documents, I will describe my interpretative philosophical orientation toward inquiry within the broader literature about research paradigms.

#### *Research Paradigm/Philosophical Orientation*

In perhaps one of the most influential books of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century—*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*—Thomas Kuhn refers to a paradigm as “universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners” (1996, p. x). While articulating his view of paradigms as a set of practices that define a scientific discipline, Kuhn makes a distinction between the natural sciences and social sciences, stressing that there is more agreement about the philosophical underpinnings of chemistry, physics, and biology than those of sociology

and psychology. Additionally, much has been made of the distinctions between the “hard” and “soft” sciences—and these differences have fueled a debate about divergent research paradigms.

Seeking to bring clarity to this debate, Guba and Lincoln (1994) convey a simple, yet elegant, approach for researchers to examine their own philosophical orientation to inquiry. They suggest that researchers should answer the following questions concerning their ontological, epistemological, and methodological views:

- 1) What is the form of nature and what can be known about it?
- 2) What is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what is known?
- 3) How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? (1994, p. 108)

Guba and Lincoln indicate that these questions must be answered sequentially, meaning that an individual’s methodological orientation is dictated by their view of epistemology, which is in turn determined by the researcher’s ontological point of view. Guba and Lincoln (1994) use these three questions to create a typology to examine four competing paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory (and other similar approaches), and constructivism. While the post-positivism and critical paradigms represent important perspectives, my own interpretative orientation is best articulated through a discussion of the contrast between positivism and constructivism (1994). Before describing my views it is important to note that authors use a variety of terms to describe these two orientations. Manning and Stage (2003) refer to these paradigms as conventional and constructivist, while Burrell and Morgan describe the perspectives using the terms objective and subjective (1979).



Describing the ontology of the positivist and constructivist paradigms, Guba and Lincoln (1994) indicate that differences between the two are based on how the researcher views reality. Positivists believe there is one, identifiable reality. By comparison, the constructivist view is relative to an individual's point of view. Borrowing from Berger and Luckmann's seminal work, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), reality under this orientation is socially constructed with an emphasis on the lived experience. Burrell and Morgan (1979) use the terms nominalism and realism where reality is respectively based on individual cognition or is tangible and measurable. My ontological point of view is that reality is indeed relative and dependent on local context and interpretation.

Epistemologically, Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that positivists view the researcher and the "object" of the inquiry as completely independent and any threats to this neutrality should be eliminated to allow findings that can be replicated. By contrast, constructivists assume that there is interaction between the research participants and the investigator. In fact, it is through the connection between the researcher and the study subjects that findings are co-created. Burrell and Morgan (1979) also describe the relationship between the investigator and study participants as needing to be independent in large part because of the empirical focus on causal connections. The subjective approach, which I endorse, rejects this detachment in the pursuit of more nuanced understanding.

Comparing the methodological differences between positivists and constructivists, Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight the deductive, hypothesis-testing approach on one hand and an interpretative and inductive style on the other. The methodological difference between these two paradigms encapsulates the quantitative/qualitative divide

that continues in scholarly research. To further illuminate the distinction, Burrell and Morgan (1979) point to the idiographic approach that places a premium on first-hand knowledge gained through subjective methods such as interviews and participant observation. Conversely, they describe the nomothetic approach that subscribes to rigorous techniques more reflective of the empiricism of the natural sciences. My view of methodology is much more in line with the constructivist paradigm as a means of gaining deeper understanding of complex phenomenon.

In summary, the distinction between these two perspectives can be found in the scope, findings, focus, data, and results of the research conducted. A researcher operating under the constructivist approach will study a phenomenon in-depth. Findings are interpretive, rich in contextual detail, and focused on a deeper understanding of an individual's point of view. By contrast, the positivist orientation requires the researcher to examine an issue with a very broad scope for findings that are generalizable to a larger group and largely devoid of context for individual cases.

While there is place for positivist paradigm, my philosophical perspective is firmly grounded in the interpretive orientation. Ontologically, I believe that the world is complex and it is through interactions with others that we socially construct what ultimately is a subjective reality. My view is that knowledge is socially constructed and that our values and beliefs—as much as observable events and measurable facts—shape what we know. The qualitative methodological approach for this study follows predictably from these ontological and epistemological views. Given this research paradigm, the questions posed in this study require fieldwork to develop an understanding—in this case about the college presidents' differing values and beliefs—

shaped by my own personal experience. This inductive approach to these complex issues will generate new knowledge and understanding that also contributes to existing theory.

### *Interviews and Data Collection*

To understand the opinions and beliefs of presidents about student access, success, and their related implications for the college mission, I employed semi-structured interviews with a series of open-ended questions (Merriam, 1988; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). Most interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, but some interviews were performed via telephone due to time constraints. While the goal was to speak with all 23 community colleges presidents in Ohio, ultimately 19 interviews were conducted. Fifteen interviews were conducted in-person and 4 were conducted over the telephone. In addition to presidential interviews, four supplemental interviews were conducted with key experts at the state and national levels to gain perspective about the mission of community colleges and the success of students that attend these institutions. The extra interviews included two individuals from national intermediaries—one based in Boston, MA and the other based in Washington, DC—working with community colleges and state policymakers to promote improved student outcomes. There were also two interviews conducted with state-level policy actors in Ohio. All supplemental interviews were conducted by telephone. All of the presidential and supplemental participants were offered confidentiality, which will be maintained throughout the study.

Prior to each interview I reviewed the participant's biography and the college (or organizational) website. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (see

Appendix A) at the start of each interview. All but two of the presidential and supplemental interviews were recorded, but I also took notes throughout each conversation to aid with the analytic phase of the study. For the two interviews that were not recorded, I took detailed notes of the discussion. In most instances I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix B), but occasionally I needed to deviate from the protocol based on the responses from the participant.

The interview protocol is reflective of the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 2. The melding of institutional logics and the notion of institutional entrepreneurship in one conceptual framework guided the flow of questions in the interview protocol. Interviews began with an exploration of the presidents' professional background and progressed into a discussion of the community college mission and their interpretation of the effectiveness of their institution in meeting this mission. The examination of the presidents' experiences provides valuable context for a later discussion about their potential roles as institutional entrepreneurs. The questions about the college mission and institutional effectiveness offer important presidential points of view about the historic role of community colleges in regard to the student access logic. The last several questions in the interview protocol surface the presidents' views about the emerging student success logic, as well as the factors they see driving this agenda and its potential implications for their colleges.

To maximize the number conducted in-person, presidential interviews were scheduled over a short period with little time to reflect on each one individually. To ensure that appropriate adjustments were made to the protocol as the interviews continued, I listened to the interview recordings while also reviewing my handwritten

notes. Each interview was then transcribed by a third party allowing for immediate review upon receipt from the transcription service. Given the busy schedules of participants, member checking was not conducted as part of this study. Participants would have been provided copies of the transcripts if asked; however, none did.

Finally, in addition to the one-on-one interviews, I also gathered relevant documents including presidents' biographies, college strategic plans, accreditation reports, and board minutes from the colleges. I also gathered relevant state documents from the Ohio Board of Regents and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges as well as key publications from major national completion initiatives that have been active in Ohio. These documents provided valuable context to the participants' comments as I progressed through the interviews.

### *Study Population*

My methodological approach to this study focuses on interviews with the presidents at 19 of the 23 community colleges in Ohio. Ohio was selected as the location of this study because it has been the focus of significant foundation and policy activity around college completion and I had direct access to several study participants as a result of relationships established from previous professional experience. The context in Ohio is described in more detail below.

I decided to focus on community college presidents' views of student access and success because their leadership position at institutions and their attention to external pressures made them a key constituency to understanding organizational responses to the changing expectations from policymakers, etc. (Amey, 2005; Boggs, 2003; Dressel,

1987; Levin, 1998; Shults, 2009; Vaughan & Weisman, 1998). The personal views of presidents can dictate the degree to which an individual college embraces shifting external expectations. Presidents play a crucial role in setting the tone and strategic direction on campus. They secure buy-in from key campus constituencies to move a particular initiative or agenda at the college, which is crucial for them to serve as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana et al., 2009; DiMaggio, 1988). Many of the 1,200 community colleges in the United States have publicly stated that their goal is student success. This study will attempt to differentiate between institutions in Ohio that are rhetorically committed to student success and those that are *actually* changing institutional behavior to realize improved outcomes.

It is also important to note that another, smaller set of supplemental interviews were conducted to better understand the extent of the external pressure facing community colleges and their presidents. These supplemental interviews included dialogue with a staff member from the Ohio Community College Association and a senior leader at the Ohio Board of Regents. These individuals in Ohio were chosen because of their knowledge of and involvement in the completion-related initiatives in the state. A staff member from the national office of Achieving the Dream, Inc., which is one of the key national completion initiatives operating in Ohio, was also selected for an interview. Finally, a senior leader at Jobs for the Future was selected for an interview because this national intermediary organization is involved in several completion initiatives across the country including Ohio.

*Ohio Community Colleges: Presidential Background and Institutional Context*

To gain a deeper understanding about how presidents view the issues of student access and student success and the connection with college mission, it is important to have a better sense of their personal background and the trajectory of their careers. To this end, each interview began with a discussion about the president’s background. While the study will return to a discussion of the presidents’ backgrounds in later chapters, Table 3.1 includes some interesting highlights.

Table 3.1: Professional Profile of Ohio Community College Presidents

College	Gender	Years in Current Position*	Prior Professional Experience	Highest Education	Experience in Other States
Belmont	M	13	CC, for-profit higher ed, & accounting	PhD - Higher Education & MBA	CT, FL, RI
Central Ohio	F	8	CC, K-12 education, & health care	PhD - Higher Education	no
Cincinnati State	M	1	Medical practice, & elected official	MD & MA in Public Health	MA
Clark State	F	(13)	CC	PhD - Higher Education	MN
Columbus State	M	1	Public university, CC, & consulting	PhD - Ed Policy & Leadership & MBA	FL
Cuyahoga	F	(19)	CC & K-12 education	PhD - CC Leadership	KY, IL, MN
Eastern Gateway	F	(12)	CC & K-12 education	PhD - Curriculum & Instruction	KS, WA
Edison State	M	23	CC	PhD - Curriculum & Learning	IA, NJ
Hocking	M	2	CC & university researcher	PhD - Ed Policy & Administration	MN, NY
Lakeland	M	10	CC, public finance, & accounting	PhD - Management	no
Lorain	M	24	CC	PhD - Higher Education	FL
Marion Tech	M	39	CC	PhD - Higher Education	no
North Central	M	3	K-12 education	MA - Education	no
Northwest State	M	3	CC	PhD - Higher Education Administration	no
Owens	M	(2)	CC	PhD - Higher Education	IL, IN, SC
Rhodes State	F	5	CC, public university	PhD - Higher Education	GA, TX, MA
Rio Grande	F	1	CC, state system office	PhD - Communications	NY, OK
Sinclair	M	8	CC	PhD - CC Leadership	AR, FL, TX
Southern State	M	1	K-12 education	PhD - Education	no
Stark State	M	7	CC, CC system office	PhD - Psychology	MA, NH
Terra	F	8	CC	PhD - English	no
Washington State	F	9	CC	PhD - CC Leadership	IN
Zane State	M	7	CC, military career	PhD - Human Dev Counseling	AL

Note. Information compiled from the presidential biographies provided by the individual colleges.

\* Numbers in parentheses are those who have been presidents at other institutions as well.

The average presidential tenure in Ohio was 9.1 years at the time that the interviews were conducted. Four presidents had particularly long tenures—19, 23, 24, and 39 years—respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, eight presidents had been in

their positions for three years or less and only one of these newer leaders had been a president at another institution. This trend reflects recent reports about the expected “tsunami” of presidential retirements in the community college sector over the next few years (Boggs, 2003; Mendoza et al., 2009; Shults, 2001). Somewhat surprisingly, only four of the presidents in Ohio served previously as CEOs of another institution and three of those individuals were women. Overall, 8 of the 23 Ohio presidents were women.

In regard to educational background, all of the presidents held a doctorate except one, who had a master’s in education. This individual was also one of the three presidents who did not have previous professional experience at a community college. Eight presidents had a Ph.D. in higher education, two others had doctorates in education policy and leadership, and three had degrees specifically in community college leadership. Two presidents had completed doctoral programs in curriculum and instruction and one had a degree in education more generally. Finally, two presidents held doctorates in psychology-related programs, one received their Ph.D. in English, another had a Ph.D. in communications, and the final person had a MD.

Turning to the professional experience of the presidents, it is not surprising that 20 of the presidents had experience in community colleges before taking their current post. Two others came from long careers in primary and secondary education both had been school district superintendents. Three other presidents worked in the K-12 education sector before making the transition to community colleges. Three presidents worked for other sectors of higher education including two at research universities, two at private non-profit universities, and one with experience at a for-profit institution. Three of the presidents had business experience—two as accountants and one as a management



consultant. Three presidents had other unique experiences including one with a career in the military and two who spent their early careers in health care. Overall, 10 of the presidents spent their entire careers working with community colleges, including two who had also worked in a state system office for community colleges.

Finally, 16 of the 23 presidents had experience working at community colleges in states other than Ohio. Ten of these individual worked in two or three additional states. There is no particular pattern to the states where presidents had worked other than four held positions at colleges in Florida. Additionally, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York were stops for at least two presidents during their career.

In addition to understanding the background of the presidents, it is also valuable to briefly explore the institutional context of each of the community colleges in Ohio. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below draw from the Delta Cost Project Database (Lenihan, 2012), which is part of the analysis conducted by the U.S. Department of Education through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Table 3.2 outlines key student data and completions for the two-year colleges, while Table 3.3 highlights information about the institutions finances and employees.

Many of the data in Table 3.2 are self-explanatory. However, a pattern worth noting is that the four largest colleges—Columbus State, Cuyahoga, Owens and Sinclair Community Colleges—have among the largest percentages of minority students in the state. Of particular relevance to this study, these four institutions also have the lowest percentage of students graduating on time. IPEDS defines graduating on time, or within 150 percent of normal time, as three years for community colleges (Lenihan, 2012). This suggests a negative relationship between the percentage of minority students enrolled and

the rate of those graduating on time—a trend that is not necessarily surprising given the extensive literature about the achievement gap. These data do not bode well for the State of Ohio’s completion goals since these four colleges—each with enrollments over twenty thousand—constitute 52 percent of all enrollments statewide. The next tier of colleges

Table 3.2: Ohio Community College Student Characteristics

College	Total Fall Enrollment 2010	Fall FTE Enrollment 2010	Student SubGroups Fall 2010 Enrollments						Associate Degrees Granted	Awards (< 2yrs) Granted	% Graduating on time
			Full-Time	Black	Hispanic	White	Other Race	Age 25+			
Belmont	2,172	1,785	73%	3%	0%	89%	7%	48%	280	72	31%
Central Ohio	4,350	2,930	51%	7%	1%	85%	5%	53%	538	99	16%
Cincinnati State	10,165	6,113	40%	26%	1%	62%	11%	49%	1,132	369	13%
Clark State	4,032	2,612	47%	9%	1%	62%	28%	52%	288	64	7%
Columbus State	28,539	18,135	45%	23%	2%	67%	7%	46%	1,768	740	7%
Cuyahoga	29,807	18,054	41%	30%	3%	55%	11%	49%	2,007	354	4%
Eastern Gateway	2,120	1,444	52%	8%	0%	76%	16%	38%	164	106	23%
Edison State	3,519	2,122	40%	4%	1%	91%	4%	43%	275	63	na
Hocking	6,340	4,932	67%	6%	1%	86%	6%	38%	631	843	27%
Lakeland	9,406	5,915	44%	13%	2%	79%	6%	44%	875	187	10%
Lorain	12,798	7,849	42%	9%	7%	79%	4%	43%	1,234	130	10%
Marion Tech	2,659	1,802	51%	6%	1%	91%	2%	49%	205	314	26%
North Central	3,595	2,051	35%	6%	1%	87%	5%	44%	341	105	13%
Northwest State	3,665	1,978	31%	2%	5%	83%	10%	51%	273	86	22%
Owens	22,530	13,171	37%	13%	4%	72%	10%	50%	1,174	470	10%
Rhodes State	4,147	2,952	57%	9%	1%	87%	2%	44%	524	151	25%
Sinclair	21,561	13,887	46%	15%	2%	69%	14%	50%	1,683	2,237	8%
Southern State	3,363	2,513	62%	2%	0%	94%	4%	45%	387	77	20%
Stark State	12,476	7,735	43%	15%	1%	76%	8%	49%	1,001	140	14%
Terra	3,152	2,027	46%	5%	7%	81%	7%	44%	211	115	13%
Washington State	2,184	1,386	45%	1%	1%	97%	0%	44%	273	38	19%
Zane State	2,592	2,021	67%	5%	0%	91%	3%	49%	362	28	23%

Note. Adapted from the Delta Cost Project Database (Lenihan, 2012). Data for Rio Grande Community College was not available in this database.

with at least 10,000 students—Cincinnati State, Lorain, and Stark State—fare slightly better in terms of graduate rates within 150% of normal time, but even these percentages are in the low teens. While these statistics are not vastly different than comparable sized institutions in other states, with 7 out of every 10 students in Ohio enrolled at one of the

seven colleges with the lowest graduation rates helps to shed light on the imperative about improving student completion rates.

Table 3.3: Ohio Community College Institutional Characteristics

College	Campus Setting	Sources of Revenue & Amount			Tuition Revenue	% Revenue	Faculty & Employees		
		Tuition & Fees	State Appropriations	Local Appropriations			Total Faculty	% PT Faculty	Total Employees
Belmont	Rural	\$ 7,758,146	\$ 4,899,228	\$ -	58%	172	78%	294	
Central Ohio	Suburban	\$ 15,905,017	\$ 8,942,603	\$ -	59%	276	79%	433	
Cincinnati State	City	\$ 43,443,355	\$ 29,538,677	\$ -	55%	724	74%	1,021	
Clark State	Suburban	\$ 13,178,518	\$ 8,741,898	\$ -	54%	494	87%	901	
Columbus State	City	\$ 87,265,147	\$ 53,904,660	\$ -	56%	1,612	82%	2,689	
Cuyahoga	City	\$ 55,557,655	\$ 52,490,120	\$ 81,327,589	23%	1,583	76%	3,263	
Eastern Gateway	Small City	\$ 5,039,979	\$ 4,878,823	\$ 773,937	34%	179	79%	275	
Edison State	Rural	\$ 7,220,378	\$ 6,108,169	\$ -	49%	236	78%	383	
Hocking	Town	\$ 27,248,780	\$ 14,271,761	\$ -	57%	345	49%	620	
Lakeland	Suburban	\$ 11,481,913	\$ 20,212,127	\$ 10,599,945	25%	630	81%	997	
Lorain	City	\$ 27,433,381	\$ 23,263,863	\$ 18,866,249	31%	683	81%	1,319	
Marion Tech	Town	\$ 8,540,748	\$ 5,910,693	\$ -	56%	127	67%	220	
North Central	Rural	\$ 10,659,998	\$ 7,913,165	\$ -	48%	219	67%	356	
Northwest State	Rural	\$ 12,562,077	\$ 8,981,224	\$ -	55%	215	80%	322	
Owens	Suburban	\$ 55,336,093	\$ 37,070,052	\$ -	56%	1,356	85%	1,917	
Rhodes State	Rural	\$ 14,992,727	\$ 9,153,595	\$ -	53%	231	71%	408	
Sinclair	City	\$ 44,949,956	\$ 41,414,612	\$ 34,239,654	33%	1,285	71%	2,336	
Southern State	Rural	\$ 10,709,796	\$ 6,247,904	\$ -	50%	196	70%	462	
Stark State	Suburban	\$ 36,081,537	\$ 20,206,375	\$ -	58%	815	80%	1,113	
Terra	Rural	\$ 10,269,316	\$ 5,312,083	\$ -	58%	204	80%	335	
Washington State	Small City	\$ 7,111,808	\$ 6,435,278	\$ -	46%	179	64%	295	
Zane State	Town	\$ 17,655,559	\$ 5,496,590	\$ -	71%	210	73%	296	

Note. Adapted from the Delta Cost Project Database (Lenihan, 2012). Data for Rio Grande Community College was not available in this database.

Table 3.3 provides some additional information about Ohio community colleges namely the setting of the college, their sources of revenue, and the number of employees. Again, these data are fairly straightforward, but one trend is useful to highlight. Five of the colleges—Cuyahoga, Eastern Gateway, Lakeland, Lorain, and Sinclair—receive support from local appropriations in the form of a local property tax. The difference in

funding arrangements stems from the origins of the colleges and distinctions in state law about governance and local funding.

The local funds these five colleges receive are in addition to the dollars they collect from state appropriations and tuition. In return for local support, the in-district tuition rates at these colleges are lower than those in the rest of the state, making these institutions less reliant on tuition. The implications of constrained resources will be explored in detail later, but the fiscal advantage enjoyed by these five colleges with local support in comparison with their peer institutions is substantial. For example, levy-supported Sinclair Community College had approximately \$28 million more in revenue in 2010 than Owens Community College, despite that the two institutions are very similar in size and student make-up. The impact of this resource difference can be seen in the percentage of part-time faculty at these two colleges—85 percent versus 71 percent—and the number of total employees—1,917 versus 2,336.

### *Ohio Community Colleges: Policy and Philanthropic Context*

Early on in the research design process, the decision was made to explore the core research question of this study in a single state—Ohio. This is partly because a focus on institutions in one state is helpful to isolate the views of the presidents and to be unencumbered by the implications of differing state policies and political contexts. But it is also because Ohio is an important state in which to work. Ohio policymakers have made increasing educational attainment a priority and this emphasis has led to a number of policy efforts in recent years to increase the number of students going to college and completing a credential. Finally, Ohio has also garnered significant attention from

national foundations seeking to improve student outcomes in community colleges. In this section, I will describe the relevant policy and philanthropic efforts in Ohio and why these efforts make the state a particularly valuable place to conduct this study.

### *Public policy context in Ohio*

The governance structure of public higher education in Ohio makes it just the right setting to study institutional behavior in the face of changing expectations. The Ohio Board of Regents, which was created in 1963 as a coordinating board, has limited authority over colleges and universities. Unlike states where there is a strong centralized governing authority, Ohio community colleges retain considerable autonomy with locally elected boards of trustees. The Ohio Board of Regents has historically set broad parameters and goals through statewide planning and budgeting, but local boards of trustees and presidents determine the strategic direction of individual colleges. As a result, Ohio is an ideal venue to study how the growing policy emphasis on completion is impacting behavior at the college level.

Interestingly, there have been significant bipartisan policy initiatives in Ohio over the past eight to ten years that have sought to elevate the role of higher education in the state's economy and to increase the college-going and completion rates specifically. In 2004, the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE), created by then-Governor Bob Taft (R), issued a report entitled *Building on Knowledge, Investing in People: Higher Education and the Future of Ohio's Economy* (Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy, 2004). Among the nine recommendations included in this report was the Commission's call for an increase in the

“number and proportion of Ohioans who participate and succeed in higher education” (p. 21). The report also recommended better alignment between all sectors of education and the workforce development system in the state. While this report was issued in the latter part of Governor Taft’s second (and final) term, it was an important set of recommendations that set the stage for additional focus on the issue of education attainment in Ohio during the administration of the next governor.

When the next Governor, Ted Strickland (D), was sworn into office in January 2007, he soon called for a change in the governance of the higher education system in Ohio. While the Governor had the ability to appoint the members of the board for nine-year terms, he had limited control over the administration of public higher education. Since the creation of the Ohio Board of Regents, the Chancellor had been hired by and reported to the Regents. Governor Strickland worked with bipartisan support in the Ohio General Assembly to elevate the Chancellor to a cabinet-level position. This move essentially demoted the Board of Regents to an advisory role. House Bill 2 ("Amended Substitute House Bill Number 2," 2007) was signed into law on May 15, 2007 and former state senator, Eric Fingerhut, was named the first Chancellor under this new structure. It is important to note that the governance changes did not take away any legal autonomy of the local boards of trustees. However, the Governor and Chancellor moved quickly to create the “University System of Ohio” through an executive order (Governor Ted Strickland, 2007) and to take a much more assertive role over the behavior of all the public colleges and universities in the state.

House Bill 2 ("Amended Substitute House Bill Number 2," 2007) also mandated that the Chancellor submit a strategic plan for public higher education to the General

Assembly. Building on the dialogue begun under Taft's CHEE, Chancellor Fingerhut, who had also served on the previous commission, began a process of gathering input and direction from colleges for the strategic plan. After ten months of deliberation, Chancellor Fingerhut released the *Strategic Plan for Higher Education: 2008-2017* (2008) with a goal "to raise the educational attainment of our state each year and to close the gap between Ohio and competitor states and nations" (p. 9). To reach this goal the plan called for: 1) Increasing the total number of graduates annually from 72,657 in 2008 to 100,000 in 2017; 2) increasing the percentage of graduates who stay in Ohio from 66 percent in 2008 to 70 percent by 2017; and 3) attracting more graduates from other states to 10,000 in 2017 from the net loss of 9,120 in 2008. These broad numeric goals were accompanied by more specific sector goals as well as a set of more detailed metrics on access, quality, affordability and efficiency, and economic leadership.

In addition to the overarching goals and the specific performance metrics put forward in the plan, the report also provided a series of policy recommendations that directly impacted community colleges. For example, the plan sought to implement permissive legislative language to expand the authority to grant Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees to all 23 community colleges in the state. Up until this point, seven technical colleges could only grant degrees in occupational programs. The Ohio General Assembly embraced the Chancellor's recommendation eliminating a provision in state law that made a distinction between technical colleges and state community colleges ("Amended Substitute House Bill Number 119," 2007). This change established all 23 Ohio community colleges as comprehensive institutions with a full slate of technical and transfer-oriented programs.

Another prominent recommendation put forward in the strategic plan, which is currently being implemented, was the move to eliminate all development education at four-year public universities (University System of Ohio, 2008). Citing the cost differential between community colleges and universities in the delivery of remediation, the Chancellor pushed for all developmental courses to be offered at two-year institutions beginning in 2014. Similar to national research that suggests that 60 percent of incoming community college students require at least one developmental education course (Bailey et al., 2010; Horn et al., 2009; Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011; Levin & Calcagno, 2008), Ohio has a large percentage of community college students who need remediation. Statistics in Ohio indicate that 52 percent of all incoming community college students require either developmental math or English. This number increases to 61 percent for students under the age of 20 (Ohio Board of Regents, 2011b). The problem is clearly more pronounced for traditional age college students and the challenge will become more acute if all developmental educational is only offered at the community colleges.

The proposals to expand the degrees offered by community colleges and to move all remediation to community colleges were attempts by the Chancellor to clarify the roles and missions of the institutions. The Chancellor's strategic plan, seeking greater system efficiency, also sought improved coordination between community colleges and universities through guaranteed transfer of credit, clear college readiness standards to ease transition from high school to college, and better alignment between the adult education, workforce systems and community colleges by creating "stackable certificates" between these educational systems (University System of Ohio, 2008).



The community college sector responded positively to the new strategic plan by submitting a formal response endorsing much of the document (Ohio Association of Community Colleges, 2008). At this time, the Chancellor also began to seek input from colleges and universities on how to best align state funding with the new strategic plan. The state community college leadership submitted a proposal to the Chancellor recommending the adoption of a new funding formula—referred to as *Success Points*—that bases part of state subsidies for community colleges on student progression and success rather than simply enrollment as had historically been the case (Ohio Association of Community Colleges, 2010). Under this new funding model, which was adopted by the Ohio General Assembly and the Chancellor in 2010, the success component of the formula will grow from zero to 30 percent of the community colleges’ base funding from the state by Fiscal Year 2015. The adoption of this new funding formula for community colleges, which is mirrored by a new funding model for four-year universities, is the culmination of a series of policy changes that began early in the last decade.

It is worth noting that during this same period, which saw significant policy innovation, enrollments at community colleges also grew dramatically. More specifically, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments at community colleges increased 64 percent from 87,803 FTE in 2001 to 144,205 FTE in 2010 (Ohio Board of Regents, 2010). This is compared to a 17 percent increase at university main campuses during the same period (Ohio Board of Regents, 2010). Similar to other states, the enrollment increases were accompanied by decreases in state support with overall state subsidy to higher education in Ohio declining from \$6,436 per FTE in FY 2001 to \$4,504 in FY 2010 (Lingenfelter, 2011).

Ohio policymakers have clearly moved away from an agenda focused exclusively on access to higher education to one that emphasizes successful completion of a credential. Political leadership has embraced greater accountability for results and efficiency between and among education sectors and a series of significant national efforts by philanthropic organizations to improve student outcomes have significantly influenced this shifting policy terrain.

*Overview of relevant philanthropic activities in Ohio*

There are a number of national college completion and student success initiatives that have been active in Ohio over the past decade and it is valuable to briefly outline these efforts. Table 3.4 summarizes these initiatives, which represent millions of dollars streaming into Ohio institutions and state-level organizations to promote improved student outcomes. While some of the initiatives have included all sectors of higher education, most have focused squarely on community colleges. These initiatives reflect substantial investments in Ohio (and nationally) on college completion by several foundations—most notably by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education.

The Bridges to Opportunity Initiative funded in 2002 by the Ford Foundation was the first prominent effort in Ohio focused on improving student outcomes in the community college sector, with a particular focus on supporting low-skilled adults. In 2005, five community colleges and a state team built on this work by joining a significant national initiative funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education called Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count. This large initiative focused on improving

Table 3.4: Student Success and College Completion Initiatives in Ohio

Initiative	Focus	Funders	Years
Access to Success	To cut the college-going and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by 2015	BMGF, LFE	2005-2015
Achieving the Dream	To help more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree	LFE, KWF	2005-2010
Benefits Access for College Completion	To develop and institutionalize scalable and sustainable organizational and funding policies and practices that help a diverse population of eligible students gain access to an array of public benefits	Ford, LFE, OSI, Casey	2011-2014
Bridges to Opportunity	To bring about changes in state policy and community college governance and practice that promote educational opportunities for low-income adults	Ford	2002-2008
Breaking Through	To increase the number of low-skill adults who enter and succeed in community college-based occupational/technical certificate and degree programs	Mott	2005-2009
College Productivity	To dramatically increase the numbers of college graduates with available resources while preserving academic quality	LFE	2009-
Completion by Design	To significantly increase completion and graduation rates for low-income community college students under 26	BMGF	2011-2016
Complete College America	To significantly increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential of value and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations	Carnegie, BMGF, Ford, LFE, Kellogg	2010-
Developmental Education Initiative	To expand groundbreaking remedial education programs that experts say are key to dramatically boosting the college completion rates of low-income students and students of color	BMGF	2009-2012
Gateway to College	To revolutionize education for high school dropouts and underprepared college students so that all young people can	BMGF	2003-
Governance Institutes for Student Success	To provide a governance leadership model that will identify key policy decisions, actions, and levers for institutional transformation that trustees and presidents can utilize throughout the country to support innovation, accountability, and work to break the logjam of developmental education and improve student success, equity, and completion.	BMGF	2010
Ohio College Access Network	To help Ohio residents pursue postsecondary education by building and supporting local college access programs throughout the state	KWF	1999-
Project Win-Win	To find near completers (i.e. students no longer enrolled anywhere and never awarded any degree, whose records qualify them for associate's degrees, and get those degrees awarded retroactively. and students who are "academically short" of an associate's degree) and to bring them back to complete the degree	LFE	2009-2011
Shifting Gears	To strengthen state postsecondary, adult basic education, and workforce development systems so that more low-skilled workers gain the education, skills and credentials needed to advance and succeed in our changing economy	Joyce	2007-2012
Talent Dividend Prize	To award a \$1 million prize to the city that exhibits the greatest increase in the number of postsecondary degrees granted per one thousand population over a four-year period	Kresge, LFE	2011-2015

\* Key of Funder Names: BMGF = Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Carnegie = Carnegie Foundation of New York; Casey = Annie E. Casey Foundation; Ford = Ford Foundation; Joyce = Joyce Foundation; Kellogg = W.K. Kellogg Foundation; KWF = KnowledgeWorks Foundation; Kresge = Kresge Foundation; LFE = Lumina Foundation of Education; Mott = C.S. Mott Foundation; OSI = Open Society Foundations

college student success and has been an important contributor to many other student success and completion efforts in Ohio summarized in Table 3.2. Ohio is one of a handful of states—along with Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington—to have community colleges involved in nearly all the major national foundation investments focused on improving student outcomes. These philanthropic efforts in Ohio have had a synergetic connection to policy changes pushed by state political leadership. They have also served as important catalysts for reform on college campuses in the state and are a critical part of the background to understanding how Ohio community college presidents view student access and success.

### *Data Analysis*

My approach to data analysis for this study is informed by the literature reviewed and the conceptual framework articulated in the previous chapter. Additionally, my professional experience working with community colleges contributed to the method of analysis described below. The approach to data analysis in this study, while informed by the grounded theory methodology articulated by Strauss and Corbin (1998), departs from their views on the use of previous theory to guide inquiry. A goal of this study is to elaborate on the existing concepts of institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship. However, establishing new theory is not an emphasis of this inquiry.

As I describe my approach to data analysis it is useful to keep in mind the tasks Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest are involved in analyzing text. For example, “(1) discovering themes and subthemes, (2) winnowing themes to a manageable few (i.e. deciding which themes are important in any project), (3) building hierarchies of themes

or code books, and (4) linking themes into theoretical models” (p. 85). These tasks relate closely to the open, axial, and selective coding techniques delineated by Strauss and Corbin (1998), which I employed to discern the emergent themes from the dialogue with college presidents. Before turning to a discussion of the use of these techniques, it is important to also note that my analytic approach was guided by an issue-focused analysis rather than a case-focused analysis (Weiss, 1994). Weiss states that “an issue-focused description is likely to move from discussion of issues within one area to discussion of issues within another, with each logically connected to the others” (p. 154).

Applying an issue-focused approach to the presidential interviews, I explored the responses for each protocol question across all participants at one time. I then proceeded to examine the responses of all presidents to the subsequent question. One goal of this study was to understand if there is, in fact, agreement about the student access and student success logics among the presidents. Using this analytic approach, I examined the interview transcripts for all presidents on one issue at a time. For example, I analyzed the responses to the questions about college mission and effectiveness at one time before moving on to examine the presidents’ comments about the completion agenda and student success.

With this approach in mind, I first sorted and organized all the participant responses into eight separate Microsoft Word documents associated with the individual protocol questions (see Appendix B for the protocol). Beginning with open coding, which Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to as the process of identifying concepts, I went through each set of responses and manually wrote initial thoughts in the margins of the documents. I did not use an *a priori* coding scheme. However, because of the issue-

focused analytic approach employed, there were predictable codes that emerged in certain interview subsections. For example, a code related to the educational background of the presidents was logically present in the examination of transcripts on their personal experience, but was absent in the analysis of other sections of the interview transcripts. Through this process of open coding, I examined each line of the transcripts and labeled each as a category or theme (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

After working through the open coding process of the transcripts, I then turned to the process of grouping the initial concepts into broader categories, or axial codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). With the axial coding process I progressed from simply trying to determine “what I am seeing instances of” (Weiss, 1994, p. 155) in the concepts identified through open coding to establishing deeper meaning and higher-level themes. To accomplish this, I created an Excel spreadsheet of the open codes and began looking at the common concepts across those codes. As broader themes began to emerge, I sought to “winnow themes to a manageable few” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 85) and narrow the number of axial codes by continually revisiting the list of open codes and classifying participants, quotes within the broader categories.

Using the selective coding process described by Strauss and Corbin (1998), I began to discard certain axial categories as I shifted between the data from the interviews and the literature that gave rise to the overarching conceptual framework of the study. Through this process I sought to connect the analysis of the transcripts back to the core research questions for this inquiry. Weiss (1994) notes that as the data analysis progresses, the researcher moves from the more concrete process of local integration of ‘minitheories’ (p. 159) to a deeper inclusive integration that organizes the data into a

logical sequence. As I worked from the open coding process with each subsection of the interview transcripts to the selective coding stage of tying the data back to the conceptual framework, I also sought to reintegrate the disparate “issue-focused” (Weiss, 1994, p. 154) analyses of the subsections of the transcripts into a coherent story.

Throughout this process of identifying major themes it became clear that the presidential responses were operating at several units, or levels, of analysis. The hierarchical nature of the presidents’ comments corresponded well with the notion of institutional logics functioning on multiple levels (Currie & Guah, 2007; Greenwood et al., 2010; Herremans et al., 2009; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Thornton et al., 2012). The crosswalk in Table 3.5 illustrates how the emergent themes from the interviews relate to the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 2. More specifically, the table provides a visual depiction of the three levels—societal, field (of community colleges), and organization—that were widespread in the interviews.

Table 3.5: Crosswalk of Emergent Interview Themes to the Conceptual Framework

Level	Conceptual Framework	Emergent Themes
Society (Chapter 4)	Shift in societal-level logics from state-orientation to market-orientation is contributing to changes in the community college field	Global competition is driving different educational requirements Increased accountability focused on student outcomes Policymakers and foundations are promoting change (i.e. entrepreneurs)
Field (Chapter 5)	Competition between field-level student access and student success logics are creating dilemmas/choices for colleges	Dilemmas college face maintaining open access: (1) Unclear student intent and low academic preparation (2) Interrelated problems of comprehensiveness, resources, and quality
Organization (Chapter 6)	Individual colleges, and the presidents that lead them as potential institutional entrepreneurs, must respond to the shifting environment	Colleges must mobilize for change: (1) Create a culture of evidence and learning in the organization (2) Improve crucial practices and procedures (3) Strengthen external collaborations

Table 3.5 also provides an outline of the three findings chapters to follow. For example, Chapter 4 examines the factors the presidents viewed as contributing to the completion agenda. This chapter is coached in the concept of shifting societal-level logics and the role of certain actors (i.e. policymakers and foundations) in leveraging the changing environment to promote reform. The themes in this chapter emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts and were reflective of frequent comments from the presidents related to, for instance, global competition or increased accountability. While other less common themes surfaced as well, the goal of this analysis was to surface those themes that represented a broader view among presidents. The coding and organization of the themes for chapters 5 and 6 followed a similar process, and were also framed by the literature on institutional logics and entrepreneurship.

It is important to note that I used a similar analytic approach to examine college documents such as mission statements, strategic plans, accreditation documents, and materials from board of trustee meetings. These documents were useful throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing process by providing a deeper understanding of the college context. These documents also allowed me to triangulate the information gathered in the interviews with the presidents and to corroborate comments by presidents with the actual actions the colleges had undertaken. The individual college documents were reviewed prior to each interview to provide background information about each institution.

After the coding of the interview transcripts was completed, I returned to the college documents. Using the themes that emerged from the transcripts, I reviewed the documents again to identify confirming or disconfirming evidence of the data that



surfaced from the interviews. For example, in reviewing accreditation reports from the colleges, I used the three primary findings/themes in Chapter 6 (see Table 3.5) to determine if the organizational response to the completion agenda articulated by the presidents in the interviews was playing out in the actions of the college. Accreditation reports are particularly useful for gauging college priorities and the documents provided robust evidence to validate the presidents' interview responses.

With my interpretative research paradigm as a backdrop, I analyzed the interview transcripts and college documents to surface the individual perspectives and experiences of the college presidents. The data analysis described in this section, guided by the conceptual framework articulated in Chapter 2, resulted in the findings outlined in the next three chapters.

## CHAPTER 4

### SHIFTS IN SOCIETAL LOGICS

The conceptual framework articulated in Chapter 2 defined institutional logics as the underlying belief systems and material practices that guide the actions of individuals within organizations and organizations within their larger field or industry. An additional construct discussed in the literature about logics is that they operate on multiple levels with organizational and field-level logics embedded in a hierarchical manner under higher-order logics that broadly guide societal behavior. This chapter will explore shifts in societal logics that have triggered competing logics in the community college organizational field between the traditional access focus and the emerging success focus.

More specifically, the first half of this chapter will examine college presidents' views on broad societal shifts such as increased globalization and greater public accountability—the underlying factors contributing to the emergent completion agenda. These factors are reflective of a societal evolution toward a market logic that emphasizes greater efficiency and measurable results and away from a state-oriented logic that favors democratic value and public good. Table 4.1 (next page) is adapted from Thornton and Ocasio's (2012) work and illustrates the categories that define the competition between these two societal-level logics. The impact of globalization and accountability will be explored in more detail below, but it is important to note that the market logic is ascendant. For example, consider the “sources of identity” in the table. In the global

economy, individuals and organizations are increasingly faceless under the market logic the social and economic class of the state logic becomes subordinate. Similarly, the trend toward great accountability in the public sector moves the “basis of strategy” toward efficiency and away from the common good. Again, this chapter will explore how these societal-level swings, from the perspective of the presidents, have functioned as antecedents to disrupt the dominant field-level access logic among community colleges in favor of the insurgent success logic.

Table 4.1: Competition between the State and the Market Societal-Level Logics

<b>Categories</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Market</b>
<i>Root Metaphor</i>	State as redistribution mechanism	Transaction
<i>Sources of Legitimacy</i>	Democratic participation	Share price
<i>Sources of Authority</i>	Bureaucratic domination	Shareholder activism
<i>Sources of Identity</i>	Social & economic class	Faceless
<i>Basis of Norms</i>	Citizenship in nation	Self-interest
<i>Basis of Attention</i>	Status of interest group	Status in market
<i>Basis of Strategy</i>	Increase community good	Increase efficiency of profit
<i>Informal Control Mechanisms</i>	Backroom politics	Industry analysts
<i>Economic System</i>	Welfare capitalism	Market capitalism

Note. Adapted from Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury’s (2012) concept of inter-institutional system types.

The latter part of this chapter will examine presidents’ views on the role philanthropic organizations and policymakers are playing to promote the completion agenda. The pressure being applied by these external groups on the colleges is placed conceptually in the literature of institutional entrepreneurship, but instead of focusing on the role of individuals within an organization, this section will explore the role of

organizations (i.e. foundations and policymaking bodies) as entrepreneurs within the larger organizational field.

### Antecedents to Change in Field-Level Community College Logics

This section centers on the factors that college presidents see as contributing to the emerging completion agenda. The discussion addresses shifting expectations that have resulted from the changing global economy and the corresponding upsurge in accountability for the public sector, in general, and higher education institutions specifically. Presidents' views on the impact of global economic competition on education are examined. More specifically, this section will explore presidents' perceptions about the importance of higher levels of educational attainment, how demand for more individuals with credentials aligns with (or not) the general public's views of the value of postsecondary education, and why colleges need to ensure the credentials they offer have value in the labor market. Next, presidents' opinions about increasing expectations resulting from greater accountability are examined. This discussion also touches on the importance of adequately defining student success in the context of performance measurement systems. Finally, presidents' perspectives on the emergence of a new funding formula and its impact on college behavior will be explored.

### *Global Competition Is Changing the Role of Education*

According to many presidents, the conditions that enabled the advent of the completion agenda have resulted from a transformed global economy requiring higher skill levels. They see this change stemming from increased economic competition for the United States from emerging markets such as China, India, and others. According to

national reports (21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012; Carnevale et al., 2010; National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2006), global economic trends have been accompanied by increased focus on education in other countries as well. The United States, while still among the leaders in educational attainment globally, has stagnated as other countries have increased their degree production. Comments from presidents echo the sentiment that the relative position of the United States in overall educational attainment has been slipping. The following quote highlights this point:

I think what we've seen in the United States for the last 30 years, if not more, is a concern that our students in various levels, K-12 and then in college, might not be keeping up. Our students might not be keeping up with students in other developed countries. There seems to be a body of evidence to support the argument that we're falling behind. I think it puts probably more pressure in the last two to three years upon us, even though the message—the evidence of the message of falling behind has been there for a long time. When people have the economic situation that we've had in the United States, people aren't employed and people see the economy sputtering along and people look around and say, 'Hey, things seem to be popping in Brazil and things seem to be hopping and popping in China and by gosh there's probably an educational component to that.' There's a concern, 'My gosh these folks might be gearing up to be smarter and brighter and more industrious than we are and we might be falling behind. Maybe we should really get serious about doing something.' I think that over the long-term, concern about falling behind in educational attainment and then I think more recently specifically having our economy sputter and seeing the rise of other countries, or the fact that they might be poised to rise and we might be just simply falling behind, it's really causing people to be alarmed.

The view that the United States is falling behind globally in terms of educational attainment has been reinforced in the last ten years by national bestselling books like *The World is Flat* (Friedman, 2005) and federal efforts such as the Spellings Commission (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The forecasts provided in these publications have substantially influenced the dialogue about postsecondary education and attainment in the

United States. The outlook that contributed to these reports now also permeates the decision-making of policymakers and philanthropic organizations, as illustrated by the completion initiatives listed in Chapter 1 (Hall & Thomas, 2012; Russell, 2011). This perspective has also influenced the thinking of many community college presidents in Ohio. The following quote from a long-serving president reflects a sentiment expressed by several others:

We are at another one of those revolutionary stages where the portion of the population that needs to be educated has gone up dramatically. The first one was after the Second World War when you had all those G.I.s coming back. You had a whole generation so we provided great access for those folks at that point. Now with the digital revolution and the transformation of the worldwide economy we have another need to ratchet up. Just look at what's happened with the globalization of our economy. We are in a place where the birth and death of industries and companies and jobs is on an accelerated scale and what does that require from an employee perspective, from a workforce perspective? It requires a lot more education, a lot more training, a lot more re-training. It's a continuous education process. We've got a rapidly changing economy requiring new skills, new abilities, new knowledge, new content and you have a more rapid churning of employment causing people to have to stay in the educational process. So you've got huge change taking place.

The emerging consensus that more education is required for individuals to be productive in good paying jobs is, for some, seen as vindication of their long-held view of the importance of education. A president from one of the small colleges points out that “I've never had anybody bring me a problem, a societal problem, that education wasn't the solution.” As purveyors of education, community college presidents might be expected to take this view. However, the underlying dynamic that is driving the completion agenda is magnifying this simplistic notion. The idea that education is a cure for many societal ills is not new, but the push for postsecondary credentials as an illustration of marketable knowledge and skills is a fairly recent phenomenon—

particularly in the community college sector. A president nearing retirement described the trend this way:

If you look at the year 1960, about sixty percent of the jobs in this country could be handled with just a high school education. Look at this area, with the automotive plants, you could graduate from high school, get a good job, work for 30 or 40 years, and have a great life. About twenty percent of the jobs required something beyond high school and about twenty percent of the jobs required a four-year degree. Now let's jump forward to 2010. The percentage of jobs that you can get with a high school education are now estimated at about fifteen and beyond that about sixty-five percent for what we would call two-year education. Interestingly enough, the baccalaureate is still about twenty to twenty-five percent. That hasn't changed a great deal. With all the emphasis that we have on getting college degrees the number of jobs requiring bachelor's degrees is still only twenty to twenty-five percent. But you can see from those statistics that there is an obvious increased pressure for completion, however you define completion, and that means something beyond high school now.

Another president in a rural part of the state expressed a similar sentiment, but he goes further pointing out the significant challenges those individuals with less education will face in the job market:

It's a reality that 85 percent of the jobs now require an education beyond high school. High school is not the gold standard anymore. That jobs require—any skilled job now—requires an education beyond high school. Just take our state for example, in this area our college completion rate is 15 to 18 percent depending upon which county you're talking about, which lags the state, which is at 30 percent. The state lags the nation, which is about 37 percent. If you look at 85 percent of the jobs require a college education—85 percent of our population are vying for that 15 percent that are unskilled jobs. That's an unsustainable formula and really a formula for disaster if you're trying to build the economy in Ohio.

Most of the presidents at one point during the interviews talked about the broader macroeconomic conditions that are creating the pressure for higher graduation rates and most, at least rhetorically, are supportive of the completion agenda in general. What is also clear from the conversations with the presidents is that they are thinking about the value proposition of the credentials they offer, perhaps in ways they had not considered

or advocated in the past. The next section will explore their nuanced views of certificates and degrees.

*A broader view of credentials is needed*

Several presidents voiced concern about an overemphasis on four-year degrees to the exclusion of sub-baccalaureate credentials. A president at one of the smaller rural colleges stated, “My fear is that when we talk so broadly about completion, everyone is still in our society defining that as a four-year degree. We’ve got to get away from that. That is a mistake.” While this may be a true statement, the perception of who goes to college and what a typical college experience looks like is still largely viewed through the lens of a traditional student who goes away to college, lives in a dorm, and completes a bachelor’s degree in four years. In fact, as the quote below from one president indicates, he has board members who may not have an appreciation for the value of an associate’s degree or shorter-term certificates:

If our trustee has gone to a private college and done well and now is a professional, they assume that that is the path for every community college student. It just, it's not. Now, that’s going to correct itself as more and more people in leadership have associates degrees. We need to realize that associates degrees on the educational horizon for Ohioans is somewhat new within the last 30 years.

A common, if not explicit, refrain among the presidents is that we need to get away from the notion that the only postsecondary credentials of value are bachelor’s degrees or higher. This perception is certainly fed by an idealized, albeit misinformed view of what a college student is today. There is little question about the correlation between higher education attainment (i.e. BA and above) and higher incomes. However, research and analysis about the labor market demands reveals the future will require



education beyond high school, but not necessarily a bachelor's degree (Carnevale, 2007; Carnevale et al., 2010; National Commission on Community Colleges, 2008). This is not to say that students should not strive for a baccalaureate or more. Rather, as the quote below from a president at one of the larger urban colleges suggests, a broader perspective is needed that recognizes the days of working in one job for an entire career are a thing of the past and frequent retraining and additional education will be critical:

We need to move past the idea that going to college is an event for very young adults. Like say you're 18 to 22 and this is an important part of your life where you're going to go off to college and do all these things...it's going to launch you into the world for the next 30, 40 years. That's not the case for—it might be the case for some people—but for other people, you're going to go to college for a while, you're going to get a certificate or let's say you get a degree, but five years later you're going to go back and get a certificate in something. Then three years after that you're going to get a couple classes. Then ten years after that you're going to go a whole other direction. I think this continuous retraining is going to be with us for a while.

This quote implicitly references a trend of creating career pathways that connect shorter-term certificates and longer-term degrees in specific fields in ways that are additive for both students and employers (Grubb et al., 2003; Townsend, 2001; Van Noy & Jacobs, 2009). The career pathway concept recognizes that students—particularly at community colleges—enroll for a variety of reasons and the colleges should be sure they leave with a credential that is valuable in the marketplace. Another president reinforces this point by suggesting that “new ideas about credentialing are in order. I think certificates need to be recognized as a valid terminal credential.” He also suggests that a more sophisticated data system would allow the field to “define success in ways that are far more individualized.”

An enduring issue with sub-baccalaureate education, particularly certificates, is that there is little agreement about what constitutes the curriculum for these short-term

credentials (Bosworth, 2010; Carnevale et al., 2010). As a result, certificates are difficult to define and track, which in turn makes it difficult to articulate their value or reward the colleges for offering them. One president complains that the state's funding formula doesn't reward them for "moving someone along a workforce completion agenda." She continues by saying that there is no incentive to award certificates because "they don't give us a dime for it." This president clearly sees certificates as an important component of the community college completion agenda, but the challenges of measurement and data collection will likely be an ongoing issue.

In this section the discussion has focused on which credentials should be part of the completion discussion. The presidents interviewed clearly see the need to have a dialogue that emphasizes the importance of associates degrees and certificates as well as bachelor's degrees. The next section will explore what presidents see as a more fundamental challenge facing postsecondary education institutions and the proponents of increased education attainment—a significant portion of the population does not view education beyond high school as critical.

#### *Cultural dissonance about the value of higher education*

One obstacle to boosting completion rates identified by a number of presidents relates to a fundamental disconnect between the general public's perceived value of higher education and the human capital demands economists have projected. Historically, a large percentage of the population in industrial states, like Ohio, have not continued their education after graduating from high school because well-paying manufacturing jobs were plentiful and additional schooling was not a prerequisite for these positions.

The globally competitive economy has up-ended this scenario, and as a long-serving president at one of the larger urban colleges stresses below, overcoming the deeply engrained mindset that suggests postsecondary education is not necessary will require a cultural shift:

I think now in Ohio, and in the Midwest in general, there is a sense that one has to have higher education, something beyond the secondary, to be successful in the careers of the future. I think the challenge has been convincing the public and changing the culture in our state to understand the benefit of higher education long-term for high wage, high-skill kinds of jobs. That takes time because when you could graduate from high school and get a good job and keep that job the need for higher education just wasn't imbedded in our culture.

The problems posed by the changing economy and the cultural resistance to postsecondary education are made more problematic by demographic shifts projected in Ohio. Ohio, similar to many states in the Midwest, has an aging population that will result in a decline in the number of high school graduates over the next decade (Kelly & Strawn, 2011). This trend does not bode well for the state's economy. If the future workforce is not adequately prepared for the skills demanded by the labor market, employers will look to other geographic areas with a better-skilled workforce. The following quote highlights a similar concern expressed by several presidents:

We're in a position today where the workforce coming behind is anticipated to be less educated than the current workforce. We're going to have huge challenges in educating the replacement workforce because there are fewer of them coming out of high school with the level of preparation. The percentage of the population with a high school diploma has stagnated in the last 10 years. In fact, it now appears to be diminishing.

The comment below echoes this point, emphasizing that the success of the future workforce will rely upon retraining the current labor force:

If you look at the demographics what you see is that in order for this economy in five and 10 and 15 years from now to have the workers that it needs, we are going to have to bring people who are already in the workforce and retrain them. The

baby boom impact, the bubble that's about to burst is going to result in these tremendous vacancies in entire sectors.

Relying on the retraining of the current workforce is problematic for two reasons. First, it is a short-term solution because these individuals will ultimately retire, leading to significant skills gaps. Second, many of the older individuals in this group requiring retraining have enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle to this point without postsecondary education, as one president suggests they may not be willing or interested in seeking additional training. The undervaluing of education is problematic in indirect ways as well. If adults have less appreciation for education it is likely the next generation will undervalue it as well. Children who grow-up in households without anyone with postsecondary degrees are less likely to go to college; and those that do face considerable barriers as first-generation college students (Adelman, 2005; Hoachlander & Carroll, 2003; Lane, 2003).

For all of these reasons, changing the college-going culture will be an ongoing challenge. This challenge is further exacerbated over the long-term as result of the "brain drain" phenomenon where a certain percentage of the students who leave to go to college never return and those that remain in college will require additional education and training. The president of smaller college highlights this problem:

I know you understand brain drain and as this community loses its top 25 percent, since we send students off to college and they don't come back, we have to educate the population we have left here. If we don't do that, we're not going to survive as a region. I think that is imperative that it's not just about teaching the skills necessary. It's about changing. It's about a paradigm shift. It's about helping the community understand the importance of education. My war path in the community is to work with the CEOs, and work with the economic development organizations, and do all those kinds of things necessary to foster that paradigm shift in this community. Because if we don't make it, then you can whistle Dixie all you want with your mission. That's not going to take you anywhere.

Of course, getting additional education or training just for the sake of it does not necessarily translate into gainful employment. In the next section, the views of college presidents are presented highlighting that their colleges need to do a better job ensuring the programs offered are aligned with labor market demand.

*Labor market value of the credentials is key*

“It's all about jobs...whether it takes eight years to get a job or a one-year certificate or even a course, it's all about jobs.” This quote from a president at a smaller institution reflects the perspective community college practitioners often share about their students—they enroll to upgrade their skills to get a good paying job. What is unclear—and much contested among community college advocates—is whether students enroll in these institutions with the intention of getting a credential. Part of the challenge in promoting increased educational attainment from a community college perspective is that credentials have generally not been the message used by the colleges to promote their value. As the overview about the access mission in Chapter 2 suggests, community colleges have historically sought to meet the needs of their communities by offering short- and longer-term training that may or may not result in a certification or degree. The societal shift in emphasis toward credential attainment, as the following president at a medium-size suburban college indicates, is changing the perspective about what the goal of education should be:

I've seen a shift of public perception of higher education that in general the economy used to be there to support education. Today, education is being viewed as here to support the economy. And I think that is really germane to the discussion of community colleges around workforce development and I think community colleges are at risk of being viewed strictly as training sites.

While college presidents would say they have always been concerned with the value of their institutions' programmatic offering to employers, several presidents argue that the focus on attainment of credentials changes this dynamic. They express concern about awarding certificate and degree programs that are not aligned with employers' needs. The implication for students, as expressed below, is that the credential they earn may be of limited value if it doesn't meet labor market demand:

The inference is that if we can get more people through our colleges and into degrees that the economy will be better off at the end of the day and that may be true, but it may not be true as well. I guess this is my management side coming out in me, but just because someone has a degree doesn't mean they're going to get a job. The jobs also have to be there. People don't want to talk about that in this completion agenda, but it is something that we've got to pay attention to in leadership roles because, again, just getting people through for the purpose of getting them through and saying we were successful...well, what were you successful in doing?

Another president at a large urban institution echoed this sentiment suggesting that colleges need to be thinking about the labor market value of the program students pursue. However, he also seemed to signal that colleges need to balance the student's interest with an educational path that will lead them to gainful employment:

If you complete a degree in something that you just cannot get a job in that might be personally fulfilling. On that whole hierarchy of need it might be very personally fulfilling for you to be able to play and repair ancient musical instruments from antiquity, but you might not be able to get a job in that. It might be personally fulfilling and very much self-actualizing, but you might not be able to put food on the table. We need to make sure that we have balance in that and so that we have people who actually can make a living and then also seek those things in life that give them pleasure. There are things that you complete that don't help you and you're sitting there unemployed. I think we have a lot of people that are in that boat.

This quote implicitly highlights a key argument in the discussion of the "value" of a college education. As noted previously, community colleges often promote their value

in the context of labor market implications and not in terms of personal exploration or enrichment—the hallmark of a more traditional liberal arts education. One of the individuals interviewed from a national intermediary organization raised the philosophical question about which people get to have the opportunity to “explore their chosen career” while others are quickly shuffled into a track that may or may not have been adequately considered. The current dialogue about improving outcomes in community college focuses on streamlining and accelerating program pathways and limiting the array of options available to students (Completion by Design, 2012). As the same individual from a national organization wondered aloud “what if a student who moves quickly through a welding program discovers after four years that they don’t want to be a welder...have we done this person a disservice because we rushed them through a program?”

While this tension between the labor market implications of a postsecondary education and a student’s opportunity to explore their interests is not new, one president suggests that the ultimate measure is that “people have a credential that will enable them to improve their lives. That is the bigger picture.” Attaining one credential does not guarantee that a student will not have to return to school to further enhance their skills. In fact, the quote below argues that job requirements in a specific field evolve over time and colleges and students need to stay in tune with these changes to ensure the continued marketability of their skill sets:

I’ve watched, for example, the physician assistant program, which is a very strong program for some community colleges and over the years now, physician assistants, moved to requiring a baccalaureate degree. Then it moved to requiring a master’s degree. Now it’s moving to the doctorate level. There is any number of programs, I think that we’ve all had where at one point in time the associate degree was enough, but you’re seeing an escalation. Others the associate degree

is enough and you haven't seen that same escalation. It's something I think that we have to keep in touch with.

There is an overarching theme through the interviews that labor market demand is not static and will evolve over time. On some level this has always been true, but the globalization of the economy and the corresponding demand for higher levels of credentials is forcing colleges to think differently about their students and the programs they offer. A president from one of the large urban colleges suggest that the recent economic crisis has greatly influence the dialogue about aligning skill and credential attainment with labor market demand:

In the years since the great recession there's this general idea that we need people with the right skills to help improve our economy, so we have more productive people who are able to compete in a global economy. I think we're going to get back to [skill] shortages again. Right now since there's such high unemployment, people don't talk about shortages as much, but I think we're going to get back to that.

As the presidents talk about labor market demand for their programs, the recent recession and ensuing slow recovery have made it difficult for them to parse the short-term economic downturn from longer-term structural changes in the economy. This issue is also playing out for graduates from the colleges. One president was rather emotional on this point when she said, "I'm really worried about the economy because we are getting graduates who are not finding jobs." She continues saying, "I don't want to be a part of a school that has a mission that isn't true." Elaborating on this concern, another president juxtaposed the employment challenges for recent graduates to the increasing accountability for increased completions that has emerged from policymakers:

I was in a meeting last spring with presidents and trustees and the Governor was there speaking to us. He was talking about this whole business of completion and one of the trustees from another college said, 'Sir we have students graduating from our institution who can't get jobs. How do I go back and argue more



completion for our students? It's a function of the economy.' I don't know how long it's going to take for this economy to turn around, but I don't anticipate it happening in the very near future. So on the one hand we're being pressured for completion and yet we have people coming out the end of the pipeline who can't get jobs or they certainly can't get jobs in Ohio and so they're leaving the state of Ohio.

On one level, this comment reflects the reality of a slow economy. In another sense this quote suggests a misalignment between policymakers increasing expectations about student outcomes from programs that are not in demand by employers. President argued in several instances that if there isn't a collective effort to ensure the credential that students earn has labor market value, the desired effect for students, the local communities, and the state will not be realized. This line of thinking suggests that accountability systems that are put in place, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, need to focus on credential attainment *and* labor market demand.

#### *Increased Accountability Pushing for A Return on Public Investments*

The second prominent shift in societal-level logics that was cited frequently by the presidents was the increased expectation of colleges to produce better results, namely completion rates. The confluence of the pressures from globalization described above with the fiscal crisis of the past several years has led to significant constraints on public resources. This has created an environment where policymakers—reflecting public sentiment—are asking more questions about what they are getting for the tax dollars being allocated. This heightened level of accountability is not aimed solely at postsecondary institutions. However, when fiscal constraints are paired with the demand for increased educational attainment, the rationale for the college completion agenda becomes intense. One of the presidents described the situation well in this quote:

I think that there's a conspiracy. I think what's driving it [the completion agenda] to a great degree from the federal government is the fact that a group of influential people have realized how much money the federal government is spending. They want more accountability for the dollars that they're spending. The same thing is true on the state level. It's even worse on the state level because most states are experiencing shortfalls. They're looking for ways to cut back on all spending and all funding, including higher education. It's easy to pick out the sectors that have the highest funding amounts and say, there's got to be more accountability there. I also think that higher education has flaunted itself to the general public.

In general, the presidents were accepting of the increased scrutiny that comes with stronger accountability, with a president of a smaller institution stating directly, “We are being held to be accountable, accountable for our resources, and accountable for the success of our students. I see that as a good thing.” Some believe, as the previous quote insinuates, that higher education institutions have not been as accountable as they should. One of the newer presidents suggests that community colleges should not be surprised by the focus on completion given the track record on graduation rates:

If the completion rate is 20 or 21 percent that just doesn't look good. If people just look at that and they don't think too deeply about it, that just doesn't look good so if I am a legislator and I am starting to hear—especially in the political environment with the funding discussions and how much money that the government pours into higher education—and look what we get, that is why it's [the completion agenda] no doubt part of the conversation. When you get somebody like Bill Gates paying attention to it and saying why can't we do better with this and be willing to back it up substantially—that is why it's getting attention.

A common refrain in the conversations with presidents about increases in accountability and expectations is the idea that there should be a greater focus on the return on the public investments in colleges. This marks a different perspective from the historical view of higher education, according to a long-serving president who is nearing retirement. He says he sees “pressures to run our colleges more as a business today.” He continues suggesting that some expectation around efficiency, effectiveness, and

outcomes is warranted, but “the emphasis has shifted away from what we’re doing for people to more of how we are running the college as a business.”

This shift in emphasis is indicative of the changing societal logics toward a market orientation that values efficiency over other attributes. It is a mindset reinforced in the rhetoric of other presidents. For example, when describing policymaker perspectives about higher education expenditures and outcomes, another president stated that “the federal government and state governments are tired of pouring money—vast amounts of money into systems that produce 16 percent success. As a businessman, none of us would tolerate that. As a nation we shouldn't tolerate it either.” Putting a finer point on the emerging consensus about degree attainment, the president of one of the largest colleges channels the perceived view of policymakers about the completion agenda in the following quote:

I think states are going to say, ‘we’re not willing to pay for somebody who wants to come that are just there for enrichment and improvement because the dollars we’re putting into education will be for productive citizens who are going to work and add to the economy.’ That state investment or that national investment in higher education, I have a feeling in community colleges, will be for people who say ‘I want a degree. My goal is a degree. The courses that I take will lead me to a degree, not that I’m just coming for some college.’

While most of the presidents didn’t predict how some of these conversations on accountability would play out specifically, they generally viewed the trend toward higher expectations and greater scrutiny as something that would not recede with time.

Returning to the self-critique of community colleges offered by one of the presidents previously, another referred to accountability as a “sticky wicket” that was here to stay and suggested that while it is being driven by external forces, colleges have themselves to blame because “we brag about our successes and ignore our failures...and our failures are

legion.” This comment reflects the view held by many presidents—who also said they need to tackle the challenges they face head on or someone (i.e. policymakers) would do it for them through more prescription mandates. The same president also said that “demonstrating that we’re actually doing what we say we’re doing is much easier said than done.” The presidents’ views of what student success should look like in the context of accountability will be explored in the next section.

*Defining, measuring, and funding student success for accountability*

When you talk about institutional effectiveness, it is do students graduate? If they're going to transfer, do their hours transfer as anticipated? Did they get jobs? If so, do they get good paying jobs? And then you have to ask your question, are you efficient? You know, what's your cost per FTE? That's basically it:

This quote from a president at a smaller rural college suggests a fairly straightforward view of the effectiveness of an institution and accountability. Others indicate that performance measurement and accountability are more complex because of the choices students make. The notion of a student’s intent when they enter community colleges and their role in their own success will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter, but some presidents expressed reservations about how to appropriately hold colleges accountable for decisions and actions of students that are beyond their control.

The quote below is one of the more blunt examples from the interviews:

The bottom line is students are the ones that have to learn. Students are the ones that have to demonstrate the skills. Students are the ones that have to persevere. Students are the ones that have to graduate. Not the presidents and not the deans and not the well-intentioned policy makers:

Most of the presidents acknowledge a more prominent role for the college in shaping the success of students and were more nuanced in their discussion about who should be

accountable for what. Rather than shifting the accountability burden to the student, several conversations centered on defining student success broadly enough to reflect the varying missions of the college. The following comment is a prime example of this sentiment:

The completion agenda should be there. It should be broader than just completion. It should be about the student success. I'd like to rather than call it the completion agenda, because what is completion, I like to talk about the student success agenda which is different by the different components of the mission:

This remark could be construed as a president trying to simply extend the definition to get to more favorable accountability metrics from a college perspective. However, a broader definition of success is consistent with the multiple missions of community colleges and the varied constituencies within their service areas that should also be considered in any accountability system. Another president echoed the call for an expansive definition of success "beyond the traditional academic measures of success." He continues by asking "How does the student measure success, how does a business measure success, and how does a community measure success?" These types of broader metrics are inherently more difficult to quantify compared to some of the typical accountability measures such as graduation rates, degrees and certificates awarded, etc.

The question of how to accurately measure community college students and their success, a point which was discussed in Chapter 2, has been a long-standing grievance of leaders in the two-year sector. Historically, there has been limited data systematically collected beyond the enrollment information, institutional financial statistics, or the outcomes measures mentioned above. As a result, there has been an incomplete understanding of differences between the community college student population and

other sectors of higher education. As a president at one of the medium-size suburban colleges indicates, this is starting to change:

Only recently, in the past half-dozen years, have we really even begun to have the research from foundations and some state efforts that have begun to gather data that allows us to measure effectiveness unique to community colleges. Always before it was community colleges as a subset of higher education and we would talk about how our populations were different, but many times I think that came across as us being defensive—trying to explain away our failures rather than talking about what does success look like and how do you determine that and it is different for a community college. Our populations are different. Their reasons for coming here are different and obviously the outcomes are different.

The promise of improved performance measurement of community colleges students is important for the practitioners at the campus-level, but as the quote above suggests, it is also critical in the context of heightened accountability.

The general acquiescence of Ohio community college presidents to transparency and accountability is perhaps best exemplified in the proactive nature in which the colleges addressed a legislative call for a new performance funding formula. As discussed in Chapter 3, the community college leadership in Ohio recommended a new formula referred to as “success points” that would, once fully implemented, distribute 30 percent of a college’s state subsidy based on a set of student success metrics. Ohio is on the cutting edge of a national trend of adopting a performance funding formula based on student progression and completion in community colleges (Dougherty & Natow, 2009; Katsinas et al., 2011; Lingenfelter, 2011; Mullin & Honeyman, 2007). As the following quote suggests, some of the presidents are supportive of the general approach:

We’re moving in the right direction. We understood that we’re going to have to move to performance funding and so we wanted to control our own destiny... We stole from Washington [State’s funding model] and refined that a little bit, but we don’t for a moment think that we’ve got it right, at this stage. We’re going to learn our way through that and hopefully all of this work will benefit from each other and enable us to improve this funding formula as we go forward over time.

Ohio's approach to the performance funding formula reflects the concern noted previously about not focusing on completion alone. The funding model includes a series of "success points," or intermediate milestones, that gauge student progression such as movement into college-level course work from developmental education. The colleges earn points for each student they get to the defined milestones. The funding set aside at the state-level for the success points is then allocated to the colleges based on the total number of points they earn. Again, as one president notes, several others endorsed this approach as a proactive way to define how they are going to be held accountable:

Historically, we were funding on enrollment, recruitment. It was how many we recruited in the front door, not what happened to them after they got here. That's going to change and by the time the performance funding model is rolled out completely in five or six years only 70-percent based on enrollment and 30-percent based how well students are retained at various levels. Now I support that idea because I believe that students come to us with the purpose of completing something.

While the presidents have been cooperative in the development of the success points funding model, there are some concerns about the impact it will have on a college's behavior, the competition it sets up between colleges, and whether or not it will actually have an effect on what happens in classrooms. As one president stated rather sarcastically, "there's a naivety among those who profess these things that believe by dangling some carrots we can actually change the conditions of learning, we can actually get students to learn more rapidly or to learn on our terms versus theirs." The next section will explore some of the reservations about the funding formula and accountability more generally.

*Impacts of accountability and performance funding*

The presidents expressed a variety of concerns about accountability standards in general and the implications of performance funding specifically. The worries shared included the impact on their colleges individually and collectively, but some presidents raised the prospect that students would be negatively impacted as well:

What I'm afraid of is that we'll start becoming primarily numbers driven. The students may wind up being the ones who lose in the long run, especially the ones that need a lot of help, because the focus will be on retention and completion. The ones that are not strong enough or capable enough could very well fall by the wayside. We could put all our emphasis on resources and efforts on the ones that are going to complete so we can maximize our state funding. That scares me. Granted, states are up against it and they have their budget challenges that they have to face. I hope this door never closes. I've said this to my staff, I'm afraid that the open door is starting to close.

This quote was one of the more pointed arguments about the tension between open access and higher completion rates, and it suggests that colleges could begin to make choices, in reaction to funding realities, that will cause the least prepared students to suffer as a result.

Another bothersome possibility expressed in several interviews was that colleges may also find creative ways to essentially game the new formula to their benefit. This may entail focusing on students who are more likely to succeed, as the previous comment suggests. It might also lead to an equally problematic trend of colleges lowering standards and expectation to ensure a larger percentage of students reach the various momentum points the formula rewards. A president at one of the largest colleges suggests that attention should be paid to the possibility that colleges will behave in ways that are contrary to the intent of the new funding formula:

I think we need to be vigilant and on guard for unintended consequences. There's always the possibility of unintended consequences. The most egregious



possibility—and I don't think what I'm about to say will necessarily come true—but the most egregious unintended consequence would be colleges watering down their standards and passing students through just so that they can make their numbers look better. The question is how to provide safeguards against that.

Beyond manipulating the system, a few presidents raised the issue that colleges have very different ways of doing things and this may impact their position in the funding formula compared to other institutions. For example, depending on an individual college's approach assessing and placing students into developmental education courses, the institution may be advantaged or disadvantaged not because of the actual success of their students, but because of the practices and policies they have in place. One of the presidents, who indicated she is very supportive of the new formula, called for an inventory of developmental courses and practices to be “compiled at the state level because once funding depends on it, then it needs to be consistent and it is not.”

The issue of how one college performs under the new formula in relation to the other institutions was a prominent theme in the interviews. Because of the way the success points funding is distributed through a defined pot of money, colleges essentially compete against each other for the funds. As one president indicates, colleges that “figure out a way to have their students complete more course work and complete more certificate degrees and transfer at higher rate than other colleges, they will get a greater share of money.”

Without knowing the exact dollar figures, it was relatively easy to discern those institutions that were doing well under the formula and those that were not based on the presidents' comments. Presidents of those colleges fairing more poorly tended to object to the competition that formula created between institutions. One president from a large urban college said his primary concern is that “in order for any college to gain resources

it's got to be at the expense of other colleges.” He continues by questioning the sustainability of a funding model under which a college “can grow and still lose money.” The contrary view from a president whose institution has fared better, takes the long-view suggesting that implementing policies that can help the college benefit from both enrollment and success components of the formula is essential. He calls out his peers stating that “they’re not growing fast enough,” and that they all agreed to the formula so “why should it be changed now?” It is difficult to predict the longevity of the current funding formula, but if the frustration exhibited in the following quote becomes more pervasive among the presidents, modifications seem likely:

Gore Vidal once said, it is not enough that I succeed. My friends must also fail. When you look at the funding formula, you can have growth. If you're not growing quite as fast as your sister institutions, you'll get less money this year than last. It really is like that. We live in a system where we wish for failure of everyone else except us. That's a hell of an economic formula.

Acknowledging the competition for limited resources under the new formula, several presidents also raised the paradox that stronger accountability and performance funding models may have very little impact on what happens in the classroom. A newer president stated it this way:

I will tell you where all that stuff breaks down. It breaks down at the classroom level because there is not a faculty member at a state institution in Ohio that is going to be held accountable for that. What is the closest source of success? It is whether or not the student is learning that which we have decided is important for them to learn. If I am a professor and my view is my job is to teach them, alright, my job is to provide the material, but I don't view it as my responsibility to make sure that they learn it or to be available during office hours, on and on and on.

While this quote represents a long-standing excuse for why students outcomes have been so stubbornly low, it is also reflective of an organizational reality that presidents must balance as they attempt to steer their colleges in a different direction.

The issues of faculty and instruction will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter. A president nearing retirement repeats the challenge of impacting what happens in the classroom, but he does not place all the blame on faculty alone. Instead he points out that “part of it is faculty resistance. Part of it is institutional ignorance and institutional will.” There is no question that faculty legitimately see the curriculum as their purview, but as another president pointed out, there is a tendency to use academic freedom as a scapegoat for avoiding the work of building constructive dialogue. Asked about the prospects of engaging faculty in the conversation about the completion agenda, a long-serving president shared the following perspective:

I think that's where the challenge is. I'm not saying that any of this is impossible, nor is it necessarily unrealistic. I think in the kind of society we have today, there's got to be accountability. No question about it. But how do you turn this gigantic ship around in the middle of this ocean? You're not going to change faculty attitudes overnight.

The challenges of the community college student population will also be explored in more detail in the next chapter. However, one president from a rural college argues that those promoting increased accountability can't lose sight of the individualized nature of education and how choices students make also impact the outcome:

I think that as long as we're being held to these standards, we have to appreciate the fact that at the heart of our industry are highly individualized human beings who are and can be terribly fickle...It would be a dreadful crime to ever get to a point where we're being penalized for not being able to fit multi-dimensional people into very square categories. I think that would be a really sad thing. I'm a bit afraid of the success points. I'm a bit afraid of them because of that very thing, that if in fact we find ourselves financially penalized for not meeting goals that are too rigid or too stringent in their technical definitions, it's not going to help anything. I want to be inspired by the challenge that they present. I want to be inspired to think that excellence will be rewarded.

This section has explored how presidents described broad societal shifts in terms of both globalization of the economy and increased accountability for public resources.

The challenges created for community colleges are considerable and the shift in societal-level logic discussed here has precipitated competing logics at the level of the organizational field. The field-level impacts will be explored extensively in Chapter 5. The final section of this chapter will examine college presidents' perspectives of the role of foundations and policymakers in promoting the divergent change in community colleges (i.e. as institutional entrepreneurs).

### Agents for Change

In the discussion with the presidents about shifting societal dynamics resulting from globalization and increased accountability, there was also dialogue about where the pressure being exerted on community colleges was coming from more specifically. In most interviews this discussion centered on state and federal policymakers as well as major foundations funding education reform efforts nationally. There is no doubt from the conversation with presidents that the external pressure exerted by these two broad groups of actors created political conditions ripe for the completion agenda to emerge.

In order to tie this section back to the conceptual framework in Chapter 2, it is important to note that foundations and policymakers—acting as institutional entrepreneurs—have intentionally advanced divergent change focused on student outcomes at the nation's community colleges (and universities) (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). As agents of change, they have leveraged the shifting field characteristics around increased demands for human capital and have used their influential positions to create incentives (and regulations) intended to change college behavior. These actions have created the circumstances necessary to challenge the

dominant institutional logic in the community college field focused on access. The next two subsections will examine the presidents' views on foundations and policymakers, respectively.

### *Influence of Foundations on the Completion Agenda*

As discussed in Chapter 3, several national foundations have played a substantial role in promoting the completion agenda. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, Ford Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and others have sponsored a variety of initiatives that, as the institutional entrepreneurship literature suggests, drive divergent change by creating a vision of ambitious completion goals (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Complete College America, 2010; Completion by Design, 2012). By mobilizing multiple constituents within the field such as presidents, trustees, associations, policymakers, and the research community, foundations have sought to influence the behavior of colleges from a variety of perspectives. One of the individuals interviewed from an intermediary organization (that works with many of the foundations mentioned above) made the distinction between the role of large national funders and local community or regional foundations. This person suggested that “there are only a few foundations that have enough resources that they can set an agenda and drive systemic change.” It is these foundations that have played a prominent role in promoting the completion agenda.

Two overarching themes emerged from the interviews with presidents about philanthropic organizations. The first is that foundation resources serve as catalysts to help college leadership transform their colleges. The second theme was actually a

concern about the sustainability and scalability of work occurring under the guise of these grant-funded initiatives.

Interestingly, presidents' views toward the actions of foundations were generally more favorable than those of state and federal policymakers. This positive view was prevalent despite the fact that foundations have also pursued aggressive strategies at the state and local levels to influence completion-related policies (i.e. performance funding, alignment between educational sectors) (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Complete College America, 2010; Completion by Design, 2012). Presidents, overall, have a very supportive view of the investments foundations have made to improve student success in the community college sector. Many see the funding and attention as critical for raising awareness about the challenges colleges face, creating synergies and models for reform, and, perhaps most importantly, filling gaps in resources. One president described the efforts of the foundations in the context of the work of two of the larger completion initiatives under way:

All of the challenges that you see with Achieving the Dream and Completion by Design are going to be with us for a long time. This is a big issue. This is important work that we're doing because somehow we've got to transform our delivery systems to better engage and nurture those disparate learners to get them to a credential.

The notion of transformational change at colleges is difficult to achieve without external pressure and support. The major national foundations have been critical of community colleges, but they have also offered possible solutions. As the work of the completion agenda has matured over the past several years, the foundations have developed stronger points of view about the innovations that seem to be working. In this respect new funding is increasingly tied to specific modes or approaches (Complete

College America, 2010; Dougherty & Natow, 2009). The following quote by a president at a small college suggests that this testing of intervention models is vital:

I think Gates [Foundation] and some other groups are beginning to say, 'look traditional approaches aren't working. We need new approaches.' They're putting pressures on us to get people through degree programs...to be successful. And they've developed these models to say here's a way to do it.

To continue with this point, some have argued that the models promoted by foundations are too prescriptive and have not been adequately tested. However, one president responded to criticisms of the foundations' approach, by saying they are "going to have an agenda, but they're not forcing anybody to take their money, so it's still up to the individual college to decide if the Gates [Foundation] agenda fits the college's agenda."

There were subtle references to the efficacy of some of the things foundations were promoting. For example, a president from one of the larger colleges that has been involved in a number of the national initiatives made the following statement:

I think the philanthropic organizations are doing the right kinds of things. They're trying to provide resources; they're trying to use their resources and their power to make good things happen. So I think they're generally well-intended. I think we're early in that process to undergo and understand to what degree they've been successful, but, again, I appreciate the fact that they're focused on the things that matter to us.

This president is clearly supportive of the work of the foundations, but he also notes the relative newness of these efforts suggesting we need to be patient enough to see what the impact will be. This sentiment about patience was also a point made by one of the national intermediary staff as a weakness of relying on foundations to drive the completion agenda. More specifically, this person noted that the major foundations have "short attention spans" and they often are not willing to let the process of innovation play out.

Continuing with the theme of the sustainability of foundation support for efforts to support the completion agenda, a president—whose college has not been involved in many of the initiatives—raises the question of how colleges keep the work going without grant funds:

I think they are well intentioned—whether it is Gates [Foundation]—I mean I think their heart is in the right place. They want to create systemic change, whether they will or not I think remains to be seen. When the funding is pulled, what will remain—I couldn't really tell you, but I think they are well intended. It is just like any grant funding or even Achieving the Dream in Ohio and I am no expert on that, but each of the colleges kind of did their own thing—some obviously more successful than others.

This quote alludes to the consistency with which new interventions or strategies are applied across colleges to improve student outcomes. This point was also raised in a 2011 evaluation report of the first five years of work under the Achieving the Dream initiative (Rutschow et al., 2011). In this report, the evaluators noted that there had been too much variation in the type of interventions piloted by colleges to really gauge the effectiveness of the initiative overall. While complimenting the foundations and the colleges involved in Achieving the Dream for changing the dialogue and elevating the conversation of students success, the report went on to criticize much of the college-level work as being too small in scope to move the needle in terms of the broader community college student population.

Several comments from presidents reflected this issue of scalability of interventions piloted through their foundation-supported work as a key barrier to really moving completion numbers. In discussing the overall value of the foundations' role, one president said the issue for them is “how do we translate that [intervention] from a group of 25 students to 1,000 students— to the masses—taking it to scale? That's our



challenge. How are we going to take this Gates' model to scale?" This comment comes from one of the largest colleges in the state where the challenge appears to be designing interventions that can actually be expanded to a larger numbers of their students with adequate support in place. A president from a smaller college highlights a different dynamic:

There's a lot of emphasis on scaling up [interventions that work]. It's much more difficult to scale up at a small college than it is a large college. At a large college, you do something and it works, and then you expand it to a greater population. Now you're affecting a good portion of students. At a small college, we can proportionally have the same effect or even a greater effect within our institution, but how much is that contributing to the overall goal is less impactful. The way we have to scale up is export best practices to other colleges that can use what we've done and take it to a larger population. I've been emphasizing that really the small colleges need to network in order to have that kind of impact. If we do network, we'll have just as much an impact as the larger colleges do, but it's a different approach.

The issue of scale from this president's perspective is that small colleges, because of the costs involved, can only reach so many students regardless of how well an intervention is designed. Several of the more recent student success or completion initiatives have tried to remedy this issue from the start by designing the interventions with scaling to large numbers of students (Complete College America, 2010; Completion by Design, 2012).

Again, the overall view presidents have of foundations is that they play an important role in raising awareness about the completion agenda and community colleges more generally. As one president indicated, "it's no accident that the profile of community colleges increased when the Lumina and Gates [Foundations] got interested. Having community colleges more prominently placed in the psyche of the public is nothing but positive." The general view is that the foundations have also served as a

catalyst for promoting organizational change and reform. In a telling comment about the value of the foundations' focus on completion and innovation, one president suggested that it wasn't the financial support resources as much as the impetus for change that foundations provided through the prominent national initiatives:

We have been fortunate to leverage some of those resources from Gates [Foundation], Achieving the Dream, and others. We have one school [in Ohio] that went through Achieving the Dream on their own dime and there are other schools that are doing that right now. Looking back on it if I had to do it, I would have done it because it really transformed this institution.

The next section will examine the presidents' views of policymakers and their role in promoting the completion agenda at the state and federal level. As noted previously, the presidents' tone about policymakers was markedly different and more negative than about the foundations.

#### *Appropriate Role of Policymakers*

The role of government to education is to ensure that from a citizenry standpoint, the citizen has the opportunity. That's not to say they will or will not take advantage of it, but the citizen has the opportunity to advance, to have choices, and to have opportunities.

This quote from a president at a suburban college reflects the general recognition among those interviewed of the appropriate function of government in supporting educational opportunities. There were two predominant themes that emerged in the interviews about the role of policymakers, both of which reflected a need for balance. The first theme from presidents speaks to the desire for there to be balance between consistent, yet flexible, policies in place. This theme is also reflective of some of the discussion earlier about the use of performance funding to incentivize changes in college behavior. The second theme focused on policymakers as regulators versus facilitators of

change. Several presidents noted that at times the roles that policymakers play are at cross purposes. It is important to note that the presidents' comments about policymakers, unlike those about foundations, tended to reflect a broader perspective on issues such as governance and institutional autonomy rather than a more narrow focus on completion.

As leaders of their colleges, the presidents generally favor autonomy and flexibility to guide their institutions based on the needs of the communities they serve. The notion that state or federal policymakers can dictate what they can and cannot do on their individual campuses is not well received by most. One president made the following statement when talking about the increasing pressure coming from the state:

Mandating what we should do and how we should do it, that is overly intrusive. I think it really could lead to a one size fits all type of philosophy. I think that's what many of us are fearful of, that kind of intrusion.

Continuing with the theme of an overly intrusive approach from the state, another president expressed concern about the impact of state legislative term limits and the short-term view many elected officials have on thoughtful policy:

So you've got legislators who quite often have very little tenure in their positions and the institutional knowledge isn't there. At best some of their staffers may have it. So as a result, I think that the election cycles and the impact of the election cycles have really forced a much more short-term vision of the role of not only higher education but education in general and state public policy even more generally. I think then that you get things like a shifting emphasis in funding trying to impact institutional behavior, resulting in all sorts of unintended consequences that I'm not sure we've fully fleshed out.

As this quote suggests, legislative turnover leads to significant shifts in policy and funding priorities that make it difficult for the colleges to react to local and state needs or demands. To make matters more difficult from the colleges' perspective, the change in the governance structure for the Ohio Board of Regents, which now has the Chancellor appointed directly by the Governor, is also problematic. This change means that the long-

serving senior staff at the Board of Regents, which has in the past provided some consistency for the colleges, also now shifts with changes in the party controlling the Governor's office. These changes in administrative and legislative positions have a direct impact on the policy priorities that buffet the colleges with shifting expectations. One president discussing state policy on transfer and articulation laments this trend of frequent shifts in policy priorities:

Three or four years ago, we were all very concerned about transfer in Ohio. Transfer is very important, so please don't misunderstand. As that moved into the front seat, what moved into the back seat? Now I think we're seeing a reverse in that. Although transfer will continue to be important, what are we doing for business and industry, entrepreneurship, economic development, and how are we getting workers retrained to reenter the work force, is equally important. It's hard to serve two masters. That becomes part of the dilemma. It's a balancing act.

While the policy shifts have presented challenges for how colleges act, they can also have negative implications for students. For example, one of the long-serving presidents discussed how the Chancellor of the Board of Regents, in an attempt to maximize the funding available to colleges in recent budget deliberations, changed the way state financial aid was awarded:

The state required the federal financial aid to be applied before the state aid and when they did that, what it did was eliminate every community college student from getting state financial aid. We used to package state aid first because it could only be used to pay for tuition whereas, the Pell grant could pay for lots of other support for students. What they did was inadvertently, from a policy perspective, made our job more difficult because they reduced the full package of support.

The effect of this policy change was to reduce the cost of the financial aid program for the state and, in turn, free up dollars that went to colleges in the form of overall state subsidy, but it had an adverse impact on community college students. The same president continued drawing the connection between cost of attendance and completion rates, stating that "we know that there's an association between enrolling full-time and

completion, but we also know that 60 percent of our students are part-time because life is in the way.” These students simply can’t afford to attend full-time and, as a result of the recent change to state aid policy, they are less likely to do so in the future.

With the recent changes in state financial aid as an example, several presidents note the lack of coherence to the state’s approach to higher education policy in general and student progression and completion specifically. One president, comparing his experience in other states, indicated that “Ohio is all over the place and as a community college system has no cohesion in advancing these [completion] issues, no cohesion in helping the colleges refine and expand their missions.” Pointing to the recent creation of the University System of Ohio (USO) as a promising development, this same president conceded that “if it was not the USO plan, we’d continue to languish in even less definition and cohesion as a system.” This notion of greater cohesion, while welcomed by many presidents, creates the potential for greater state intrusion as the following comment suggests:

A lot of what’s built in the University System of Ohio was what has been put forth in other states in terms of tighter collaboration and those kinds of things. I think there’s a place for the state to, if nothing else, to facilitate collaboration. There’s a balance between how much you facilitate and how much mandate.

This quote reflects the sentiment discussed previously that too much state intervention is unhealthy and would diminish the autonomy of the individual campuses. While this view was prevalent in many interviews, some of the presidents voiced a subtle desire to see the state take on a more assertive leadership role. One president, who had only been in Ohio for a short time and came from a state with a much stronger governing board, advocated for the state to provide more assertive leadership:

I think state systems fail to lead from the front when they could, and fail to step to the back when they should. I see it happen a lot. I'm not talking about personalities. I think it's just the way they think. They tend to be afraid of their own power. They tend to deal it out very sparingly. There were so many times when if the chancellor or the senior vice chancellor had simply said, 'this is the direction we're going.' Instead, for every question, there was a system task force. It was all this decision by committee. That's what I mean by leading from the back. There were so many times when I'd say, if they'd only embraced the edict, edicts aren't always a bad thing. Just tell us what you want; you know what I'm saying? So many times I wished the system office could just step forward and say, 'you know what, we're going to save you all a lot of time. Let's just do this.'

This was an interesting sidebar from what the majority of the presidents want, which is less state intervention. From the perspective of policymakers, they often feel institutions are not sufficiently responsive to their demands and, as a result, they adopt policies that may be overly prescriptive and have unintended consequence, but push the colleges to alter their behavior. In talking about the role of policymakers in the completion agenda, an individual from one of the national intermediaries said "state policy is a blunt tool." However, he continued, "there are very few levers such as funding policymakers can pull to push for change at the institutional level." This sentiment about policymakers was reinforced in the following comment about performance funding and incentives for institutional change from an interviewee from the Ohio Board of Regents:

Legislators and other policymakers would prefer that the colleges make changes without being pushed by the state. However, when they know there are reforms and innovations that can have an impact on results and institutions are not implementing them, they start looking to policy levers that can force the colleges to do something different.

To summarize, this chapter has explored presidents' perspectives about the factors that have contributed to the emergence of the completion agenda. Using the concept of competing institutional logics at the societal-level as the frame, one key finding from the interviews is that the presidents see shifts in the global economy as having created more

competition for the United States. This competition, in turn, has been a major driver of the focus on increased education attainment. The presidents voiced concern that the emphasis on attainment could result in a focus on increasing the raw number of degrees, rather than on the value of the credentials in the labor market. They also noted that sub-baccalaureate certificates and degrees, which their institutions offer, are not receiving enough attention as an important part of the conversation relative to bachelor's degrees. More generally, they see a cultural disconnect about the value of education beyond high school as one of the major obstacles to reaching educational attainment goals.

A second key finding from the perspective of the presidents is the trend toward increased accountability for student outcomes. The presidents noted that, historically, they have been judged largely based on inputs (i.e. enrollments). The shift toward a market-orientation on a societal-level, which values efficiency, has contributed to the notion that colleges (and all public organizations) need to demonstrate a return on the investment of taxpayer dollars. Presidents noted that this trend, which has been magnified by considerable fiscal constraints in the past decade, has resulted in a much more aggressive performance funding formula in Ohio (and nationally) that rewards colleges for student progression and completion. Presidents voiced concerns about the unintended consequences of the new funding model including increased competition between colleges, the possibility of colleges manipulating the system, or a trend toward watered down standards to increase completions. They also noted the formula could have a negative impact on the access mission of colleges and actually incentivize them to enroll students who are more likely to finish. Some of these points will be revisited in the next chapter as well.

This chapter explored the presidents' views about the shift from a societal logic that views investments in higher education as a public good toward a market-based approach that values the private benefits accrued to individuals. This movement has also precipitated a competition of institutional logics within the field of community colleges between the long-standing focus on access-for-all and an emphasis on student completion. On the macro-level, national foundations and policymakers at the federal and state levels have seized on the societal shifts—functioning as institutional entrepreneurs—to promote the completion agenda. These entrepreneurs have promoted divergent changes in material practices (i.e. state policies and college processes) that have governed the community college field. In Ohio, these changes have most pointedly been exhibited through new incentive structures created through the state funding formula. This chapter set the broad societal-level context for the completion agenda. The next chapter will examine the implications of the competing institutional logics of student access and success on the organizational field of community colleges.



## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLICATIONS OF COMPETING FIELD LOGICS

A core assertion in this study is that community colleges are being pushed by a variety of external forces to focus more intently on student success. Chapter 4 specified a shift in societal-level logics toward a stronger market orientation exhibited through economic globalization and greater accountability in the public sector. The subsequent changes in the beliefs and material practices on the societal tier have precipitated—with strong advocacy by policymakers and leading foundations—a corresponding shift in the organizational field of community colleges that emphasizes greater completion rates. The central premise in this study is that this shift among two-year institutions has created competing institutional logics that will force colleges to reassess their long-held values, missions, and practices. Table 5.1 below, which is similar to the one presented in Chapter 2, illustrates the competing access and success logics that reflect the underlying assumptions guiding this study.

Resolving the tension between the attributes shown in the table will have a significant influence on how colleges operate. For example, the basis of attention under the access logic is on enrollment at the start of the academic term or year; whereas the attention under the success logic requires a focus on retention at the end of the academic term or year. If the lens becomes the end of the term or year under the success logic, colleges may focus on students who are more likely to be retained and strategies that

accomplish this end. This shift has considerable implications for the access mission of community colleges.

Table 5.1: Competing Institutional Logics in the Community College Field

Characteristics	Access Logic	Success Logic
<i>Sources of Legitimacy</i>	Number of students enrolled and breadth of programs	Number of students receiving credentials
<i>Sources of Authority</i>	Board of trustees, presidents, and local stakeholders	Governors, legislators, and, foundations
<i>Sources of Identity</i>	Community college as center of open opportunity	Community college as a purveyor of credentials
<i>Basis of Norms</i>	Increase enrollment & scope of programs	Increase the number of credentials awarded
<i>Basis of Attention</i>	Entry at the start of each academic term/year	Retention/completion at the end of each term/year/program
<i>Basis of Strategy</i>	Grow number of "customers" through marketing and recruitment	Grow through the retention of current "customers"
<i>Informal Control Mechanisms</i>	Local influence	State and national influence
<i>Economic System</i>	Welfare capitalism	Market capitalism

Note. Adapted from Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012) and community college literature.

Drawing again on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, research suggests that key components for promoting student success include college commitment and focus on student success, use of data to improve programs and services, high-quality instruction with engagement from faculty, streamlined pathways to credentials and careers, ongoing advising and monitoring of student progression, and integrated student supports and services (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bahr, 2010a, 2012; Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2011; West et al., 2012). These success-oriented strategies do not, in all cases, conflict with practices under the historical access logic, but when placed in a context of

limited resources—financial and human—the challenges of balancing these competing belief structures becomes more pronounced. Analysis of the transcripts from the presidential interviews on the topics of mission, effectiveness, and expectations points to a recurring question that is at the heart of this study—what does a shift to a success logic mean for the notion of open access at community colleges?

The dialogue with presidents indicates that, as they attempt to respond to mounting pressure from the completion agenda, they are grappling with several interrelated challenges of the community college mission. More specifically, the tensions discussed in the interviews include the sustainability of open access, the breadth of programmatic offerings under constrained funding, and the ongoing task of maintaining quality. While each campus may address these issues differently, there is agreement among the presidents that these are core problems that affect the entire organizational field.

The areas of concern cited above track closely to a set of dilemmas articulated by Norton Grubb about community colleges contending with a changing environment: 1) the dilemma of college for all, 2) the dilemma of comprehensiveness, 3) the dilemma of resources, and 4) the dilemma of instruction (Beach, 2011; Grubb & Lazerson, 2004). Each of these dilemmas illuminates a historic strength of the community colleges while also highlighting the challenge of maintaining them all and addressing a changing set of external expectations—hence the dilemma. Grubb describes each of the dilemmas as carrying equal weight in the identity of community colleges. However, sustaining open access (or using his terms “college for all”) is arguably the most fundamental challenge facing community colleges. This chapter is organized around the overarching “college for

all” dilemma as a means of exploring the presidents’ views about shifting logics in the organizational field.

### The Dilemmas of College for All under a Completion Agenda

The first section of this chapter explores the views of presidents about the principal function of community colleges—providing open access to students—and the implications of the completion agenda on this elemental role. This section also provides context for a subsequent set of issues that institutions face related to students’ intent and preparation, sustaining comprehensive programs with limited resources, and the challenge of maintaining quality in a changing environment.

Norton Grubb (2004) suggests that the “education gospel,” which calls for higher educational attainment as a solution to a wide range of societal issues, creates a dilemma that is particularly acute for community colleges. He argues that because community colleges are more accessible and affordable than other segments of higher education, they are a logical entry point for many students. The challenge is that an open door admissions policy at the colleges, which is defined by the lack of or limited admissions requirements, results in a significant portion of students enrolling who are first generation students, with little or no knowledge of the college-going experience and expectations. Further complicating the situation is the fact that a growing number of community college students are academically unprepared for college-level work. Using an analogy of ripe fruit, a president from a small rural college summarizes the tension colleges are facing between taking any and all students and improving outcomes:

Our mission is to serve a group of students that may not have opportunities elsewhere. Somewhere I heard, well, if you're serving blueberries, you just

simply take the blueberries out of the box that aren't ripe and throw them away. You can't do that with people. That is a little bit what it's like. Well, you're a blueberry that didn't make the cut, so we're not even going to play with you. You ruin our record. You ruin our ratios. I take the rotten blueberry and see how I can help that person. Are we taking them at the risk of losing funding? That's not right. Somehow community colleges need to show that we took on the student at risk and we were able to help them.

One of the most identifiable characteristics of the American community college is the open admissions policy (Bogart, 1994; Bogue, 1950; Bragg, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Deegan & Tillery, 1985; Dowd, 2003; Eaton, 1988; Gleazer, 1980; Koos, 1925; Medsker, Tillery, & Education, 1971; Tillery & Deegan, 1985; Vaughan, 1983). Most community colleges were founded on the notion of providing access to a wide range of students regardless of their preparation. The presidents embraced this philosophy when questioned about it directly. They indicated that open access is a fundamental part of their institutional mission and critical to improving students' lives by providing access to higher education for those who may not otherwise have it. Citing efforts by other sectors of higher education to increase the selectivity of their institutions and climb the ladder of prestige in rankings like those compiled by U.S. News and World Report, the presidents said they see their institutions serving as an agent for social equity and justice that other sectors increasingly discount. One president passionately stated that the community college is a source of opportunity that cannot be found elsewhere:

The mission of this institution and all two-year colleges is to help people to become self-sufficient. I'm just boiling it down to its barest essence. Whether that means short-term or long-term education or training, it doesn't make any difference. We help people that need to find a way to become self-sufficient. Whether that's through remediation or career training, I wouldn't say we're the last stop on the train route. I view us as a safety net in society. I really do. That's where the satisfaction comes in for people like me. I always say to people, you want to see the essence of what we do? Come to a graduation—so many of those people would not have engaged in higher education. I'm totally convinced of that. I think one of the greatest things that our country did was to create a community

college system. I really do. There are millions of people that would not have had any education beyond high school if it weren't for community colleges. They would not go to the university. First of all, many of them would not even be accepted. Second of all, they wouldn't have succeeded if they had gotten in.

Several presidents expressed their dedication in very personal terms to what is often referred to as “democracy’s college” (Boggs, 2011; Bogue, 1950; Dowd, 2003). For example, a president from a smaller college stated, “There are a couple things that trip my trigger. One of them is oppression...the concept of oppression. Whether it is an impoverished environment, whether it is in an abusive environment, oppression trips my trigger.” This president continues arguing for sustaining the access mission of the community colleges because it is “by empowering people with education we give them options and that is how we overcome oppression.” This sentiment is true of all institutions of higher education, but it has particular relevance in community colleges with a disproportionately large number of low-income and underrepresented students compared to other sectors. Another president from a large urban institution echoed this sentiment while describing his attraction to community colleges early in his career:

I learned that it was defined by the fact that they were open admissions. Open admission meant that poor people could go. Open admissions with low cost, so poor people could go who otherwise would not be able to go to the very—the kinds of colleges I had been working at. People who were not successful in school prior to going to college could have a chance to go. People who were place bound could go. I really like that. I was a poor person. I came from a—relatively speaking in society my family was poor. I was the first generation college student. I was a good student and I went to university. I didn't go to community college, but I identified with the students. I personally identified with the class of students. When I went to work at a community college, I felt good. I felt like this is an honorable kind of organization that's seeking to promote social justice through education.

This quote is indicative of many similar comments about a deep commitment to the role community colleges play in providing students a chance to improve their position

in life through additional education. A long-serving president nearing retirement referred to two-year colleges as “a college of first choice for many people” and “a college of second chance” for many others. Continuing with this point, the same president pointedly stated that over time the role of the community college had evolved to be “more of a porthole of entry into higher education than it was in the beginning.”

The challenge, as has been stated frequently throughout this study, is that the pressure to get more students through to a credential may limit the openness that community colleges have exhibited. For example, a president from a rural part of the state, while dedicated to the open access mission, suggests that it doesn’t mean students have access to all programs:

This is always going to be an open admission institution, always. I am committed to that. That doesn’t mean that everybody who walks through the front door has the same capability. Not everybody gets into medical school. Maybe not everybody can enter the nursing program.

One threat to the open door on some campuses may be the *type* of programs that students can get into. However, a number of presidents cited a more general threat: that the college would simply have to be more selective about which students could enroll at all.

A president from a large urban institution suggested that some colleges may conclude that “completion is so important that we’re not going to be as accessible. We’re going to start making sure that we don’t admit those students that are probably going to fail or try to discern who they are.” Another president, also from a large urban college, drew a parallel to what has happened in the university admission process:

If you are a university that has selective admission, it’s very easy [for students] to get the end. If you are a community college that has selective registrations and outreach and recruitment and you’re going after the cream of the crop and creaming those who would come to you, it’s easier to get to the end, completion. But at the same time I think we still have, as community colleges, the onus to help

more local people move through the pipeline and have an opportunity at a middle-class life. I think the challenge for us is going to be to continue to take the students who come to us, wherever they come from and have different programs, different pathways, enhanced by technology, different kinds of teaching opportunities that students could learn under to get to the end. They won't all get there at the same time, but if some ultimately make it then that's success, it just may take them a little longer to do it.

As this quote suggests, adopting a more restrictive screening process for incoming students would have a significant impact on overall success rates, but the cost would be to limit opportunities for citizens in the communities that colleges serve. The idea of increased selectivity in admissions is pervasive in higher education in general as the institutions—particularly four-year universities—seek to improve their standing in national rankings. Reflecting this sentiment, a president at yet another large community college suggested that too much focus on completion in the two-year sector could be detrimental:

One of the big risks—and this won't happen here, I hope it doesn't happen anyway—if there's an over emphasis on completion at the expense of everything else then there's risks in our institutions becoming more selective on the admission side. I mean that's what happening in universities. *US News and World Report* has had more impact on higher education than the Gates Foundation and that's what has caused this arms race of ACT and SAT scores. If we start falling into that category then there's a risk that there will a movement to start being selective in the admission's end and I think that would be a real problem for the community college movement.

It is clear from many of the comments in this section that the presidents are very committed to the open access mission of their colleges, but it is also evident that they see significant threats to that mission. The balance of this chapter will explore the presidents' perspectives on specific threats to this mission, most of which would exist without the emergence of the success logic, but are made more acute as a result of the completion agenda.



The first section will examine the presidents' views of community college students—including their background, intent, and preparation. Next, the presidents' perspectives will be explored about the difficulties of sustaining the comprehensive set of programs and services that are prevalent at community colleges in light of the considerable fiscal constraints the institutions have been experiencing. Finally, this section will review presidents' thoughts on ongoing challenges of providing quality education. Each of these issues will be presented from the vantage point of the field of community colleges and the collective implications of the competing logics on the individual colleges. Chapter 6 will explore the individual organizational responses to these dilemmas.

#### *Student Intent and Preparation as Obstacles to Success*

Throughout the interviews with the presidents a recurring contrast emerged between role of the college in supporting the student and the role of the students in driving their own success. The role of the college is covered extensively in this study. Based on the conversations with presidents it is worth spending some time exploring their perspectives about students' responsibilities as well. This section examines the role of student-intent in shaping outcomes, the psychological barriers to success, and how the lack of academic preparation presents a significant obstacle to improving completion.

The multiple missions of community colleges allow students who enroll in these open-access institutions to do so for a variety of reasons. They may enroll for personal enrichment (i.e. basket-weaving), participate in a short-term, non-credit training program developed in partnership with their employer, register for a couple for-credit courses to

increase their skills to make them more competitive for a new job, or pursue an industry certification to help them win a promotion at their current employer. All of these are viable options most community colleges offer and none of these examples would necessarily result in the completion of a credential that is recognized by federal or state policymakers. As the following quote from a president at a rural college indicates, a broader definition of success based on the student's goal is the key:

I believe that every student comes to college with some goal in mind. For some it's just to complete a class. For some it's to get two or three classes that relate to specialized welding or whatever it might be. It might be a year certificate, a two year certificate, and an associate degree. It may be that they come here because they want to get the first two years knowing they're going to transfer to some other place. And simplistically to me success is have we met their objective? Now that requires us to have a pretty good handle on what it is they're really looking for, what it is they're really after.

Tracking why students enroll and what their intended education goal is can be a complicated proposition. As one president indicates, “the problem that comes about is we're not sure what they came here for. Did they come for three classes? Did they come for a class? Did they come for a certain skill set?” Most colleges ask these questions, but in many cases the student may not have a clear outcome in mind. The same president indicated that they are “working now to determine that when they enter, so when they exit we have an idea.” If the measure of institutional effectiveness is going to be student success, then the colleges will need to have more robust systems in place to know what the students hope to achieve.

As the following comment from a president at a mid-size college suggests, there are other factors that make understanding students' intent difficult to discern:

FASFA forms, for example, where you have to declare that you're a degree seeking student in order to get financial aid—whether you are or are not, you're not going to get financial aid otherwise. And so we don't know at our level, at the

localized level or even at the sector level, we don't really know how many students that are coming to us are truly seeking a degree. Many of the students that come to us don't even know frankly what a degree is. They may think a certificate's a degree, for example, or they may think—I don't know what they think but the point is that there's a lot of illiteracy, if you will, on the part of many of the students who are coming to community colleges.

The requirement that students be degree-seeking to receive financial aid makes it challenging for the colleges to know for certain what a student's intent is because, as another president states, "we force students to lie about their goals and their intent because they can't afford not to have the financial aid." These comments assume that students are actively manipulating the system to get aid, which undoubtedly happens on some level. If colleges had a more substantial orientation and advising system in place they would be able to provide more personalized attention to students as they enroll, and they could also gather better information about what the students' educational plans are.

It is worth reiterating the point that many community college practitioners have historically justified low student graduation rates as an indication of the students' intent to do something else. While this point of view still has currency in the two-year sector, a relatively new community college president offers a different perspective:

We've always said, 'well our students don't come here for a degrees,' and I think that's been a cop out and even if that's true—which it is for some of our students—but even if it's true for a lot of our students part of our job is not to do what they came here for, but help them understand what's possible. So I think the completion agenda really helps operationalize that responsibility:

Building on this comment, some of the national completion initiatives (Complete College America, 2010; Completion by Design, 2012) are pressing colleges to promote credential attainment with students regardless of what the student's original intent may have been.

As the previous comments point out, there is a significant lack of knowledge about credentials among students attending community college and a more aggressive or

proactive approach would increase awareness of the possibilities for those that have a limited understanding. Unfortunately, some presidents fall back on a well-worn path of pointing to students' intent when they enroll as a predictor of how they perform and if they get a degree, as the following quote suggests:

I see student success as being more encompassing [than completion]. There's value in educating a person and giving them the skills they need to succeed in life even though that person is not a completer. They're a different person than before you've gotten them into your institution, received them into your institution. I think in that respect, a dropout is not a dropout, is not a failure necessarily.

In an era where an increasing percentage of jobs will require an individual to have a credential to be competitive in the labor market (Carnevale, 2007; Carnevale et al., 2010), the sentiment expressed in the previous comment seems wholly inadequate. As one president counters, the college has a responsibility to expand a student's perspective, demonstrate to them what is possible, and not simply let the student's original intent dictate the ultimate outcome based limited information:

You've heard me use customer a couple of times. I use that for a reason. The customer establishes the goal and when the student achieves their goal that is success in my mind. Now, we cannot leave out while they're with us that we're about education. We should be educating them as to what the world of opportunities is for them, so that when they achieve this goal, they are inspired to set another goal for themselves.

Another president takes the notion of expanding students' outlooks further by suggesting that colleges have to take a more proactive role with helping students understand the value of education and how it can improve their lives:

We talk in community colleges about students getting some college as if some college is enough. Some college is not enough. There's no validity of measurement to having some college so people will register for a class or two at a community college and they almost do it sometimes as a special interest kind of thing, not as part of a degree. I think it's reeducating some students who come to us to have the end in mind when they start.

It does seem reasonable for colleges to consider whether or not the students who enroll reach their self-defined goal. However, this individualized approach suggests that colleges have a system in place, adequately staffed and resourced, to understand what the students' goals are, how the college can help them reach that goal, and whether or not it leads to a credential. Students who enter community colleges need to be advised of the options in front of them and the implications of the choices they make. Given the high percentage of first generation and at-risk students who enroll, community colleges should recognize that many do not possess full information to make good decisions. The challenge is that in a period of diminished resources, colleges must make these types of advising opportunities a priority, but unfortunately non-instructional expenditures are often among the first areas to be cut when resources are tight (Katsinas et al., 2011; Thompson & Riggs, 2000).

Another important theme that emerged from the interviews, beyond the challenge of knowing what students' education goals are, relates to the psychological barriers many students have to overcome to succeed. With a large number of individuals attending college for the first time—many of whom are returning to school after an extended period in the workforce—it is not surprising that community college students often lack the confidence to be successful. A president from one of the larger suburban colleges made the following observation:

We've got students—and all community colleges have these students—whose only goal is to survive a class, I mean not even the course. It's to get through without embarrassing themselves to 3:00 p.m. so that they can get up and leave. They've got self-worth issues. They've got all these self-awareness challenges that many of our students come in with.

Repeating this sentiment, another president commented that the lack of confidence is particularly pronounced for non-traditional students:

This semester we have more 25-39 year olds. You see them coming in the door. They are in the parking lot sometimes—can't get out of the car because they are so nervous about coming in but have been laid off, they see the writing on the wall that there will be no middle class income for me or my children if we don't get out and get a higher education so it has infused people. All people, especially the automotive industry, people get it now but to begin say at 30, 35, to start over and to walk in and to say—they are all looking for nursing and suddenly they find out, well I didn't take algebra in high school and well I didn't like English in high school and I've got to take these developmental courses and boy, I've got to work nights and I've got a family.

The challenges faced by under-represented, first generation, and non-traditional students in terms of college retention and completion are well documented (Bers, 2005; Calcagno et al., 2007a; Fike & Fike, 2008; Kim, 2002; Voorhees & Zhou, 2000). There is also a fair amount of literature about the important notion of building momentum with smaller, intermediate milestones (Bahr, 2009; Bailey & Alfonso, 2005; Bragg, 2011; Calcagno et al., 2007b; Marti, 2008). One of the newer presidents emphasized this point when he said, "I'm not a social psychologist, but the attainment piece and the ability to complete is an important skill for our students to learn and to build that confidence." This comment reinforces the concept that students need to build momentum to get past key "tipping" points that are more predictive of student success (Baldwin et al., 2011; Calcagno et al., 2007b).

This same president also suggests that it is important for students to complete something not only for their own self-confidence, but also for their job prospects. "One of the reasons that so many jobs require a bachelor's degree isn't because of what they have to learn in that program, it's because they demonstrated the ability to finish something." Employers want to hire people who have demonstrated that they have the ability to set a

goal and reach it. Another president made a similar point, but also suggested that colleges need to be more cognizant of the negative implications for students who do not finish both psychologically and financially:

If a person has not completed, you have not helped that person move ahead economically. In fact, you probably created more hardship because now the person has a class to pay for that they have no more funds to pay or no more earning power than what they had before. They probably feel worse about themselves because they have an additional failure. Psychologically you need to have completers.

There is no question that student intent and motivation are critical in their ultimate success. What is also clear from this dialogue with presidents is that colleges have a role to play in helping students know what is possible and what kind of behavior (e.g. having a clear goal in mind) contributes to them reaching their education goal. Presidents clearly see students having a critical part to play in their own success, but they also recognize that students enter with a lot of baggage, beyond the challenges of academic readiness that are explored in more detail below. As the following quote from a president of a smaller rural college suggests, there are significant challenges to improving outcomes for a student population that is increasingly unprepared, but colleges are also contending with a different level of commitment and engagement from students that is troubling:

The readiness issue, it's so prevalent now. I just had a luncheon with our new faculty members about three weeks ago and I asked them, what is it you know now that you didn't know in the fall when you began here? The conversation all focused on readiness. The conversation focused on the apparent disconnects of so many students now, particularly traditional students, that don't see the connection between personal investment and output. They simply don't understand that 80 percent of success is still showing up and that attendance seems to be sort of an optional idea, and that so much is negotiable, that grades are negotiable, assignments are negotiable, deadlines are negotiable. Everything seems to be sort of up for grabs. They drop in, they drop out. They show up one week, they disappear for another, they show up again. There's this pattern of laissez faire that seems to be really plaguing a lot of the courses here now. It was really

confounding to instructors. I think that is a significant change to our culture, but it places an extraordinary expectation on our instruction.

*Academic readiness as a significant barrier*

By definition, an open door admissions policy specifies that the college will take students regardless of their academic skills and readiness for college coursework. In many cases, the only limitation colleges place on prospective students is that they have a high school diploma or take the General Educational Development (GED) test. The fundamental dilemma for community colleges is that open door access leads to a student population with a wide variety of skill levels and, as the quote below suggests, colleges need to provide adequate support for students to progress and realize the promise of a postsecondary credential. This is especially true for students who have academic deficiencies when they enter:

We meet every person where they are because we know there is a range of cognitive abilities and life experiences. Meet them where they are and then take them with great support and challenge and boundary-setting to a new level of cognitive and emotional competence. To give folks a career that reflects what America does best—moving folks to a higher academic skill set and to a higher level of standard of living and economic viability.

Many of the college presidents, while very supportive of the open door, lament the significant percentage of students requiring remediation. National research suggests that 60 percent of incoming community college students require at least one developmental education course (Bailey et al., 2010; Horn et al., 2009; Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011; Levin & Calcagno, 2008). Statistics in Ohio correspond with this figure with 52 percent of all community college students needing either developmental math or English. The number increases to 61 percent for students under the age of 20 (Ohio Board



of Regents, 2011b). According to many of the presidents, the problem is getting worse. Their frustration is apparent in the following comment from a rural college president:

More of our students are coming in developmentally challenged. Developmental education is very expensive to deliver. We're finding ourselves doing more and more of that. It's kind of a double whammy with funding cuts overall, then just having to put more resources into the developmental education. For example, our data from last fall show that 70 percent of our students tested into developmental education. This fall that went up to 79 percent. In one year it increased nine percent.

A president from a large urban college shared a similar irritation about the difficulty of serving a growing population of unprepared students, particularly when the colleges are receiving less support from the state:

More and more people are moving into higher education, not preparing themselves for it means that we are doing more developmental educational work than ever before and so it is coming at a time when there are few dollars to engage in developmental education as well as the support services that are needed.

To compound the problem, there is a growing body of evidence that developmental education, as it is now offered at most colleges, is not effective especially for students that place in the lowest-levels of developmental education or are the least-prepared academically (Bahr, 2010b; Bailey et al., 2010; Bettinger & Long, 2007). One president referenced some of this research, stating that apparently “it doesn’t matter if you take developmental education or not.” He continues that these findings have been demoralizing with a “bit of a why bother kind of attitude” developing. However, this president and others suggests that colleges need to address this issue if they want to serve students well and maintain their credibility. To further complicate matters there is also some recent research that indicates that the placement tests used by most community colleges are problematic in that they are not predictive of students’ success when compared to high school grade point averages (Belfield & Crosta, 2012).

The shortcomings of the current delivery of developmental education have resulted in significant national calls for new approaches to developmental education (The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009) or the outright elimination of it all together (Complete College America, 2010). The next chapter will explore examples of how colleges are responding to this drive to reform remedial education, but it is important to note here that community colleges as an organizational field are increasingly asking the question of what constitutes college-level work and at what point students with substantial academic deficiencies should be directed elsewhere. This circumstance is a subtle, yet important, aspect of the tension surrounding the open door policy at community colleges. Likewise, a president from a large urban college made the following observation:

We've already committed to doing pre-college-level instruction. Now the question is how pre? We've not had the opportunity to have that kind of discussion, but I think we probably will. I think that you have to have that. As long as we're doing pre-college level at some level, the question is hanging out there how low? Do we go to second grade, sixth grade, what grade-level do we go to?

One way this discussion is playing out is that a number of community colleges in Ohio, and nationally, are exploring thresholds for placement test scores under which students would be diverted to an adult basic education program. In Ohio, these programs are called Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE). The approach is to redirect students to these programs to brush up on their basic skills before they get to a community college. There are a few problems with this approach. First, under a recent change in the federal law governing what is called the "ability to benefit," students in adult basic education programs cannot use federal financial aid (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2012). Second, what happens to students when they are referred to adult

basic education? This approach may simply create another gap in the educational system where students fall out. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the resources for literacy programs in local communities have been stretched thin and the capacity of the ABLE system to serve a larger population of low-skill students is no better than community colleges. A president from a large college emphasizes this point:

The issue is going to be do communities have the appropriate literacy program? When I look in this area, I don't see us geared up for literacy work. Where would they go? I agree that there ought to be a cutoff point. Is sixth grade low enough for entry-level skills for community colleges? Is it ninth grade? Where should we pitch it and then within programs at what point should you put it? I do think our communities are going to have to create one if they don't have the whole piece that corresponds with literacy because if we don't have productive individuals in our community then we have welfare individuals. You're going to pay one way or the other. I think the more people we can get productive to some extent the better off we are going to be.

In summary, the presidents generally see remediation as a core component of their mission and a natural outgrowth of the open access their institutions provide, but there is clear frustration with the lack of readiness of students entering community colleges—particularly those directly from high school. None of the presidents explicitly blame their local high schools for the high number of recent graduates that come to them unprepared, but as a president from a suburban college stated, a significant number of students from districts “which are considered to be pretty good high schools, are coming in and testing at the 40 to 60 percent range [on the placement tests]—right at the developmental education level of either math or English. That's a sad statement there.”

Ultimately, community colleges can only do so much about this seemingly intractable problem. One rural college president grumbled that “I can have a perfect machine of education and still the output may not be exactly what I'd like it to be based on the missing ingredient in that formula, which is the student's preparation and

readiness.” The scope of the remediation problem at community colleges may get worse as the Ohio Board of Regents moves to eliminate all development education at four-year public universities (University System of Ohio, 2008). Citing the cost differential between community colleges and universities in the delivery of remediation, the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents is pushing for all developmental courses to be offered at two-year institutions beginning in 2014.

The central question that will dictate the longevity of the open door policy at community colleges is this: can colleges provide the resources necessary to support a large and growing at-risk population or will the demand for increased completion rates drive the institutions to close the door for students least likely to succeed? The answer to this question depends on how colleges prioritize the financial and human resources they have. The next section will explore the presidents’ views about the fiscal realities they face and how resources impact the comprehensiveness and the quality of programming they provide to the communities they serve.

### *Challenges of Comprehensiveness, Resources, and Quality*

Community colleges pride themselves on being responsive to the communities they serve. As the colleges have grown in importance in their local regions they have been asked to take on more and more functions. While the growing list of services and offerings adds to the legitimacy of the institution in the eyes of local residents, it raises what Norton Grubb refers to as the dilemma of comprehensiveness (Beach, 2011). The ever-increasing demand on colleges to be involved in a wider array of community

endeavors raises important questions about whether the colleges are doing any of the functions well.

Most of the Ohio presidents embrace the comprehensive mission of the community college that has evolved over the past several decades to include terminal occupational and transfer offerings, remedial education, programs supporting workforce and economic development, small business advising, and more. They cite their colleges' responsiveness to local communities as the central driver of the programs and services offered. One president stated fervently, "if the college isn't serving its community, it's not doing its job."

The presidents' views on community responsiveness and programmatic comprehensiveness, similar to open door access, reflect a deeply-held value. They see their colleges as "community assets," which can "turn on a dime to meet local workforce needs." Many presidents point out that their individual institution is distinct from other community colleges because of the uniqueness of their local community. This leads to a different mix of offerings in terms of credit programs leading to certificates or degrees as well as non-credit programs geared toward short-term training. One president described it this way:

You've got 1,200 of these colleges across the country enrolling 6.5 million students. The largest single sector of higher education in America, but every one of the 1,200 are a little different because the communities they serve are a little different.

While there is no doubt that local communities have differing needs, the question remains whether the level of responsiveness presidents consistently espouse is sustainable (Ayers, 2011; Boggs, 2011; Bragg, 2001; Desai, 2012; Dougherty, 2002; Laanan, Hardy, & Katsinas, 2006; Leigh & Gill, 2009; Mullin, 2010; Osterman, 2010). None of the

presidents suggested they were willing to withdraw from specific aspects of their mission, but one president stated pointedly that “We try to be too many things. We try to be all things to all people.” Building on this comment another president suggested that colleges need to develop specializations in certain areas and perhaps let go of other programs:

It's very tempting to become all things to all people, and we can't. Where is our area of specialization? I think there are areas that one college can do better than the other depending on their community, the constituency, what businesses need. What is their claim to fame? What are the best practices there? What is the strength of that particular institution?

The tension about how much a community college can and should do in light of constrained resources and increasing numbers of students is real and growing. While some presidents proposed retrenchment, others flatly dismissed the notion. A president from a rural part of the state adamantly rejected the notion of scaling back the college mission:

I hear colleges saying we can't be everything to everybody. And I want to say, ‘oh yes we can.’ We have to have our community college mission and if we can't do that then I don't know what we're going to do. I am confused. I think we need to be everything to everybody. I mean you know people who need to go to a community college because it's more affordable for them. People who don't have any money need to go to a community college. So what are we going to say no to, the transfers? No, we're not going to do job training. We can't do that. I mean America needs us. So, I'm a believer that we need to keep our traditional community college mission and resist the idea.

While the commitment expressed in this comment is inspiring, the reality is that sustaining diverse, quality programming will require additional resources that are increasingly scarce. The sentiment expressed by this president is reflective of the broader commitment presidents have toward the comprehensive mission of their colleges.

Another president was more pragmatic about the situation, suggesting that colleges need to get better at fewer things:

They need to focus on mission. They need to think in simplistic terms like what are we supposed to be doing? They really have to revisit that mission and groom it and refine their operations and their endeavors and their initiatives. You really have to—I know it's probably a fancy word for retrenchment, but quite frankly I think we are entering an era where we have to get better at fewer things. Secondly, I think we have to likely do fewer things for more people, but we should do them better than anyone else. That's where we maintain our competitive edge over the for-profit colleges, the non-profits, and the online competitors. We have to worry about quality. We have to get rid of this notion that a life in public service is a life of inefficiency and sloth and unfair advantage.

*Breadth of multifaceted mission in jeopardy*

Depending on their college's history and whether their institution emerged from a junior college transfer model or from the more technical/occupation track, presidents placed a different emphasis on their mission. For example, one of the presidents at a larger metropolitan college, which has long been an institution in the vein of the transfer-oriented junior college, indicated that the transfer mission has “probably become more prominent and it's as much a pull now for the universities as it is a push for community colleges.” This view was not shared by all the presidents—particularly those whose colleges have more of an occupational focus. The duality of the transfer and occupational missions of community colleges is rooted in the long history of individual institutions as the following quote articulates well:

I think woven into the mission of most public community colleges today is the blending of two historical ideologies. They come from distinctly different histories. The history of technical education is so rooted in vocational education. It's so rooted in a history that's closely associated with career and technical educational programs in the K12 sector. Whereas the community college or what used to be known as the junior college of course, movement, was really I believe much more of a movement that was somewhat tangential to or an offspring of

what you might think of as classical higher education. Here we have the meeting place of these two major historical movements. They don't fit perfectly together. I don't mean to suggest it's the perfect marriage. They are certainly highly complementary of each other.

Recognizing that the evolution over the past several decades has been toward comprehensiveness, the question of balance was most acute with the presidents from the technical colleges that have recently been granted the authority to offer transfer degrees (e.g. A.A. or A.S). Most of these individuals welcomed the new authority to offer transfer degrees, but indicated that they still tended to emphasize their technical programs. One president, at a historically technical college, was very critical of the movement by the state to grant expanded authority to institutions as an example of mission creep. This president was very concerned about the drive toward greater prestige in higher education:

In Ohio, we have 23 two-year colleges. There are seven of them that are still, through the Ohio revised code, are technical colleges. I cannot convey to you how important I believe the technical college mission is. It's all about jobs, work force development, and economic development, even stronger, more deliberate, and more intentional. My colleagues, presidents of technical colleges, they want as far—in my opinion—they want as far away from that vocational/technical component as they can get. They want—everybody is a want-to-be in my opinion. Everybody's a want-to-be. If you're a college you want-to-be a university. If you're a two-year college, my experience has shown, you want-to-be a four-year college. And if you're a technical college, you want to be a community college.

The sentiment expressed in this comment, while a minority view among those interviewed for this study, is certainly supported by the competition for higher rankings among universities (Bastedo & Bowman, 2011; Meredith, 2004; Monks & Ehrenberg, 1999) and the motivation of community colleges in other states to gain the authority to offer bachelor's degrees (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005; Levin, 2004; Townsend, 2005; Walker, 2005). Another president was adamantly opposed to community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees:



I'm in total disagreement with institutions that want to offer a four-year degree. You know there are now associations of community colleges that are joining this movement. I totally disagree with that. I think there is an absolute place for community colleges. I worked at a college that was established in 1917 and I guess that's where I first got my experience that community colleges have a valuable mission and it's very simple. You can either be transfer first or then have a job mission or like here, we were first a technical college and then became a transfer college. Either way that in itself is enough plus workforce development and community service. But when we take on that four-year mission I think we lose our value and then we start competing with four-year colleges and that shouldn't be our goal. So I'm very against it.

The presidents are generally interested in finding a balance between the occupational and transfer programming, citing this important "dual role" of community colleges. One president argued that the dual role is critical because "for one student, you serve their purpose at the moment [with a technical program], but you don't close doors of opportunity for that student [to transfer and earn a bachelor's degree]." This same president suggested that, in the recent past, there was more of a focus on the colleges' transfer mission than technical programming, but the pendulum has started to swing in the other direction. He argues that external needs change and these periodic shifts in emphasis are why dual roles at the colleges are important. Another president echoed this point, but also suggested that it is the unique needs of students that contribute to the need for comprehensive programming:

Part of our goal is to fill gaps...if other institutions in the community are the bricks, in some ways we're the mortar. You know we're a bridge for all of our students to something else. Not necessarily a final destination. Students are coming here for a couple of classes or a short-term certificate or an associate's degree to prepare them for a specific career or a specific job. Our students are coming here on their way to transfer to a bachelor's degree. Our students are coming back here after starting at a university and kind of regrouping and then on their way back. So the educational path I think does meet a lot of unique needs for students who are in unique situations.

In addition to meeting the varied needs of students, the perspective of employers also looms large for the presidents. As the earlier discussion about the various missions indicates, most institutions have significant divisions that focus on training connected with local businesses. This entrepreneurial part of the college is how the two-year sector earns the reputation for flexibility and attentiveness to local workforce needs. These programs tend to be non-credit offerings that, in most instances, do not apply toward a certificate or degree. This is starting to change, but the divide between the credit and non-credit parts of the community college should not be understated. Based on the following comment from one of the largest institutions, the demand for non-credit programming will not abate anytime soon:

There was a shift from 1985 to 1995, and then to 2005, it just progressively got stronger that there needed to be evermore customized training programs for business and industry. Businesses and other organizations in a community were the primary client where—not the primary client, but a primary client. It wasn't just the one by one student that came to you, but it was the businesses saying, "What kind of human resources needs do you have? What kind of training workforce needs do you have? Let us do customized programs." That really got traction in the mid '80s and has been increasing ever since.

Reflecting an emerging dialogue nationally, several of the presidents advocated for tighter integration of occupational and transfer programs to benefit both the students and the institution. A president from a medium-size college suggested that colleges need to eliminate the distinction between occupational and transfer programs stating that "I think applied [training] gets you ready for a specific expertise. Liberal arts prepare you to do everything." This sentiment is manifesting itself with community college practitioners and experts nationally promoting the need to get more sophisticated about the alignment between occupational programming—including short-term training—and degrees that are oriented toward the traditional transfer mission. The following comment

reflects this perspective of needing to combine occupational training with competencies that come from more traditional liberal arts:

What we hear from our employers is that, yes we want you to produce graduates with the technical competencies necessary for them to at least enter into our workplace. You don't have to have them totally polished, but please give them a basic foundation of competency to give them a foot up and to make them competitive in the job search. What we really want are people who can write. What we really need are people who can communicate. What we really need are people who are unbiased, not prejudicial of their fellow workers and employers. We need someone who understands the value of teamwork, who understands how to step up to the plate and to do their fair share. Those are the characteristics that we continue to hear from our industrial partners. Well, where do you get those? You tend to get those from the liberal arts and sciences. These aren't opposing, they're complementary.

Much of the dialogue with the presidents about the comprehensiveness of community colleges centered on satisfying diverse demands from students, employers, and local communities. Most of the conversations emphasized the need to balance and sustain the dual roles of transfer and occupational training. The majority of presidents said they supported the broad mission, but a minority that were less enthused about the comprehensive approach voiced concerns about having the resources to do it all well. As the following quote suggests, even before overlaying the pressure around student completion rates, there are significant trade-offs college leaders will have to weigh to implement the comprehensive mission:

I absolutely feel pressure to do that [have a comprehensive mission]. We were mandated by law to offer the AA and the AS degree. My colleagues begged and pleaded to get that law changed so that we could offer it. . . What I said is if this is what everybody wants, I will not resist it. You must understand that it will be secondary. I mean, it'll be an option. I don't want you to think I'm stupid in digging my heels in. Sure, today, we have the full gamut now. I mean, we can offer the transfer degrees, AA, AS. We market them. We've got them. What it forced us to do, we had to divert resources from the technical mission to hire faculty that are credentialed and acceptable to the Higher Learning Commission, so that we could offer the AA and the AS.

This section has focused on the programs offered by colleges to respond to community needs and how the colleges balance the quality and breadth of offerings. Several presidents take a pragmatic view of the college mission and point out that in many communities there is no other institution that will provide the needed services. However the question of breadth and quality of programming represents a key dilemma for community colleges moving forward. The access logic suggests that colleges will continue to provide a wide array of programs to support their students and their communities. The success logic challenges this assumption as institutions adjust to focus on helping students meet their educational goals. One president optimistically stated that “the focus on completion is a way for us to be more successful at fulfilling those five basic purposes for those we serve.” While rhetorically this president makes it sound simple, the considerable challenge for college leadership is how, in the current fiscal environment with constrained resources, they can sustain existing program offerings while also improving outcomes. The next section explores the presidents’ perspective on the fiscal trade-offs and how access could be limited as a result.

*Constrained resources forces tough choices*

Reflecting national trends, Ohio community colleges experienced remarkable enrollment increases over the past several decades, undoubtedly a result of their affordability. More specifically, in the last decade full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments at Ohio community colleges increased by 64 percent from 87,803 FTE in 2001 to 144,205 FTE in 2010. By comparison, the FTE enrollments at university main campuses only increased by 17 percent during the same period (Ohio Board of Regents,

2010). While this trend is an encouraging reflection of more people enrolling in higher education, colleges have also had to contend with significant decreases in state support during this same period. Overall state subsidy to higher education in Ohio declined from \$6,436 per FTE in FY 2001 to \$4,504 in FY 2010 (Lingenfelter, 2011). These numbers mask some improvements in state support between 2001 and 2010, but the recession in the past couple years has taken a dramatic fiscal toll on funding for public colleges (and universities) in Ohio.

Additionally, as more affordable institutions with open admissions, community colleges are an appealing option for many low-income students beginning their postsecondary education. However, Grubb suggests that declining resources in most states and corresponding cuts in state subsidies for higher education are problematic for community colleges especially because the kinds of students they serve require considerable supports to be successful (Beach, 2011).

So, the heart of the dilemma of resources for community colleges is that they are being squeezed by declining state subsidy and pressured to keep tuition low, all while experiencing historic enrollment growth and serving populations that require more resources to succeed. One president noted the cumulative impact of state budget cuts in the recent years stating, “The share of our budget [from state funds] has dropped from 55 percent to less than 40 percent in less than ten years.” He continues with a resigned view that “the best we can hope for right now is to keep that solid.” While the economic conditions that have plagued state budgets over the past several years have eased some since the depths of the recession, the longer view of state finances suggests that appropriations for higher education in general, and community colleges specifically, will

not markedly improve any time soon. In addition, the increasing cost of higher education overall will likely result in considerable pressure for colleges to keep tuition from rising, although the following quote from a president lamenting the squeeze colleges are in suggests that tuition increases will be the only way colleges can react to the fiscal realities:

It's almost a recipe and a definition of an insane situation. Here are more people who are less prepared, we're going to give you fewer resources and we want you to be more successful. How that's playing out is that on the resource side we're going to continue to try to balance our resources and actually get more resources to aid. We're going to increase tuition. I mean, tuition will be increasing.

The discussions with the presidents revealed that they do not expect any significant influx of resources for their colleges in the near future and that any increases in tuition will simply be used to backfill lost revenue from cuts in state funding. Coupling the prospect for resource constraints with increased expectations about outcomes, and it's clear that community colleges will be faced with tough choices moving forward. One president described the specific impacts of a tight fiscal environment at his institution:

We're going to need more advising, more financial aid staff, but we can't just keep adding on people, we're not going to have the money for it. Over on the instructional side the same thing is true. We're probably not going to hire that many more full-time faculty. That means more part-time faculty. We're looking at marginal programs. We have programs that maybe only have a half-dozen or eight students only graduating one or two a year, if that. And we're taking a hard look at that right now, of trimming some of those programs either because they're small and can't sustain themselves or maybe they even aren't needed that much anymore because of a changing job market. We probably will be reducing sections. We'll probably be putting more students in existing sections, increasing class size. One of the real benefits that we've had historically over the universities is small class size.

A recent survey of state directors of community college systems suggests that focusing on a completion agenda is made considerably more difficult with declining state support (Katsinas et al., 2011). As the quote above notes, constrained resources will

force colleges to make operational decisions such as increasing the historically small class sizes and growing the number of part-time faculty to accommodate the increased enrollments. These operational decisions may be the most efficient choices for the college fiscally. However, each runs counter to what research suggests is needed to promote student success and improved student outcomes (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Green, 2007; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009). When one president was asked pointedly about the implications of funding constraints for the completion agenda, she referenced retention research about the importance of connecting with students:

The funding issue is a threat because we are a people-intensive business and the research says—and it makes complete sense—that a student decides to stay often because they bond with one person. One person on a campus—it may be a secretary, faculty member—one person took an interest in them and they felt like they were part of something. All the research about it says they know within three weeks whether they are going to stay—they may finish the term, but if they just don't feel part of something, they don't connect, then they possibly jump ship. So in a people intensive business, you have to be able to pay people and I think that is a real conflict—what we are going through and doing so much with part-time, so it is a threat.

Much of the emerging research on community college student completion suggests that students need more supports and better orientation (Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Levin et al., 2010). The research also suggests that the number of part-time faculty at community colleges has a negative correlation to student success (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Green, 2007; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009).

The question becomes where should colleges invest their limited resources? Like many colleagues, a president from a small college said she is trying to allocate sufficient resources to support students, and she asked, “Should we require orientation and require it before a student can register?” She continues, wondering aloud if the current staff could

handle the additional work stating, “What is it going to take and is that going to be our highest priority or is full-time faculty going to be our highest priority?” Again, research shows that both student supports and strong faculty are important to student success, but often, and increasingly, colleges have to choose between them.

Part of the answer to these fiscal challenges, according to the president quoted below, is choosing to operate differently:

We're going to have to be creative because we're not going to have the dollars. We're going to have to be creative as to how we help them [students] move through the pipeline. I think it's going to require more participation by more people coming together. It can't be a faculty member who just comes in and teaches his or her courses and that's it. It's going to involve tutoring. It's going to involve more people being engaged in advising and counseling.

The collaboration this president is calling for will be discussed further in the next chapter but, as was noted previously, one resource for colleges has been the grants they receive from national foundations through various completion initiatives. These grants have provided additional dollars—particularly in areas of student supports—that have helped fill some gaps. Foundation funding has also been valuable in spurring new ideas as the previous quote suggests. However, these grants rarely cover the full costs of a program and are typically short in duration. The question remains for colleges to make tough choices about how to expend limited resources. The following comment from a president who has been a strong proponent of the completion agenda is indicative of the stark reality the college presidents face:

There are just so many students that you can serve effectively with what you have. We have been pretty creative as administrators in finding the resources to sustain our growth. We'll continue to do that for a while. There comes one point where I know schools have just abandoned the access agenda, at least in the sense of trying to continue to grow in order to serve the students better. I wouldn't say that's where we're heading, but I say that could be a significant negative consequence of not funding the mission at an appropriate level.



As this quote suggests, ultimately it will be the role of the state to invest public dollars to sustain the access mission of community colleges while also promoting completion. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ohio is moving toward a performance funding formula that gradually funds the colleges more on student progression and completion rather than enrollments. As the quote below intimates, this new formula may expedite the move toward more selective admissions at community colleges as they gauge the impacts on their revenue and attempt to balance this with the costs associated with offering certain services such as developmental education:

Three of the six [Success] points [in the formula] deal with developmental education... We have four schools in Ohio with 20,000 students or more. Three of the four big schools lose money in the system and it's because they have such a predominance of developmental students... and I have heard one of those presidents say in a public meeting we're better off not to take anymore developmental students, the formula works against us.

This sentiment about funding on completions and the need to be more selective was not only prevalent among the presidents from the largest colleges. Several presidents from very small institutions shared similar views. None of the presidents were enthusiastic about the prospects of limiting access, but rather they see it as pragmatically yielding to the fiscal realities they are encountering. The following comment reflects the hesitancy several presidents expressed about the trajectory of funding and the likelihood that the colleges will have to be more selective:

I don't want community colleges to close their door, narrow the entry way, or raise the threshold without having argued and lobbied for another avenue that will prepare students to meet our heightened threshold. I think that it really almost goes without saying that if we are going to have the completion rates we want and maybe need for funding, we're going to have to control the inputs a little bit more and that could be a very treacherous decision and we can't do that lightly.

This section examined the implications of constrained resources for the colleges under the student success logic. With the emerging completion agenda and the corresponding performance funding changes, the presidents discussed the need to make tough choices about their internal budget priorities that will help them maximize student outcomes. They also discussed the likely negative impact of a stronger completion focus in the funding formula on their historical access mission. Several presidents highlighted operational decisions they have made—such as increasing class sizes and relying on more adjunct faculty—that have resulted from the constrained resource environment. These choices exacerbate another dilemma colleges face as they seek to balance the access and success logic, which is how to provide a quality education.

*Maintaining quality as a constant struggle*

Advocates of community colleges historically have cited accessibility, affordability, and extensive programmatic offerings as central arguments for the value of these two-year institutions. Another key attribute frequently mentioned is the emphasis on teaching. While on the surface this is seemingly an advantage for community colleges, Grubb suggests that dynamics in the community college sector such as declining resources, increased levels of remedial need among students, and the general lack of attention to quality teaching create a situation where what the students learn comes under question (Beach, 2011). Under the completion agenda, this is even more challenging. One president suggests that when students complete, we collectively need to know that what they complete is of high quality. “The question is not only are students getting through, but what are they learning.” Another president points out that if a college suddenly

improves their outcomes, the credibility and quality of the college will be in question if they don't have the evidence to back it up. He states that if colleges go "from 22 percent of our students completing within four years to 80 percent, people would be coming from all over the county to see what we were doing." At the heart of these questions are the quality of teaching and learning. The completion agenda simply aggravates an already challenging issue for community colleges.

Often referred to as "teaching" or "student-centered" institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Grubb et al., 1999), community colleges are distinct from other sectors of higher education. More specifically, community colleges have smaller class sizes, particularly when contrasted to the large lectures for prerequisite courses at universities for first-year students. Further, community college faculty focus squarely on teaching without the publishing and research expectations of their university peers (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Townsend, 2007a). This singular focus on teaching allows faculty at community colleges to teach a greater number of classes per term and this is an important contributor to the operational efficiency of two-year institutions.

Unfortunately, the reality is that these institutions have increasingly had to make operational decisions that are detrimental to learning and student success. Because of the growth in enrollment and the reduction in state support, two-year colleges are starting to increase the traditionally small class sizes. One president was very blunt about the prospects on this front:

We struggle to make the class sizes small. Yet, as we look into the future, those class sizes are going to have to become much larger just to make them economically viable. That may not be what a high school student would find in their best interest—a small class to us is currently 24, but it's going to become 36 and 48 as we move ahead.

More personalized attention offered to students through smaller classes has been a hallmark of most community colleges but as one long-serving president indicated, “We don’t have the luxury of small classes anymore.”

Class sizes are an important issue, but the rise in the percentage of classes taught by adjunct faculty is a much more vexing problem and growing challenge for all community colleges. The percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty is growing nationally (Charlier & Williams, 2011; Eagan, 2005; Gappa, 1984; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). In Ohio specifically, the percentage of first-year students in Ohio community colleges, which are arguably more at-risk, were in classes taught by part-time faculty 57 percent of the time in 2005 and 63 percent of the time in 2009 (Ohio Board of Regents, 2011a). This trend toward a greater proportion of courses with adjunct instructors is clearly increasing in Ohio and several presidents expressed concerns similar to those below:

It's not uncommon to find more than 50 percent of the faculty as part-timers. Now, we've spun this yarn forever. Oh, but those part-time faculty members, they're experts in their field. They really lend credibility to our institution. They really know what they're teaching. From a practical point of view, but do they teach the critical thinking skills that's necessary for those students to be able to elevate the kind of learning that goes on in the classroom? I question how high a level of learning goes on in the average college classroom...I think we're a miserable failure. Part of that—I can only speak for the community colleges—is that we have too many part-time faculty members. We herd them like cattle. We're going down to the wire to the day before the class starts, sometime the week the class starts, and we're hiring people who had never taught before. We're throwing them a textbook, ‘here, go teach this course.’ I can say that from experience because I was on the receiving end of that many, many times. I was a gypsy adjunct for a long time. I'd stand there say, what do I teach? Don't worry about it, just go teach.

This quote raises important questions about the quality of instruction provided by part-time faculty. Several researchers have examined the effect of part-time faculty on

students success and their findings have been largely negative (Charlier & Williams, 2011; Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Jacoby, 2006). This is not surprising given the fact that many part-time faculty are detached from campus in general, receive very little professional development or support, and have limited interaction with their students outside of the classroom (Christensen, 2008; Green, 2007; Levin, 2007; Murray, 2001; Wallin, 2007).

Add the dynamics of increasing numbers of adjunct faculty to a growing student population that is academically underprepared and the situation goes from bad to worse. As noted on the previous page, two-thirds of first-year students at Ohio community colleges are taught by adjunct faculty (Ohio Board of Regents, 2011a). This is roughly the same percentage of students that require at least one remedial course before progressing to college-level work (Ohio Board of Regents, 2011b). The challenges faced by academically underprepared students are daunting and, as the following comment from a president indicates, colleges do not put their best teachers with the most at-risk students:

I've always been a supporter of developmental education, but a year ago I said I feel like a hypocrite because we don't have a full-time developmental education teacher. We have full-time teachers teaching, but we don't put our best teachers in developmental education.

The growing number of students with academic deficiencies and other attributes that make them less likely to succeed presents a significant challenge for community colleges in light of the pressure around the completion agenda. Combine this circumstance with the trend toward increasing numbers of adjunct faculty and it is not difficult to imagine a situation where colleges opt, as one president stated, to "control the inputs" by becoming more selective with admissions. Given a choice between managing

the level of preparedness among entering students and being able to identify additional resources, it seems likely based on the conversations with the presidents that colleges will begin to tighten entry requirements to bring in students who are more likely to succeed regardless of whether they are in small classes taught by full-time faculty members.

Placing this dilemma of instruction in the context of the shift from an institutional logic of student access to one that emphasizes student success, it is hard to imagine how community college instructional delivery models will not change dramatically in the near future. In this respect one of the presidents suggests that the completion agenda presents colleges with the impetus to do a better job of measuring quality of instruction and learning:

I think obviously access is a critical piece of a mission of a community college, but community colleges, in my opinion, are always just stuck with how you balance access with quality and so access to a quality education is different than just access to education. And I think that's where this focus on student success has really become important because what we should be talking about is creating access to change and creating opportunities, if you will, as a result of the learning experience and learning environment and I think that creating access to failure is not doing the student any favors.

As this quote suggests, helping students attain a credential will not have the desired impact on the economic vitality of communities and the country as whole if institutions are not able to validate the quality of the certificates or degrees awarded. Community colleges have long been pressed to demonstrate that they provide a quality education for the reasons cited in this section. The emergence of the completion agenda simply adds urgency to an ongoing challenge.

To summarize, the historic open access, or college-for-all, policy at community colleges creates significant dilemmas for colleges as they try to balance the access logic with the emergent success logic. This chapter examined the presidents' perspective about

the challenges posed by student intent and deficiencies in academic preparation as well as difficulties in sustaining comprehensive, quality programming in light of limited resources. The findings described in this chapter point to easily identifiable strategic choices colleges could make to better position themselves to embrace the completion agenda and improve student outcomes. However, the clear options available would contradict the long-standing focus on student access in the two-year sector.

For example, community colleges could simply institute an admission standard that would curtail the number of underprepared students requiring remediation. This decision would allow the colleges to reallocate scarce resources from developmental education to fortify support for a wider array of programmatic offerings that meet community needs. This choice would obviously run counter to the open door philosophy that has characterized community colleges since their founding. A key finding in this chapter is that in inconspicuous, but significant, ways colleges are beginning to make these choices as they seek to clarify the boundary about what level of student academic deficiency that is practically beyond their scope.

Another choice colleges could make would be to eliminate certain programs that are expensive, like many of the occupational offerings that require costly equipment. The resources from terminated programs could be shifted to support the hiring of more full-time faculty in the remaining academic programs and provide greater professional development opportunities to all instructors. Again, this choice would force the college to abandon some of the programs that have been deemed important by the local community they serve. This, in turn, could cause the institution to lose legitimacy among its external stakeholders. The findings in this area are mixed as it relates to the completion agenda.

Colleges continue to balance their budgets by hiring greater numbers of adjunct faculty despite the negative correlation between student outcomes and part-time instructors.

Again, these are just two examples of the strategic choices colleges could make to address the dilemmas they face. And while they are relatively easy to identify, they would require the institutions to abandon long-standing practices and values that are fundamental to the access mission of community colleges. The current situation is unique in that all community colleges—in Ohio and nationally—face the same challenges and will have to respond in the best way for their institutions and communities.

The prevailing institutional logic in the field has stressed student access for the past several decades and fosters an approach of accepting students where they are regardless of their preparation and likelihood for success. The emerging success logic is challenging this thinking and raising the question of what access really means. This chapter explored the implications of these shifting logics for the entire organizational field. The next chapter will delve into how the presidents see their individual organizations responding to the changing environment.



## CHAPTER 6

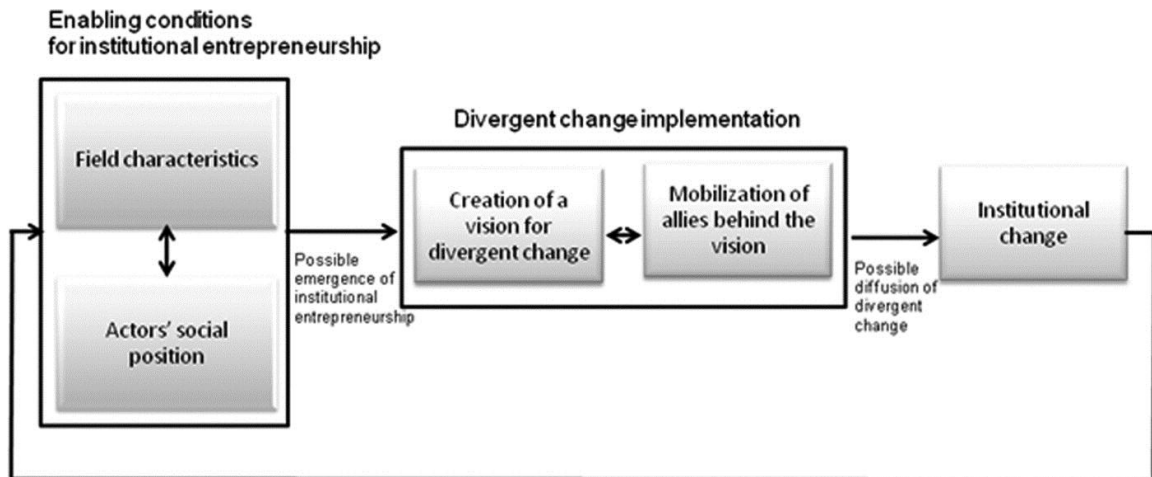
### ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONAL LOGICS

Chapter 4 explored presidents' views about the conditions (or shifting societal logics) that contributed to the emergence of the completion agenda and the actors (i.e. institutional entrepreneurs) that promoted it. Chapter 5 examined the presidents' perspectives about the struggle between field-level logics of student access and student success. The implications of this contest were presented as a series of dilemmas colleges face as they alter their beliefs and practices from those represented by the dominant access logic to the emergent success logic. Next, Chapter 6 will consider presidents' views on the organizational response of their individual colleges to the shifting field-level logics and will reflect on the role of presidents as potential institutional entrepreneurs.

Before discussing how the presidents see their colleges responding to the emerging completion agenda, it is useful to briefly revisit the process of institutional entrepreneurship described previously in Chapter 2. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, the ability (or willingness) of community college presidents to serve as institutional entrepreneurs to promote the emerging success logic is dictated by enabling conditions that include field characteristics and the individual's position within the organization (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). Clearly, the presidents, as CEOs of their organizations, have both the authority to reallocate resources to support a new direction and the prominence to build support for their views. The field characteristics include increased

external pressure to improve education attainment to be competitive economically as well as greater accountability for student outcomes. The enabling conditions are right—allowing presidents to embrace change and lead their colleges in a new direction.

Figure 6.1: Model of the Process of Institutional Entrepreneurship<sup>2</sup>



To successfully promote divergent change within their colleges, presidents must create a vision for transformation and mobilize allies behind it (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). The first section of this chapter will explore the Ohio presidents’ visions for promoting student success, and will provide a window for observing how their organizations are oriented for improving completion rates. The next several sections will explore three themes that emerged from conversations with the presidents that suggest which steps colleges need to take to adjust to the emerging completion agenda. These themes include: 1) Establishing the college as a learning organization that leverages the collective wisdom of the faculty and staff to maximize

<sup>2</sup> Figure adapted from Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum (2009).

results; 2) Improving college practices and processes to better support students; and 3) Enhancing collaboration with education and community partners—especially K-12 schools and districts. Each of these themes not only further elaborates the presidents’ visions for change, but also alludes to how they will mobilize allies—both internally and externally—to achieve it.

It is important to note that the research design for this study hinders a full exploration of presidents’ roles as possible entrepreneurs within their colleges. Because this study focused on a cross-section of presidents from multiple institutions rather than a deeper investigation of the role of a limited number of presidents within their colleges with additional interviews with faculty and staff, it is difficult to discern the level of entrepreneurship they have exhibited. However, it is possible to detect the extent to which the presidents are rhetorically supporting the emerging completion agenda and the strategies they see as crucial for their colleges to move forward in the changing environment.

#### Presidents’ Positioning of Student Success

“The biggest challenge is helping the students who are coming through our doors to be successful” is a statement from a president at a smaller rural community college that captures the sentiment expressed by several presidents about the emerging completion agenda. What was striking in the dialogue about the role the college’s play in promoting improved student outcomes was the honesty, of many of the presidents, about the community college track record in this regard. When asked about the inherent critique of

community colleges in the broader discussion about completion, one president stated that the criticism is appropriate because “we are miserable at it.”

Others echoed this perspective, suggesting that shifting blame for poor student outcomes is not the answer. Practitioners at community colleges have often pointed to the shortcomings of the K-12 sector in preparing students for college as the reason outcomes are lacking at two-year colleges. While this sentiment was voiced in the interviews, some presidents also pointed out that the flaws in the K-12 education system are only part of the problem. A president from one of the mid-sized colleges expressed this view in the following quote:

We haven't done a very good job of completion. We've done a great job of mass education, but our level of developmental education has risen, because really something is wrong in K-12. Something is wrong with the learning model, but something is also wrong with us. You can't blame it all on developmental education. We're not graduating enough students.

This quote highlights an important point that is often overlooked—that completion rates are not where they need to be even among community college students who are academically prepared. Such willingness to look inward with a critical eye is a necessary step for the sector and for individual colleges as they begin to reform and adopt innovative practices. Critical self-reflection by colleges has also been an important component of many of the national initiatives aimed at completion, and this point will be explored later in this chapter (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Completion by Design, 2012).

Additionally, some presidents suggested that students' outcomes in community colleges are not well understood and, as the following comment from a president at a rural college suggests, colleges need to be prepared for a negative reaction as the public becomes more aware of the poor record on student outcomes at two-year colleges:

The public is not well aware [of the community college student outcomes]. I think if they really understood that retention rates of 40 to less than 50 tend to be the norm, I think there'd be some kind of a revolt or certainly an investigation into what is going on here.

The concern expressed in this comment is made more relevant as colleges confront the reality of higher levels of accountability that have taken the form of more sophisticated performance funding formulas and metrics. It is in this vein that some presidents, while supporting the notion of improved student outcomes and acknowledging that community colleges have a less than stellar record in this regard, also urge policymakers to judge their performance through the appropriate lens. A president from a smaller college made the point this way:

We take any student who walks through our front door and we enroll them in class. So to be able to look at Ohio State and see their completion rate that, it is not even apples and oranges, it is apples and raisins or something along that line. It is just a totally different thing. The obstacles that our students have to, not only complete, but even staying in the program—retention—they are just insurmountable and I applaud any of them that are here.

One of the issues community colleges are encountering, which underlies the previous quote, is managing expectations about what is possible with the student population served relative to the generally held view of who a “typical” college student is. Without revisiting the issues of student intent and readiness that were covered in the last chapter, it is clear, as the following comment reveals, that the public perception of what colleges can control and what they can't is on the mind of many of the presidents:

You can build a system where all the components are aimed at success. The only missing ingredient is the student's aptitude and perseverance and stick-to-itiveness. You can build a perfect system, a perfect process, essentially a perfect institution. If the output of that perfect system is less than what you want, it certainly isn't perfect, is it? We simply can't get out of a societal expectation that we will worry about the process, the experience of education, and its result. That's where we always get stuck. There's no one right answer. Now, what I think

the Obama administration said is, ‘we will lean toward outcomes. We want to speak in terms of completion.’ There's your expectation—completion.

This quote also suggests that if the stick that colleges will be measured by is completion, then the presidents can live with that. Another long-serving president was very matter-of-fact about the completion agenda stating that “I’m very accepting of this emphasis because I’m very pragmatic about it. If it helps people succeed in the work place—in the workforce—that’s a good thing.” He continues indicating that colleges should “focus as much energy as we can to get them [students] to what’s going to help them the most; to me it is a win for our institutions.”

As the presidents considered the implications of the completion agenda for their institutions, many noted that the focus on degree attainment has created greater awareness among a variety of key campus constituencies that are critical to creating buy-in and support for change. These constituencies—namely trustees, faculty, and other college staff—are much more aware of the completion agenda. One president highlighted the increased attentiveness among the college board of trustees:

The visibility of that completion agenda has been heightened across the state in a very pronounced way and is very visible to the board—the board of trustees knows what the completion agenda is now. Even though they have always taken pride in how many people graduated...the completion agenda has in a very positive way created some urgency and certainly the trustees have it on their radar screen and are actually asking for more results about completion. Of course, we know that 50 percent of the students drop out at four-year universities as well but ours is pretty dismal. We’re starting to compare ourselves to benchmark institutions and to other community colleges because we all sit in the same 10 to 12 percent within three years.

This quote points to the work the colleges are doing to compare themselves to other like institutions. A number of the presidents indicated that they have adopted new performance metrics at the college-level that are routinely reported to their boards. This

represents a departure from the past when much of the data that was shared with trustees focused on the financial status of the college and enrollment trends. The shift to reporting on student outcomes was a common theme that emerged in many conversations with presidents and is indicative of a cultural shift at the institutions that has undoubtedly created more urgency about student success, specifically completion rates.

Picking up on the point about a culture shift, the following quote from a president at a large college raised a question about the important role that faculty have in improving student completion rates and the time it will take for the colleges to shift the mindset:

I am not opposed at all to having community colleges move into the whole completion rate discussion. I think, though, the speed with which it has ramped up is not doable. It's a culture change and culture changes take a while. This is not only in an individual institution, but it's in a segment of higher education that has not focused this way on completion rates. So I think it does mean first a culture change within the institution. For example, I'm not sure that across the country our faculty value our degree in the way they're going to have to value it if we are going to see greater numbers of students obtain it. It has to be talked about in classes. It has to be talked about as a goal not only for counselors to have, but faculty who have probably the biggest influence on students. It has to happen within the organization where all the students services, all the academic area focuses in on what does it take to get students to the end. I do think it's going to mean that we have to not only ask them what their goals are, but intervene and help shape that as a goal because a student coming in to community college probably doesn't have a goal of obtaining a degree.

This comment suggests that presidents will have to take the long view on moving their colleges toward an environment where student success goes beyond simply meeting the goal of the student when they show up—assuming they have one clearly articulated—to a place where degree completion becomes an expressed expectation and is the norm.

While most presidents offered a less than full endorsement of the completion agenda, most said they were largely supportive of efforts to improve student outcomes.

Further, the vision articulated by presidents in this section includes honestly assessing the community colleges' track record with student outcomes, establishing realistic expectations for students attending these two-year institutions (many whom are underprepared), and having the patience to let reforms and innovations take hold. As the next section will explore, the adoption of completion as a core component of the community college mission will require buy-in from a variety of stakeholders within the institution as well as the broader communities they serve.

### Mobilizing Allies for Divergent Change

College presidents, by themselves, cannot mandate that their institutions embrace the notion of the completion agenda and shift from a logic based on student access to one that emphasizes student success. They will need to enlist the support of college trustee, faculty, and staff to make reforms and implement promising practices. Moreover, they will need evidence to justify the change and to promote a culture of organizational self-reflection that may not now exist. They will also need to strengthen partnerships with a variety of stakeholders including other education sectors, local community organizations, and businesses that rely on them for a trained workforce. In short, the president will need to mobilize a variety of allies behind the changed organizational practices, policies, and belief systems that contribute to an institutional logic centered on student success.

With the challenges presented in Chapter 5 as a backdrop, the balance of this chapter identifies more specifically the actions that presidents said were critical for their colleges to embrace the completion agenda. These actions fall into three broad categories: creating a culture of organizational learning that will set the context for reforms of



college systems and routines, adopting specific innovative practices that contribute to improved student outcomes, and building stronger partnerships with other organizations in the community. These three categories are explored in detail below.

### *Creating a Culture of Evidence and Learning in the Organization*

One of the refrains that emerged from the conversations with the presidents related to how their organizational response to the nascent student success logic was the need to think and act differently as an organization. To do this, presidents suggested that college faculty and staff would need a fuller understanding of their students—how they behave, what their challenges are, and how the college could better support them. In short, they said there is a need for colleges to learn as an organization through better use of data to inform decision making, by incorporating lessons from national initiatives and research, and by leveraging existing college processes like accreditation. Each of these activities will be explored in this section.

In reviewing the literature in Chapter 2 about types of institutional practices that can contribute to student success, one of the overarching areas of focus that has emerged is the need for community colleges to systematically use data to better understand their student population and where students are falling out of the education pipeline (Bailey et al., 2011; Jenkins, 2007; West et al., 2012). Picking up on this area of need, many of the national completion initiatives have emphasized the use of data and more robust analyses of student trends on progression and completion (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Complete College America, 2010; Completion by Design, 2012; The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009). The notion

behind this argument is fairly straightforward. For colleges to make better decisions about the interventions needed to improve student outcomes they need to have a much more sophisticated approach to looking at their students.

Most of the presidents spoke at some point about the need to use more robust data collection and reporting to improve student outcomes. Reflecting the sentiment of several presidents, one individual from a smaller college talked about investing in institutional research staff and technology to help them “collect and maintain the data that we need to make data-driven decisions.” To be sure, the colleges have had to increase their data capacity to respond to the external compliance requirements, but as another president pointed out, “continuous quality improvement is one of our deeply held values, right?” He continues noting that colleges are “trying to improve the effectiveness and the impact of what we’re doing,” and having clear data is a critical to that effort.

According to many presidents, the national initiatives also pushed colleges to look at how students perform over time to get a clearer picture of where the loss points are (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Completion by Design, 2012). While this longitudinal examination of student trends is important, as the president below observes, it is also critical for institutions to look at how different subgroups perform:

One of the things that we are currently working at is to desegregate the data to try to figure out where we are effective and where we're not. It's very easy to talk in pie in the sky terms that really don't mean a lot. From those, unless you desegregate, you don't know where you're really—how you're being effective. In what categories, what communities, what race? How are our black students doing compared to our Hispanic [students] or to our white [students]? What are the differences between male and female [students]? What are the age differences?

These points about tracking students longitudinally and disaggregating the data by various student subgroups seem obvious on some level. However, according to a recent

survey, community colleges have not historically had strong institutional research capacity to support these functions (Morest & Jenkins, 2007). Further, the limited capacity that exists is often devoted to complying with accountability requirements from the state and federal level. Many of the presidents indicated that they have augmented their institutional research capacity in recent years to support the demand for more data.

Increasing the analytic capacity on campus is only part of the work that colleges have to engage in to truly become data driven. As the quote below suggests, institutions also need to have an agreed upon set of metrics that gauge the colleges' performance on a variety of attributes including student success:

One of the things that we've done locally is we forced our faculty, staff, and board through a process on agreeing on effectiveness indicators that we're going to track over time. They've identified 18 or 19 indicators that we track annually and that we keep focused on and that we then use to drive initiatives for improvement as we go forward. For instance, developmental education has been on our radar screen for a decade and we have taken on all kinds of initiatives to work with K-12, to modify our curriculum delivery, modify our support structure, add technology, and use a whole host of those kinds of things. We try to keep focused on what's really important about the various aspects of that mission and how much progress that we're making.

Another important point from this quote is that there needs to be broad buy-in on the measures and the data that need to be shared at all levels of the college.

Reflecting this push to incorporate the use of data to better understand the challenges to completion, one of the presidents at an Achieving the Dream college stated, "I believe it is incumbent on us to show student success in terms of looking at data." He indicated that historically, higher education institutions—especially community colleges—have made decisions based on anecdote and assumption, but that national initiatives have really helped promote a more data-rich conversation. He continued by saying, "Now we're very data driven."

Beyond embracing the use of data encouraged by the national completion initiative, several presidents said they intend to leverage the lessons that emerge from these broader efforts in the form of rigorous research and promising practices to promote change on their campuses. The following comment from a president at a different college participating in Achieving the Dream argued that this national work builds on older efforts and is pressing institutions to look for systemic change:

If we really believe in the continuous quality improvement notion, then you have to buy into Edward Deming's research. Remember, he concluded that 85 percent of the waste in any system is attributable to the system not to the people that implement the system. Okay? Now that's kind of just a fundamental so where should you be focusing when you have limited resources...on the system. What is Completion by Design and Achieving the Dream asking you to do? They're asking you to focus on the system. They're asking you to make more effective use of the resources that you have in whatever it is you're trying to do. I'm convinced that we've got lots of waste in our educational system. We've got lots of not only wasted steps, but approaches that don't produce the level of results that are needed and warranted.

As the previous quote suggests, the leaders of the colleges that have participated in Achieving the Dream and other national initiatives have been able to use the creditability of these external groups to build support for a reform agenda within their institutions. As another president indicated, "the national initiatives have helped institutions begin to measure and focus in on effectiveness." However, the results have not all been positive. This president continues stating that the initiatives have not "moved the needle as much as it needs to be moved because the numbers coming to us and the numbers coming unprepared are so great."

Questions have been raised about the efficacy of these initiatives (Rutschow et al., 2011) and, as was noted in Chapter 4, some presidents worry about the sustainability of this work once the grant funds are spent. With that said, the value of these initiatives in

changing the conversation in the community college field cannot be dismissed.

According to one president, whose college is participating in several of these efforts, being part of a national network of colleges working to innovate and improve is as valuable as the grant funds on individual campuses:

We will continue to participate in the national initiative so that we can borrow resources from the Gates Foundation, from the foundation and other colleges that we're connected to by virtue of being a part of the national initiative. See if there are activities and techniques and changes that would allow us to be more effective than not.

Even leaders of colleges that have not participated in national initiatives said they find value in learning from their peer institutions. One president indicated that it is good to have “some institutions out there that are showing us how to do it.” As with any process of innovation in a field or industry, there are always leaders and laggards (Herremans et al., 2009; Rogers, 2003). Some institutions are simply holding back, attempting to assess if particular approaches are fads or if they are sustainable, as the following quote suggests:

We are assessing the whole Achieving the Dream body of work to see kind of where we fit. I'm not all that interested in jumping on fads, but you know there's some advantages of not being the first one in the pool. I've got friends at some of the participating colleges and I keep telling them that I want to make different mistakes than you all made. So were assessing that now.

While there were some presidents who were skeptical about the value of the national completion initiatives, most see these efforts as an important mechanism for learning valuable lessons and shortening their time to adopting innovative practices. One of the staff interviewed from the state community college association indicated that “student success is the top priority of this organization,” which represents all community college presidents and trustees. This individual also indicated that the association had

created a student success center with the explicit goal of “spreading the promising practices for colleges participating in initiatives like Achieving the Dream and Completion by Design to all 23 community colleges in the state.” This idea of learning from peer institutions and practitioners is a very common phenomenon in higher education and is most pointedly illustrated through the regional accreditation process in which all community colleges (and universities) must participate.

Several of the presidents discussed the role of the regional accreditor—the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools—as not only validation of the quality of their instruction, but also as a useful mechanism for promoting change within their college. More specifically, as the quote below indicates, a number of presidents referred to their participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) through HLC as a means of focusing on student success:

I look at what we’ve done with AQIP [accreditation]. We have made steady progress toward improving student achievement based upon improving instruction, tracking, focusing, intervening in that iterative process.

AQIP was launched by HLC in 1999 as an effort to conduct an ongoing dialogue with colleges and universities about continuous improvement of their programs and to replace the 10-year-visit cycle of the traditional accreditation approach (North Central Association - Higher Learning Commission, 2007). Fifteen of the 23 community colleges in Ohio are participating in AQIP and—as part of their continuous improvement effort—they engage in annual action projects in specific areas where they hope to make progress. These action projects are often aligned with strategic plan goals and objectives

and are important indicators of college priorities. A president at one of the larger colleges described AQIP in the following quote:

Accreditation has changed to be continuous improvement. Back years ago I decided to go the AQIP route and so that means we take on opportunities, approve the projects and we don't look at accreditation as an every ten-year event to prove our compliance, but it's a continuous yearly annual thing to show that we're continuously improving in certain areas.

Despite recent national reports that have been critical of the accreditation process for higher education institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), one president praised the accreditation process saying she likes it because she wants "lots of eyes looking at our college." She continues, saying that the process should be tough because "people should have to show the evidence of the effectiveness of their outcomes." Accreditation involves not only external validation of what the colleges are doing, but also involves significant numbers of faculty and staff in the projects. As one president indicated, "I had 90 volunteers who have volunteered for AQIP committees, so it's team building, it's a process."

Accreditation is an important mechanism for presidents to build buy-in and support for the strategic direction of the college in general and for efforts to improve student outcomes specifically. As stated previously, the action projects colleges adopt for the AQIP process are often reflected in college strategic plans and are approved by boards of trustees. A closer examination of the 167 action projects undertaken by 15 Ohio community colleges participating in AQIP over the last decade reinforces the views of the presidents to promote organizational learning and self-reflection as an important step to improving their colleges. As a matter of fact, 47 of these projects related to expanded data collection and sharing. An important component of sharing embedded in many

projects was the idea of improving internal communications with campus constituencies, soliciting regular feedback from all aspects of the college, and building collaborative relationships among faculty and staff. As several presidents noted, the idea of sharing data and working collaboratively will be a critical component to improving college practices and, by extension, student success.

### *Improving Crucial Practices and Procedures*

The research reviewed in Chapter 2 suggests that key components for promoting student success on an institutional-level fall into six categories: 1) college commitment and focus on student success, 2) use of data to improve programs and services, 3) high-quality instruction with engagement from faculty, 4) streamlined pathways to credentials and careers, 5) ongoing advising and monitoring of student progression, and 6) integrated student supports and services (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bahr, 2010a, 2012; Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2011; West et al., 2012). The first two of these categories were covered earlier in this chapter. The remaining four categories, in one respect or another, were raised in conversations with the presidents about college-specific practices that needed to be changed or improved upon.

For example, presidents highlighted the need to change student assessment and intake processes, aligning curriculum internally, and strengthening teaching. They also said their institutions needed to enhance student supports across the board. Looking again at colleges participating in AQIP, a substantial portion of the action projects institutions



have undertaken reinforce the views the presidents shared in the interviews. Sixty-two of the 167 action projects were geared toward specific efforts to improve college practices that directly relate to improving student progression or completion.

Reflecting the discussion in previous chapters about the challenges of assessing student intent and academic readiness, a president at one of the smaller colleges stated that “we need to reexamine our current point of entry assessment because it is haphazard and it really doesn’t seem to be serving what it needs to be doing.” This comment reinforces an emerging consensus that colleges do not do a good job of adequately gauging student interests and intent, understanding where their academic deficiencies are, or orienting them to college procedures.

Given the increase in the number of students entering community colleges needing remediation and the low success rates of students placed into developmental courses, there was significant discussion with the presidents about the need to reform the way remedial education is structured. The actual delivery of developmental education is discussed below, but this trend in the number of students placing into remedial courses has also raised questions about the efficacy of the assessments that colleges use for mathematics, reading, and writing (Bahr, 2007; Belfield & Crosta, 2012). Several presidents indicated, as the comment below illustrates, that the assessment process does not serve students well and that something needs to be done differently:

I think it's irresponsible for us to put students on a pathway where they're not going to be successful at least at that point in their lives. So the adult basic education kinds of options I think are important and we're just in talking stages right now of how to do a better job at triaging students up front and really providing a unique response to students' unique situations. What happens too often is when the students get put into the lower levels of developmental education and in many cases because of life circumstances aren't going to get

through to get to college-level work and they've burnt through all their financial aid.

This quote seems to suggest that if colleges do a better job of assessing students they may, in fact, end up with fewer students in developmental courses. However, improved assessment and placement policies may also lead to a conclusion that some students, as the president at a large college suggests below, may not be successful no matter what the colleges do:

If I walked into NFL training camp today at age 50 and said, 'Listen, I would like you to assess me and see if I could, let's say, be a quarterback in the NFL.' They would probably measure my age. They would probably—let's say they just did an assessment. They'd measure my age. They'd measure my strength. They'd measure my speed. They'd measure my ability in certain targeted areas and they would give me an assessment of whether or not they were willing to put millions of dollars into me to make me an NFL quarterback. The answer I know would be, "No. No matter how much money and time you put in and we put in, you are not going to be an NFL quarterback." It's kind of a stupid analogy, but on the other hand it is not. The state of the art of assessing an NFL quarterback, or for a college, high school quarterback for that matter, is such that they can—well, if we get better state of the art in assessing students, we might find ourselves—and I think it will probably, maybe not in the next five years, but at some point it will. We might find ourselves in the position of saying, "We're sorry. There's no amount of money or time that you can put into this and be successful."

This same president pointed out that he does not see his institution telling students to go away, but he does say that colleges need to "look at what the state of the art is on predicting students pass at an individual level. Right now we're not competent at it [assessing students]."

As important as better assessments were in the conversations with the presidents, this line of thinking does raise, again, the issue of what the definition of the open door at a community college means and, if a person is so unprepared, at what point does the institution turn them away.

Beyond the need to improve student intake processes, particularly academic placement assessments, presidents also talked about the need to clarify the curriculum for developmental education in relation to both college-level courses as well as the content in adult basic education. For example, one of the long-serving presidents indicated that they still have work to do in streamlining the remedial courses and aligning the content with what students who have taken the GED should be capable of:

What we haven't done is we haven't disaggregated the curriculum of each of those systems and then repackaged it in a way that makes sense. One of the things that when our faculty take the GED levels and I've forgotten just exactly how they're structure is put together, but I remember that our faculty, when they looked at what were the three top levels of GED able math compared to our continuum, they did not believe, they did not conclude that there was a significant overlap with our continuum. What I've said back to them is there is something wrong with that analysis. I said that just can't be. You're telling me there are 10 levels [of math]?

This quote mirrors an important dialogue nationally about how many levels of remediation there should be in a given subject. In some instances, colleges in Ohio (and elsewhere) have a single remedial math course. Other institutions may have multiple levels of developmental math. Recent research has found that students who place multiple levels down in developmental math (or English) have very little chance of ever moving into college-level course work (Bailey et al., 2010; Bettinger & Long, 2007; Calcagno & Long, 2008). Reinforcing this point another president discussed the steps they are taking to change his college's practices in this area:

We have seven levels of mathematics below college level math, and one of the things I've asked our folks to do is to track the success rates of those that started in those lowest levels. There are multiple reasons to do that and they're not financial. One of them is how long can one endure in developmental math and still get a degree? I think that's a legitimate question to ask. How much of their federal financial aid should they chew up in doing that?

Findings from national research in this area have spurred significant conversation about redesigning developmental education. There are a variety of approaches that are being examined such as mainstreaming developmental students in courses with college-ready students and also providing supplemental instruction. Another approach is to create modules—particularly in developmental math—that allow students with deficiencies to take only those content areas they need rather than an entire semester-long course. All of these approaches look at different ways to accelerate students with deficiencies through the remedial material and avoid semester after semester of development education. Several AQIP colleges in Ohio have action projects that are looking at these types of strategies, which is encouraging. As one president pointed out in regard to developmental education, “we just can’t keep doing what we’ve done and reach those [completion] goals.”

Even if colleges improve the assessment and placement of students with academic deficiencies and streamline the delivery of developmental education, the presidents note that there is much work to be done to enhance the services they provide to students. One president suggested that his college needs to totally re-engineer a variety of practices and procedures including “advising, counseling, intervention strategies, the classroom, and faculty engagement” to better support students.

As was noted in the previous chapter, there is an ongoing tension about what the college should provide in the way of support and what the responsibility of the student is. There is no question that students have a role in their own learning and success, but as the following comment from a president nearing retirement suggests, the role of colleges in supporting students has increased significantly:

I used to believe—and I think this is reflective of how the evolution of community colleges—I used to believe that it was a student’s responsibility to learn and if they didn’t want to learn, then that was their choice. That changed 180 degrees. I believe in intervention. I believe in second and third chances. I believe in doing everything we can to help them in terms of learning and in terms of finance. So many of our students are struggling and they have mental health problems and while I have changed, I think our industry has changed as well in that regard. We’re not going to give up on learners unless they absolutely refuse our help.

Another president echoed this sentiment, but also suggested that one of the ongoing challenges for colleges in providing stronger student supports is to bridge the gap between the student services and academic affairs staff on campuses:

If you use old adages, like you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. There's another set of grindstones that just constantly wear away at each other. I've seen it in every institution I worked at. One of those grindstones is embodied in the idea that we are here to support the students. We are here to ensure their success. The other grindstone is embodied by the notion that we are here to help students become adults. We are here to impart independence. We are here to impart responsibility. Where those two worlds meet, there's always tension. It's amazing. You generally see it along the lines of academic and student affairs. I don't mean to sound disrespectful. But there are those on this campus and every other campus that are accused of being hand holders. You're holding their hands. You're making it too easy. You're enabling this juvenile behavior. Then there are others who would say, yes, but if not for us, they wouldn't be here. They need support. They come from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds. You must be able to hold them and support them through the process. That tension will always be there, it will never go away.

Again, several of the AQIP colleges have action projects that seek to improve student supports through improved advising, orientation, tutoring, and to create a more collaborative environment on campus. Several presidents noted that an important part of the solution to improving student success will be to get faculty more involved in advising and counseling students and to building stronger teamwork across divisions and departments. This notion of greater collaboration was a recurring theme and extended to external partners as well. As one president stated matter-of-factly, “This whole business, as you know, is relationship intensive.”

### *Strengthening External Collaborations*

My starting point is partnerships. Part of the solution to the completion problem is college readiness; let's not wait until students show up on our campus to help them be ready. So we're having conversations now with superintendents throughout our region on how we can develop our own public policy to address this. At the other end are our partnerships with our colleges and universities.

As this quote suggests, most presidents emphasized tighter collaborations with external partners as an important part of their organizational response to the completion agenda and shifting expectations. This view plays to one of the historic advantages of two-year colleges and their role in the communities they serve. However, the tenor of the conversations with presidents also suggested that they recognize that their institutions will not be able to address the considerable task of increasing educational attainment alone.

With their colleges situated between two distinct sectors of the larger education system (K-12 and universities), presidents see an opportunity to build a stronger bridge for many students. This perspective reinforces the notion of aligning the vertical mission of community colleges to create a more seamless and efficient pathway for students to a credential (Bailey & Averianova, 2001; Morest, 2006). Many presidents also said they view enhanced partnerships with other community and education leaders as a key strategy to improve student outcomes. This section will examine the presidents' perspectives about institutional partnerships with a particular emphasis on other education sectors.

The growing number of community college students placing into developmental education and the obstacle this creates for progressing to college-level courses and ultimately, to completing a credential, looms large for all two-year institutions. With this

trend as important context, many conversations with presidents about community partnerships focused on the need for better alignment with high schools and adult basic education providers as means of reducing the number of students requiring remediation to begin with. One president nearing retirement noted that too often “Students graduate from high school having a pretty good GPA, etc., and they come in here and they test into remedial.” He continues, “They just can’t believe it. They’re mortified and their parents are mortified and upset.” As discussed earlier in this chapter, the presidents agree that colleges need to do a better job with student assessment and intake procedures, but as another president pointed out, “collaboration with our K-12 schools is critical” to addressing the issues of readiness and clarifying student expectations. To tackle the readiness issue, a president from a small college indicated below that relationships with high schools need to be more methodical:

Together, collaboratively, the college and the high school could ensure, we work as partners to ensure this person is ready for college when they graduate [high school]. That's a more proactive approach. The student doesn't waste their time, they're not demotivated, and we take yet another step to create that bridge between the K-12 system and the college.

This quote reflects a growing trend nationally for community colleges and high schools to improve and accelerate the transition between the two sectors. (Andrews, 2004; Bailey, 2008; Bueschel, 2004; Hoffman, Vargas, Venezia, & Miller, 2007; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; Orr & Bragg, 2001; Smith, 2007). Specific approaches in this area include assessing college readiness early enough in high school to know which students are on track and which are not, creating dual enrollment programs that award college credit that also satisfies high school requirements. These strategies have the potential to help students navigate the education system easier and to realize financial efficiencies as

well. However, as the quote below suggests, these types of efforts can't help colleges deal with some portion of the students who are coming to them academically unprepared:

The demands of developmental education are dramatic and you can lament it or you can structure your college to respond to it, and you can also work with your community partners to undo the need for remediation. That gets into the whole P-16 dual credit issue, and it's our responsibility to handle the spectrum of students, but as a society we have to solve the fact that 70 percent of the students are developmental and we have to partner with K-12 and business and community leaders to make it change. K-12 isn't going to do it alone.

Again, these types of partnerships between high schools and community colleges, which many of the presidents interviewed have embraced, have great potential. There are successful models across the country taking hold at both the institutional and state-levels. However, there are also obstacles that must be overcome. For example, education leaders and state policymakers are wrestling with how to fund these arrangements, who can teach college-level courses, and what dual enrollment means for students who intend to transfer from the community college to a university (Boswell, 2001; Girardi & Stein, 2001; Hunt & Carroll, 2006; McLendon, Heller, & Lee, 2009; Orr & Bragg, 2001). Despite this, it is clear that Ohio presidents see dual enrollment and dual credit as very promising strategies to addressing many of the challenges they face.

While presidents regarded greater collaboration with K-12 leaders as an important part of their organizational response to the completion agenda, they also talked about other areas where they need to build on existing partnerships. A president at one of the larger institutions noted that "part of the solution is tighter collaboration with K-12, but even that only addresses some of our students." He continues noting that the student population at community colleges is diverse and partnerships with secondary schools "only address the students that are coming directly from high school." Another president



pointed out that, given the large number of non-traditional students attending their colleges, “we have to recognize that, like it or not, we're going to have to be involved in adult development at whatever level it is.”

In the previous chapter, many presidents talked about how the growing student population requiring remediation will force colleges to draw an academic readiness line under which those with very low basic skills would not be admitted to the college. The presidents genuinely lamented this development, but cited the constrained resources and pressure to improve student success as the main drivers. However, several presidents also noted they are not simply turning their backs on these students, but instead trying to strengthen their collaborations with Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) providers in their areas to provide an alternative. The following comment from a president at a mid-size college was indicative of several others:

We've created a threshold for that [Adult Basic Education]. If they [students] don't meet it, they actually blend in the ABE. We still give them a student ID and we still let them come to the college. The ABE program is here on the college campus. They go into ABE and they don't go into developmental education. What we're finding, and we call it Solutions, we don't call it ABE. What we're finding is out of that group of people that we've put in Solutions, not only are they doing well enough to get into college classes, but they're bypassing developmental education.

This quote provides an important example of how presidents and colleges could help students with very low basic skills. First, in this example, the college has a clear line of demarcation for students whose skill level is low enough to go into the Solutions (i.e. ABE) program instead of placing into developmental education. Second, the program is branded in a way so as to not discourage those participating. Third, they treat individual participants as enrolled students even though the ABE system has separate funding and governance and the collaboration was established in a way to make the distinction

invisible to the student. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, the curriculum is aligned so the Solutions students can transition directly into college-level courses rather than taking more time in additional developmental education classes. On the surface this seems like a very strong model, particularly the strategy to accelerate the students into college coursework. As the following comment from a president at a larger college suggests, speeding up the process for students with low basic skills on clearly defined pathways is key, but it also requires significant collaboration:

We focused on the issue of how long it takes to get through the pathway of adult basic education here and figure out how we can create a better marriage with the college. We've ended up with the opportunity where we've taken over the ABLE and GED programs. We have multiple partners. The JVS [Joint Vocation School] is still a partner in the process, but we now have a consortium across the whole county where ABLE and GED are being incorporated as an integrated part of the pathway to a college degree.

The encouraging refrain that emerged from the conversations with presidents is that colleges have identified creative options for addressing the readiness issue, including dual enrollment and the integration of adult basic education. The optimism in this area stands in contrast to the downbeat tone expressed in the previous chapter about threats to the open door mission of community colleges. The key element of these innovative approaches is cross-sector collaboration. As a matter of fact, existing AQIP action projects reinforce the presidents' commitment to increasing collaboration within their communities. Despite the fact the accreditation process is largely an internally-focused activity, nearly 10 percent of the projects colleges have worked on over the past 10 years have emphasized external partnerships on such things as improving dual enrollment opportunities or increasing college readiness.

To this point, much of the conversation about partnerships has focused on how students—traditional and non-traditional—enter community colleges. However, the presidents also discussed the importance of collaboration aimed at students’ successful departure from the colleges, whether they transfer to a four-year university or into a new career. In both instances, the presidents noted existing partnerships but they also alluded to the need for even greater collaboration. In the following quote, one of the presidents at a small college points out that they place a significant emphasis on successful transfer:

We really prepare our students for that transfer to the four years. We have a lot of students that will transfer into the local four-year college or anywhere else, but we made so much more progress with the ease of transfer that it has become a greater emphasis for us too. The other thing I would just add is we are working to bring additional bachelor’s level programs to our campus so the people—they have enjoyed the convenience of the first two years, why not finish a bachelor’s degree here? They bring their faculty here, we facilitate with space but we have some of these partnerships.

The comment from this president touches on the need, as a rural institution, to bring additional educational opportunities to their community through collaboration with four-year institutions through what are commonly known as university centers. These types of models, which are designed to provide easy access to university offerings on community college campuses, are becoming increasingly more prevalent, particularly for isolated communities.

The university center strategy is mostly about increasing access, but it also may be an important approach to promote bachelor’s degree attainment for individuals that are place bound. In a related comment, another president talked about “seeing more pressure for partnerships, for collaboration, for regionalization.” He was very interested in working with other local higher education institutions to realize synergies and work

together. He asked optimistically, “Why can't we bring out some efficiency by doing these kinds of collaborations?”

The bulk of the discussion about collaboration and partnerships focused on other education sectors and the need for better alignment within the entire educational system. However, several presidents did discuss their connection with employers and the need to continue the colleges' role as a “flexible and responsive provider of workforce training and education.” Yet, there was a slightly different tone in some comments, like the one below, that suggests colleges need to be thinking about how they work with employers:

We have to think about partnerships in a brand new way. I think we have to reach out to our corporate partners in whole new ways. Cities and municipalities are way ahead of us in this. I really think that the time has come for folks like me to get into the corporate boardrooms, and to say, whether you are fully aware of this or not, I am producing your future work force, I am your partner, I can bring talent to your doorstep, and you must start to give back.

This quote harkens back to the discussion in Chapter 4 about the need for colleges to ensure their offerings are aligned with labor market demand. As it suggests, colleges need to be thinking about their relationships in deeper, more sophisticated ways than they have in the past. Another president summed up his college's approach to collaboration this way: “We've got to get out of the mode of thinking we're the only ones that can do something and allow other partners to help us.” Many of the challenges colleges face will require a broader effort by communities to solve and the presidents overwhelming embraced the need to enhance their external relationships to do so.

To summarize, this chapter explored the presidents' views about how their organizations will respond to the emerging completion agenda. Based on the interviews with presidents and a review of documents that outline college priorities, it is clear that a vast majority of the presidents have embraced this shift toward the success logic and are

working to position their institutions to change the appropriate behavior. The key findings in this chapter point to presidents pushing their colleges in three areas: 1) to be more reflective as an organization about who their students are and how they are served, 2) to think differently and critically about college practices and procedures that are in place that impede students' progress and success, and 3) to strengthen existing external partnerships and build new ones that will increase the likelihood that students succeed. The presidents articulated a fairly straightforward change agenda for the direction they believe their colleges need to go, but each of these areas will require considerable dialogue, trust, and new thinking to succeed. The next chapter will include a discussion about the prospects for this change agenda and the implications of this study for organizational theory.

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION

Community colleges have become an important access point for people entering postsecondary education in the United States. However in recent years, there have been widespread calls—by policymakers, major foundations, and others—for increased educational attainment at these institutions and their four-year counterparts that have resulted in a greater focus on postsecondary student outcomes. Community colleges, in particular, have been the subject of mounting scrutiny about how their students ultimately fare, and this concentration on student progression and completion is challenging fundamental assumptions about how these colleges operate. This study examined presidents’ views about emerging pressure to improve student outcomes and how it will affect the colleges’ core mission and functions.

This chapter discusses the implications of findings from the interviews with 19 community college presidents. The narrative below includes a brief recap of key findings of this study and a review of the initial research questions guiding the inquiry. This chapter also examines the theoretical, practical and policy implications of this study as community colleges seek to respond to the emerging completion agenda. Finally, the limitations of this study are discussed along with areas for future research on this topic.

This study employed institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship as the conceptual framework to guide the inquiry. Defined as “a set of material practices and

symbolic constructions” (Friedland and Alford, 1991, p. 248), institutional logics emerged from the broader field of institutional theory and “provide the formal and informal rules of action” (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999, p. 804) for individuals and organizations. Two important attributes of institutional logics are that they are often in conflict—with dominant logics being challenged by emergent logics—and they operate on multiple levels. This study examined competing societal-level logics which, in turn, contributed to a clash of beliefs and practices within the field of community colleges. Institutional logics were used to shed light on how community colleges are adjusting to a different set of rules and practices guiding action in support of student success, in contrast to the historical emphasis on access.

Ultimately, this study examined the organizational responses—from the perspective of the presidents—to the conflicting logics of student access and success in the community college field. To this end, the concept of institutional entrepreneurship was coupled with logics to explore the role community college presidents played as possible change agents in navigating the shifting expectations toward student outcomes. Defined as “activities of actors who have interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 257), institutional entrepreneurship provides a theory of action for individuals or groups within an organizational field. Taken together, institutional logics and entrepreneurship form the theoretical foundation for this study to illuminate how community colleges in Ohio, and the presidents that lead them, are dealing with an evolving environment that has the potential to challenge dominant aspects of the colleges’ mission and purpose.

Before moving into a fuller discussion about the implications of this study and revisiting the specific research questions, it is helpful to briefly recap the key findings. Table 7.1 below provides a summary of the findings. Chapter 4 explored presidents' perspectives about the factors that contributed to the emergence of the completion agenda. Looking at competing institutional logics at the societal-level, one key finding is that the presidents see shifts in the global economy as having created more competition for the United States. The increased competitiveness from other countries has contributed to the calls for a higher-skilled workforce and the push for increased educational attainment. Presidents voiced concerns that the focus on attainment could result in an overemphasis on simply growing the number of degrees, with little regard for the value of the credentials in the labor market. They also noted that sub-baccalaureate credentials are not receiving enough consideration as part of the completion agenda. The presidents also said they see a cultural divide between the value of education beyond high school and the emerging demand for higher degree attainment.

Another key finding is that presidents noted a significant societal shift toward increased accountability for all education sectors focused on student outcomes. They noted that, historically, community colleges have been judged largely based on inputs (i.e. enrollments). The shift toward market-orientation, which values efficiency, on a societal-level has contributed to the notion that colleges (and all public organizations) need to demonstrate a return on the investment of taxpayer dollars. This trend, which has been magnified by considerable fiscal constraints in the past decade, has resulted in much



Table 7.1: Summary of Key Findings

---

**Chapter 4: Shifts in Societal Logics**

*Focus:* Shift in societal-level logics from state-orientation to market-orientation is contributing to changes in the community college field

*Key Findings:*

- A changed global economy has created more competition for the United States resulting in:
    - Calls for a higher-skilled workforce and the push for increased educational attainment
    - An overemphasis on the number of degrees without regard for the labor market value
    - Sub-baccalaureate credentials receiving less attention as part of the completion agenda
    - A cultural divide between the value of education and the demand for degree attainment
  - Increased accountability for all education sectors focused on student outcomes is leading to:
    - A market-orientation that demands a return on the investment of taxpayer dollars
    - Aggressive performance funding models rewarding student progression and completion
    - Unintended consequences of the new funding models including increased competition between colleges, possible manipulation of the ‘system’ by colleges, watered-down standards, and incentives for colleges to enroll students more likely to finish
- 

**Chapter 5: Implications of Competing Field Logics**

*Focus:* Competition between field-level student access and student success logics are creating dilemmas/choices for colleges

*Key Findings:*

- Maintaining the open access in the context of the emerging completion creates significant dilemmas for the colleges such as:
    - Measuring success in light of vague student intent and goals
    - Addressing the rising number of students with academic deficiencies
    - Sustaining comprehensive, quality programming in the face of limited resources
- 

**Chapter 6: Entrepreneurship in Organizational Responses**

*Focus:* Individual colleges, and the presidents that lead them, as potential institutional entrepreneurs, must respond to the shifting environment

*Key Findings:*

- Presidents are accepting of the shift toward the success logic and are working to position their institutions to change the appropriate behavior in the following ways:
    - To be more reflective as an organization about who their students are and how they are served by creating a culture of evidence and learning
    - To think differently and critically about college practices and procedures that are in place that impede students’ progress and success
    - To strengthen existing and establish new external partnerships that will increase the likelihood that students succeed.
-

more aggressive performance funding models in Ohio (and nationally) that reward colleges for student progression and completion. Presidents voiced concerns about the unintended consequences of the new funding model including increased competition between colleges, the possibility of colleges manipulating the system, and a drift toward watered-down standards to increase completions. They also noted the formula could have a negative impact on the access mission of community colleges and incentivize them to enroll students who are more likely to finish.

Maintaining the historic open access policy at community colleges creates significant dilemmas for colleges as they try to balance the demands associated with the emergent student success logic. Chapter 5 examined the presidents' perspectives about these dilemmas. More specifically, the presidents spoke about the challenges posed by the lack of clarity around student intent and goals, the rising number of students with academic deficiencies, and difficulties with sustaining comprehensive, quality programming in the face of limited resources. The findings described in this chapter indicate strategic choices colleges could make to be better positioned to execute the completion agenda and improve student outcomes. However, most of these options would contradict the long-standing focus on student access in the two-year sector.

For instance, community colleges could institute an admission standard that would curtail the number of underprepared students requiring remediation. This approach would allow the colleges to spend less on developmental education and more to fortify support for a wider array of programmatic offerings that meet community needs. This choice runs counter to the open door philosophy that has characterized community colleges since their founding. In spite of this contradiction, an important finding in this

study is that, in subtle ways, colleges are beginning to move in the direction of closing the open door as they seek to clarify expectations for the academic proficiency of incoming students. This is one example of the strategic choices colleges are making to address the dilemmas they face and their implications are significant for their impact on the entire field of community colleges—in Ohio and nationally.

Chapter 6 explored the presidents' views about how their individual colleges will specifically respond to the emerging completion agenda. Based on interviews with presidents as well as a review of documents that articulate college priorities, one crucial conclusion to be drawn is that a majority of presidents largely accept this shift toward the success logic and are working to position their institutions to change the appropriate behavior. The key findings in this chapter point to presidents pressing their colleges in three areas: 1) to be more reflective as an organization about who their students are and how they are served; 2) to think differently and critically about college practices and procedures that are in place that impede students' progress and success; and 3) to strengthen existing and establish new external partnerships that will increase the likelihood that students succeed.

The principal findings of this study suggest that presidents in Ohio feel considerable pressure to meet the demands of the emerging completion agenda. While they noted several obstacles to addressing the calls for increased degree completion, the presidents also articulated a fairly straightforward change agenda for the direction they believe their colleges need to go. However, each of these initiatives will require considerable dialogue, trust, and new thinking to succeed—both internally and externally.

## Revisiting the Research Questions

Before turning to a discussion about the implications of this study for practice, policy, and future research, it is useful to return briefly to the questions that have guided this study to further illuminate the findings summarized above. The overarching research question, which emerged from the competition between the logics of student access and student success, was: How are presidential logics about community college mission and institutional effectiveness shaped by their personal background, the characteristics of their institution, and the evolving policy context? The answer to this question is difficult to discern from the interviews. Overall, there was not an obvious pattern in responses in relation to the characteristics of the presidents or their colleges that emerged from interviews. However, it was clear from the interviews that external pressure exerted from foundations and policymakers was the driving force behind colleges' recent reform efforts rather than a push by some internal constituency. This appeared to be the case regardless of the college size and/or offerings or the president's experience. Beyond the central research question, there were nuances that emerged from the sub-questions that guided the interview protocol. Again, the answers to these secondary questions did not yield any cross-cutting trends, but there were some interesting patterns that emerged within the individual responses. What follows is a brief discussion about the responses to these sub-questions in the context of the interview protocol.

The first question posed to presidents focused on their definition of the community college mission. Overall, there were fairly consistent responses about what the mission of community college entails. An interesting nuance was that some presidents took a very programmatic view of the mission versus others who described their college

more in terms of its social impact. For instance, a number of presidents referred to some version of the five components of the community college mission articulated by Cohen and Brawer (2008) including academic transfer preparation, vocational-technical education, continuing education, developmental education, and community service. Other presidents offered a more philosophical view of the mission, regarding the colleges as centers of opportunity for a segment of the population that might not otherwise enroll in postsecondary education. This perspective on the community college mission is, in fact, the most at risk as a result of the completion agenda. There was not a discernible pattern among the presidents related to this question.

Following on the conversation with the presidents about mission, the next line of questioning focused on how they defined the effectiveness and performance of their colleges in the context of that mission. Nearly all of the presidents defined effectiveness in terms of students reaching their goals. A few also discussed the financial efficiency and stewardship of their college as an important metric of their performance. The focus of most responses on students attaining their goals is a particularly interesting trend given that many presidents also indicated that they are challenged by the often vague understanding of student intent from the start. In this new environment of promoting completion there is considerable tension between students' freedom to chart their own goals and direction versus expectations that colleges act more prescriptively to promote what is in the best interest of the students. Colleges will have to resolve this tension by developing better ways to gauge students' intent, which will also be important to measuring student progress and success. Similar to the discussion about mission, there

was not a clear pattern of responses from the presidents about effectiveness, but then there was not a wide variety of answers to this question.

Turning pointedly to a discussion about the emerging student success logic, the next question focused on the presidents' views of the completion agenda. There was a clear split in the responses to this question with two different perspectives offered. One point of view, which was largely unreserved, was that the completion agenda is a good thing and that colleges should be promoting student completion. The presidents offering this perspective suggested that the focus on student outcomes would make them better at what they do by pressing students in a more intentional fashion to progress and complete. There was a sentiment that colleges have, in the past, used the ambiguity around student intent as an excuse for not promoting degree completion and that it was time for community colleges to encourage students to pursue more education beyond their short-term objective.

The other point of view was more skeptical of the completion agenda and caused several presidents to ask some version of the question: completion to what end? These presidents wanted to know what successful completion means. Is it simply churning out more certificates and degrees regardless of the program? These presidents, while not opposing the focus on completion, raised the concern about the labor market value of the credentials student attain and whether or not the student that graduates can get a job. This set of presidents highlighted the tension between the number and quality of credentials.

There was an interesting pattern that emerged among the presidents in relation to the general question about the completion agenda. Presidents who had been in their position for a longer period of time or had served in another presidency were more likely

to raise the question of the labor market implications of the completion agenda. The newer presidents were less skeptical about the focus on degree attainment. In part, this difference may be attributed to the fact that newer presidents, especially those that have only been in their position for a short time, have not functioned in an environment where the completion agenda wasn't a part of the conversation. For older presidents, who have focused most of their careers on the access mission, it is understandable that they may be more skeptical of the completion agenda and its impact.

Having discussed the completion agenda in general terms, the next question focused on the factors that contributed to the completion agenda. The first factor, not surprisingly, cited by a vast majority of presidents was the increasingly competitive global economy and the downstream impact it has had on the need for a high-skilled workforce and educational attainment. The presidents were well aware of macroeconomic trends, which they cited as a critical part of the discussion. Most also cited the tension at the local-level or a student-level where the population has not historically valued or demanded education above high school. Ohio, like many rust-belt manufacturing states in the Midwest, has had a population that, up until fairly recently, has not needed more than a high school diploma to have a family-sustaining income. One of the impediments to improved educational attainment, according to the presidents, is that despite the dramatic change in the economic imperative for more education in the past two decades, a similar cultural shift has not occurred.

The second factor presidents indicated has contributed to the focus on completion was constrained resources at the state-level and the increased focus on accountability by policymakers who want to see a greater return on public investments in the education

system. As discussed previously, presidents pointed to the evolution over the past 5 to 10 years of accountability mechanisms to a focus on outputs rather than inputs. This means a greater focus on completions, graduation rates and credentials awarded rather than the historical focus on enrollment and the number of programs. Several presidents indicated that these shifts represent dramatic changes for higher education institutions and their interaction with policymakers.

It is difficult to identify a particular pattern of responses from the presidents about the factors promoting the completion agenda. However, there was an interesting distinction between their perceptions of the role of foundations and the role of policymakers. The presidents were supportive of the work of the foundations and the resources they have contributed to student success initiatives. At the same time, presidents were more critical of the role of policymakers. The difference in their perspectives is ironic because the foundations have in many states—and especially in Ohio—been leading the charge in advocating for more stringent policy to promote institutional change and reform.

The presidents' personal experiences and their institutional characteristics did not have a discernible influence on their views of the factors contributing to the completion agenda. However, in looking at presidents' views of the players—namely state policymakers and foundation leaders—who have been advocating for increased completion rates, a distinction did emerge. For presidents who had worked at community colleges in other states, there was a perception that Ohio was dysfunctional in terms of the alignment of expectations across colleges and education sectors. Many of the college leaders, especially those who had recently worked at a college outside of Ohio, lamented



the lack of leadership from the Ohio Board of Regents in providing more strategic direction to address some of the challenges outlined in Chapter 5. They seemed to be advocating for more centralization of authority in the state capitol. Interestingly, 16 of the 23 community college presidents had worked at community colleges in others states and 10 of those had worked in multiple states besides Ohio. Among these latter individuals there was a sense that Ohio's higher education "system" needed to be tweaked to clarify the missions and roles of the various sectors as well as the individual institutions within those sectors.

The final line of questions posed to the presidents in the interviews focused on the perceived impact of the completion agenda on the community college mission. On the one hand, there were presidents who held a politically-correct view that the completion agenda would not change anything. These presidents stated that they were devoted to the open access mission and the focus on completion would not diminish that in anyway. Yet, throughout the interviews there were more subtle suggestions that things needed to change. Some presidents, including some of those who initially expressed unwavering support for open access, were frank about the student population, the challenges of academic preparedness, and the downstream effect of these trends. Some presidents placed the onus on the students, some pointed to K-12, but there was a general frustration with the idea that colleges would be expected to do more, in terms of student outcomes, when more and more students were coming to their colleges less and less prepared academically. There is a certain amount of scapegoating to this sentiment, but it is a truism that the community college student population is increasingly at-risk and less prepared.

The other issue that emerged from this discussion was about the need to make hard choices about institutions' offerings and how they remain responsive to the demands of their communities, while at the same time recognizing there are only so many things they can do and only so many students they can serve. Several presidents said they need to focus on the things they can do well and be willing to let some other things go. Like the discussion about what the level of readiness should be, this idea of somehow curtailing offerings is a subtle, yet fundamental, shift in the rhetoric about what a community college is. One president asked why shouldn't they be everything to everybody? This is what a community college has been and the literature supports this trend. Yet, some presidents suggested there is a limit. It was an interesting dialogue about where these institutions stop and start. Nowhere was this more pointed than during the dialogue about what is the appropriate place to be teaching the least prepared students. The question some presidents asked was, at what point do colleges say that is not their role?

The question of what is meant by open access and open admissions is most definitely being debated within the colleges and among policymakers in Ohio and nationally. The open door is already closing to some degree, just based on the threshold of preparedness set by placement tests, which divert incoming students to adult basic education or other literacy programs at the start of their community college experience. While there are many open questions that remain to be answered on this front, interviews with the presidents suggest that, if expectations continue to mount around completion and the resources to support the least prepared students are not available, there is no question that colleges are going to look for students who are better equipped to progress and

succeed. This is clear from the interviews, whether the presidents dance around it to be politically correct or they address it head on. However, again, there was not a clear pattern among the presidents in response to this line of questioning.

### Study Implications

Having reviewed the findings from the study and revisited the research questions that guided the inquiry and the interviews with presidents, this section explores the implications of the findings for policy, practice and theory. Given the interrelated nature of policy and practice in this study, the implications for each are examined concurrently. Next, the significance of this study for the theory underlying the conceptual framework articulated in Chapter 2 is discussed. The relevance of the changes in the community college field for research related to institutional logics and entrepreneurship are revisited in light of the findings. Finally, this section outlines the limitations of this study, including dynamics that have changed since the interviews were conducted and areas of future research with a particular emphasis on the connection to research about cross-sector collaboration.

#### *Implications for Policy and Practice*

Important implications emerged from this study for both policy and practice. As presidents indicated throughout the interviews, it has been the macro-level policy reforms that have elevated the completion agenda as a priority that has, in turn, spurred changes in practice at the college-level. The interconnectedness between policy and practice reinforces the conceptual framework for this study that features institutional logics operating at multiple levels (Currie & Guah, 2007; Greenwood et al., 2010; Herremans et

al., 2009; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Thornton et al., 2012). The nested nature of institutional logics helps to illuminate how individual community colleges are adapting to field-level changes that are the result of external prodding by policymakers and foundations.

The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted the circular nature of logics suggesting that lower level logics can also influence higher order logics (Currie & Guah, 2007; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Greenwood et al., 2010; Herremans et al., 2009). In the context of this study, the initial push by policymakers to incentivize college reforms with performance funding was followed by several individual colleges calling for more standardized practices across the entire community college sector in the state. More specifically, the new funding formula rewards colleges for moving a greater percentage of their students from development education into college-level courses. However, inconsistencies in the way the 23 colleges assess, place, and teach developmental students placed some institutions at a disadvantage. As a result, calls for greater consistency ensued and a set of statewide recommendations were developed by the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (2011). This example illustrates how the high level logics of accountability and performance funding spurred individual colleges to seek change in “material practices” (Friedland & Alford, 1991) operating for the entire organizational field.

To further demonstrate the interrelated nature of the changes in policy and practice, this section revisits prominent policies that have emerged from various completion initiatives nationally (described in Chapter 1) and their connection to the institutional practices that have emerged in the research literature that are showing

promise for improving student outcomes (discussed in Chapter 2). While it is tricky to point to a causal relationship between state policy changes and shifts in practices at the college level, the interviews with presidents point to an association between the two.

The U.S. Department of Education *College Completion Toolkit* (2011) articulates seven policy strategies for Governors to consider when promoting college completion:

1) set goals and develop an action plan; 2) embrace performance-based funding; 3) align high school standards with college entrance and placement standards; 4) make transfer easier for students; 5) use data to drive decision making; 6) accelerate learning and reduce costs; and 7) target adults, especially those with some college, but no degree.

Most of these strategies are key policy components of foundation initiatives such as Complete College America and Achieving the Dream, which are also urging state policymakers to enact legislation and rules that create conditions more conducive to college completion.

Similarly, the discussion of emerging promising practices in Chapter 2 classified six key areas colleges should focus on to promote student success. These are: 1) college commitment and focus on student success; 2) use of data to improve programs and services; 3) high-quality instruction with engagement from faculty; 4) streamlined pathways to credentials and careers; 5) ongoing advising and monitoring of student progression; and 6) integrated student supports and services (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bahr, 2010a, 2012; Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012). There are clear parallels between the state policy recommendations and the key college practices listed above. The balance

of this section will illuminate this connection between policy and practice by looking more closely at several specific actions. This section will also explore the implications for policy and practice in each area drawing on the findings from this study.

### *Setting completion goals*

Many states, including Ohio, have made a significant push in recent years to set goals for increased college completion and to develop plans to reach these goals (Collins, 2006; Complete College America, 2010; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2009; The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009). As a matter of fact, state political leadership and the Ohio Board of Regents staff developed a ten-year strategic plan that outlines attainment goals and steps the state is taking to realize them (University System of Ohio, 2008). Establishing state completion goals and implementation plans has been a key plank of the national initiatives like Complete College America (2010) and is a prime example of the institutional entrepreneurship of the education foundations and the intermediaries they fund.

The institutional-level corollary to this goal setting activity is reflected in literature about promising practices that suggests colleges need to have a clear commitment to and focus on student success (Achieving the Dream, 2007; Bailey et al., 2011; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012). The vast majority of strategic plans created by community colleges in Ohio have explicit goals around student success and/or increasing educational attainment. Further, over one-third of the action projects developed through regional accreditation have focused squarely on improving student outcomes.

As stated earlier in the chapter, presidents appear to be embracing the completion agenda. However, some presidents are skeptical of the greater focus on student outcomes and one challenge of these goal setting activities—by the state or the individual colleges—is ensuring the objectives are attainable and the implementation plans actionable. Based on the interviews and the review of college documents, many of the presidents appear to be engaging in this type of activity. Specifically, the accreditation action plans, college strategic plans, and more frequent reports to college trustees about student outcomes provide evidence that colleges are promoting completion goals. In the absence of this kind of evidence and routine monitoring, the completion goals that are set and the plans that are created run the risk of simply being window dressing. In this situation goals and plans may satisfy outward appearances, but do little to actually improve student outcomes and increase educational attainment.

*Creating a culture of evidence and inquiry*

Advocates of the completion agenda have called for a greater use of data to better inform both policy and practice. These calls in a policy setting have also been reinforced by the research literature that points to data-informed decision-making as a key attribute of colleges that are performing at higher levels with better success rates (21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 2012; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Complete College America, 2010; Completion by Design, 2012; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2009; The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). On a policy level the focus on the use of data also relates closely to the notion of greater transparency and accountability and is

critical to ensuring progress toward completion goals that are set within and across colleges.

From a college perspective, the literature points to better use of data as an important component to improving outcomes, but the emphasis is more about continuous improvement, effectiveness, and quality (Achieving the Dream, 2007; American Association of Community Colleges, 2012; Bailey et al., 2011; Committee on Measures of Student Success, 2011; Completion by Design, 2012; Jenkins, 2007; West et al., 2012) rather than accountability. In fact, one of the most promising findings from the initial evaluation of the Achieving the Dream initiative is that participating colleges have made substantial strides in collecting, analyzing, and sharing data across campus (Rutschow et al., 2011)

As a key finding in Chapter 6 indicated, the presidents view data use as a crucial institutional strategy of self-reflection that not only leads to an increased understanding of student progression and success at their colleges, but also helps to build support internally for needed changes in practices that will further improve student outcomes. Again, the priorities of the colleges, exhibited in strategic plans and accreditation projects, suggest that presidents are making needed changes by augmenting institutional research staff and gathering and disseminating data more widely with various campus constituencies. A considerable challenge for all colleges will be to meet the ever-increasing demands for data. With limited analytical capacity on most campuses (Morest & Jenkins, 2007), the growing amount of data required for complying with state and federal expectations runs the risk of crowding out data collection and analysis for the more promising purpose of improving practice.



*Funding based on progress and completion*

Arguably the most impactful policy dialogue, in terms of influencing institutional attention and behavior, has been the implementation of performance funding models promoting completion. Proponents of state-based performance funding point to the need to change the incentive structure for higher education to emphasize completion in student subsidies rather than the historical approach to funding based on enrollments (Complete College America, 2010; Shulock & Moore, 2007). The performance funding formula in Ohio is designed based on key milestones of student progress toward completion with the goal of creating an incentive for colleges to change their behavior (Ohio Association of Community Colleges, 2010). For example, the funding formula rewards colleges for students that successfully complete college-level gatekeeper math courses, for those that are retained from academic term to academic terms, and for students that accumulate a critical number of credits.

The literature about promising college practices buttresses the “momentum point” concept and also points to areas where colleges can redesign procedures to see that students reach these milestones by streamlining curricular pathways, providing ongoing intrusive advising, and seamlessly integrating student supports along the way (Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012). College leaders are looking for predictability in terms of their funding from the state and the literature about the sustainability of performance funding models is mixed (Askin, 2007; Dougherty & Natow, 2009; Katsinas et al., 2011). While the funding formula in Ohio appears to be stable, there is limited research on higher education that has been able

to extrapolate that the adoption of a funding formula based on outputs has been shown to actually improve student outcomes.

The presidents, in discussing how they would respond to the completion agenda and, specifically, the new funding formula, clearly recognized the need to improve their colleges' interactions with and support for their students. However, the presidents also pointed to potentially perverse incentives that the funding formula could create. Specifically, the presidents mentioned increased competition between colleges, possible manipulation by colleges to somehow mask student outcomes, watering-down of academic standards to pass classes, and incentives for colleges to enroll students more likely to finish. This last point, which will be discussed at the end of this section in greater detail, goes to the heart of the tension between the access and success logics.

#### *Accelerating student progress*

Another set of levers policymakers have attempted to pull to promote outcomes are strategies to accelerate learning and shorten the time to completion. The acceleration policy strategies have taken the form of aligning education sectors through expanding dual enrollment or transfer policies (see more below), encouraging full-time enrollment and heavier course loads for students each term, or limiting the number of credits students can accumulate overall. From the policy perspective this approach is focused on the need to reduce cost through greater efficiency of the system.

The research literature on student persistence and retention suggests that the intensity and pace with which students progress through their program of study is closely related to their ultimate success (Bailey et al., 2011; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Jenkins & Cho,

2012; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012). From the perspective of practice, colleges are implementing innovative program designs by engaging faculty to contextualize developmental education and streamline pathways to credentials (Bailey et al., 2011; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Hagedorn, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Pennington & Milliron, 2010; West et al., 2012). They are also integrating student supports in more sophisticated ways through learning communities, student success courses, and supplemental instruction (Hall & Thomas, 2012).

The interviews with presidents reinforced these developments around accelerating student progress. Presidents indicated the specific need to have better aligned curriculum—both internally and across the education sectors—and stronger supports for students with an eye toward moving them more quickly through their programs. On the surface these approaches seem like logical efforts to streamline a student’s experience and increase efficiency in the system, but specific interventions can be costly to implement and students often opt to enroll in fewer courses for a reason. Acceleration strategies may include team teaching courses or more frequent or longer class meetings, all of which have cost implications (i.e. faculty, course loads, etc.) that are an ongoing challenge for community college presidents. Another obstacle to implementing acceleration strategies is the students themselves. Students frequently enroll part-time because they cannot afford to enroll full-time. Even with enough financial aid to cover tuition and fees, which is an issue, students have other financial obligations that require them to work.

*Improving alignment across education sectors*

Both policymakers and college practitioners acknowledge the need to improve alignment between high schools, community colleges, and universities. Again, policymakers tend to frame these efforts around the efficiency of the education system overall, whereas the practitioners are inclined to emphasize the benefits to the students. In the policy context these conversations have centered on aligning high school standards with college entrance and placement expectations and clarifying transfer and articulation policies and practices between two-year and four-year institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). State policy can set the broad context for these cross-sector dialogues; however, activities on the local level address the nuances of the partnerships.

The relationships between K-12 and community colleges increasingly center on approaches to dual enrollment, early assessment of college readiness, and remediation while still in high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Locally, the dialogue between community colleges and universities is often challenging because of the significant amount of student swirl with lateral transfer between two-year institutions and vertical transfer to universities. These complexities are manifesting themselves in an assortment of concurrent enrollment arrangements, program-specific articulation agreements, and provisions for the reverse transfer of credits (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Greater collaboration locally loomed large in the interviews with the presidents. They saw improved relationships with high schools in particular as absolutely critical to tackling the significant challenges they face with increased remediation rates. Reflecting this sentiment, many of the college strategic plans have goals that emphasize increased

collaboration with other education sectors. A critical, yet unresolved, policy issue in Ohio (and elsewhere) is whether the appropriate incentives are in place to spur greater partnerships across the education sectors. Whether the issue is college readiness standards, expanded dual enrollment opportunities, or streamlined transfer and articulation between postsecondary institutions, policymakers have not tackled the cross-sector conflicts—particularly as they relate to funding—that will impede the partnerships that presidents suggest are so critical.

The preceding section examined the specific implications of this study and the broader completion agenda for policy and practice. Overall, this study provides a useful lens to look at policy and its influence on institutional actions toward student success and completion. It is clear from the interviews with presidents and the review of various documents that college leadership has been motivated by state policies—most notably performance funding—to reconsider college practices and procedures. A lingering question for policymakers is how they sustain the pressure around the completion agenda in the context of constrained resources. Regardless of questions about sustainability and impact, performance funding incentives are unlikely to go away any time soon. Other states are experimenting with funding formulas that are similar to, or even more aggressive than, Ohio's to spur innovation and reform.

Taking a step back and looking again at the underlying premise of this study—namely the competing institutional logics of student access and student success—the findings provide a somewhat mixed picture about how this conflict of beliefs and practices will be resolved. The next section will attempt to shed light on a possible resolution.

### *Implications for Theory*

This study borrowed from the concepts of institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship to understand the organizational tensions community colleges face and how presidents guide their campuses to resolve the divergent expectations. Institutional logics—which constitute the beliefs and practices within an organization or field that guide action through collective identities and categories of behavior—served as the basis for the conceptual framework of this study. Previous research indicates that dominant institutional logics are not stable and can be challenged, resulting in competition between belief structures and the practices that are derived from them (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Thornton et al., 2012). Specifically, rival logics disrupt incumbent views and social identities through the intentional actions of individuals or organizations seeking divergent change. These change agents are labeled institutional entrepreneurs.

In the context of this study, the dominant access logic reflects the long-held view of community colleges as open admissions institutions that maximize convenience and a range of program choices and offerings. The movement of the community college sector toward an insurgent logic emphasizing successful student outcomes raises questions about who the colleges serve, at what costs, and under what conditions. Under this success logic, the lens of effectiveness is credential attainment. This focus on outcomes is, in turn, leading college leaders to adopt a markedly different “set of material practices” and policies (Friedland and Alford, 1991, p. 248) as described in the previous section. Colleges are also reconsidering, albeit subtly, their overall mission in an effort to respond to the changing environment and to maintain legitimacy. The changes occurring

in the community college field make it a valuable setting in which to investigate the concepts of competing institutional logics and the role of institutional entrepreneurs.

This study illustrates the cascading impact that changes in logics at one level can have on logics at another level. The competing access and success logics did not develop within the community colleges themselves. Rather, the emergent success logic developed from external pressure driven by a move toward the market-oriented logic on the societal-level. Presidents' noted a change from a view of higher education as a public good toward a market-based approach that values efficiency and the creation of human capital for the sake of economic competition. This shift of societal-level beliefs triggered the field-level competition of institutional logics within the community college sector demanding increased degree attainment. To the chagrin of some presidents, what has been almost completely absent in the national dialogue about completion is the public benefit that is derived from higher education and the value of education for reasons other than vocationalism and competitiveness.

National foundations and policymakers seizing on societal shifts have aggressively promote the completion agenda as a textbook example of how institutional entrepreneurship works (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). They have promoted divergent changes in material practices (i.e. state policies and college processes) that are becoming ubiquitous in the field. Using their influence and resources to create a vision for change and to mobilize key constituencies to support their agenda, foundations and policymakers have produced an exogenous jolt to the community college field in Ohio and nationally. Pointing to the economic benefits that accrue to individuals and states that increase their educational attainment, many of these institutional

entrepreneurs have scarcely slowed their reform efforts to consider the negative consequences of a singular focus on the numbers of credentials produced.

In the end, the interviews with the presidents suggest that a series of organizational trade-offs are developing between equitable access and more selective admissions; between a limited number of quality programs and more diverse offerings that meet the needs of their communities; and between a more prescriptive approach to student advising and one that is more student-directed. These trade-offs are a series of choices that are being created as a result of the competing access and success logics. As with many conflicts, this competition will not go on indefinitely. Given the preponderance of the national focus on the completion agenda, it is likely the success logic will prevail. In the absence of a significant infusion of financial resources to sustain the open access mission, community college leaders are being forced to consider which students they will serve. Given the focus on outcomes, the students admitted will be those that are most likely to succeed.

To summarize, dominant institutional logics (on any level) are challenged by emergent logics when promoted by institutional entrepreneurs. To be successful, the institutional entrepreneur must leverage enabling conditions—including environmental shocks and their own standing within the organization or field—to create a vision for change that will mobilize allies and other resources to their cause (Battilana et al., 2009; Hardy & Maguire, 2008). The focus on education attainment (i.e. the emergent institutional logic at the field-level) is challenging the long-held emphasis on access (i.e. the dominant field-level institutional logic) at these traditionally open admissions colleges. The outstanding questions in this study have been how community colleges are



responding to these shifting logics and if presidents are playing the role of institutional entrepreneurs within their own organizations in response to the external pressure. This study suggests that most of the presidents are taking up the mantle of entrepreneurs and promoting divergent change in their institutions. However, as the next section will discuss, more research is needed to understand the extent of the entrepreneurship underway.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study sheds light on how Ohio community college presidents are adapting to external pressure to improve student outcomes. While the interviews and document analysis suggest the presidents are supportive of the emerging completion agenda and are promoting strategies for their colleges to adjust to the changing environment, the research design for this study hinders a full exploration of presidents' roles as possible entrepreneurs within their colleges. The choice was made to focus on a cross-section of presidents from multiple institutions to gain a broader sense of how institutional leaders were responding to the pressure to boost success rates. Community college presidents are the fulcrum between demands of external constituents and the operational realities of these complex organizations. As such, gauging their views of the shifting environmental expectations is an important step in understanding how the entire organization will respond.

The presidents talked about three themes that they see as key to improving student outcomes: 1) establishing colleges as learning organizations that leverage the collective wisdom of the faculty and staff to maximize results; 2) improving college practices and

processes to better support students; and 3) enhancing collaboration with education and community partners—especially K-12 schools and districts. Each of these themes elaborates the presidents' vision for change and alludes to how they will mobilize allies—both internally and externally—to achieve it. The primary limitation of the research design for this study is the difficulty discerning how presidents are operationalizing these efforts without a deeper investigation with additional interviews of faculty and staff within colleges. This type of deeper case study analysis at a few select colleges could be undertaken to discern the extent to which presidents are truly acting as institutional entrepreneurs as it relates to the completion agenda.

Another limitation of this study is the focus on a single state. The decision was made early to conduct this study in Ohio because the state had been the focus of considerable attention from national foundations and had recently adopted a performance funding formula for community colleges that would reward student progression and completion. While these are valuable attributes in deciding the location of the study, other states such as North Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, and Washington have had similar experiences and would also be good candidates for this type of research. It would be valuable to replicate this study with presidents from different states to determine if the differing policy and college contexts would impact the findings.

Finally, it is important to note that several of the dynamics that were in place at the time the interviews were conducted in the first quarter of 2011 have subsequently changed. For instance, at the time of the interviews the new state funding formula with student progression and completion factors was not fully implemented (that happened in June 2011). At the time, the presidents were clearly anxious about how their institutions

would operate under this new context. They now have had nearly two full fiscal years with the formula in place and it would be interesting to know how their perspective on the funding model may have changed.

Another dynamic that has shifted since the interviews is the political leadership in the state. Governor John Kasich (R) was sworn-in just weeks before the interviews (replacing Democrat Ted Strickland) and his higher education policy agenda had not been articulated. One of Governor Kasich's priorities coming into office was to curtail collective bargaining rights. He had a high-profile legislative victory on this front in his first months in office only to see the legislation overturned by a ballot referendum in November 2011. While collective bargaining did not surface as an issue in the original interviews, that might change if they were conducted now.

The final change worth noting is that 7 of the 23 community college presidents have retired or announced their retirement. This development is reflective of a national trend that will see a substantial portion of current presidents retire in the next 5 to 10 years (Boggs, 2003; Mendoza et al., 2009; Shults, 2001). What is interesting about this situation is that one of the few distinguishing factors among the presidents was the length of their tenure. Those that had been president longer were generally more skeptical of the completion agenda, whereas the younger presidents were largely more accepting. The significant number of retirements may in fact hasten the ascendancy of the success logic, and it would be fascinating to conduct another set of interviews to find out.

With these limitations and shifting dynamics in mind, the balance of the chapter will focus on the areas of future research that could build on this study. There are four specific research projects that come to mind which stem from the limitations outlined

above. The first would be to conduct another round of presidential interviews to get a bit of longitudinal perspective on this topic. Second, and closely related to the presidential interviews, is a more in-depth case study at two or three of the community colleges in Ohio. The focus of this work would be to substantiate the views expressed by the president and better understand the adjustments colleges are making in light of the completion agenda. This type of study would include interviews and focus groups of a cross-section of college faculty and staff to validate the president's role as a possible institutional entrepreneur.

The third area of inquiry needed to augment this study is a cross-state multilevel quantitative analysis intended to gauge the impact of state policies and institutional practices on student outcomes. Designing this type of quantitative analysis would be no small undertaking, but it would bring a mixed methodological approach to the qualitative work that has been done thus far and add the ability to generalize to this inquiry. Collecting data for this type of study would be a daunting challenge in light of definitional issues and the nuances of various state policies and campus interventions. However, overcoming these challenges and designing a robust study that controls for the actions of both states and institutions are two areas lacking in the current literature. This type of research would be of considerable value as advocates of the completion agenda work to discern what works in terms policy and practice.

The final area of research that is desirable relates to the key finding from this study about the need for greater cross-sector collaboration. This study focused squarely on reactions of community college presidents to the completion agenda and how their institutions are adjusting to changing expectations. The conditions that are causing these

changes in community colleges are also prevalent in other education sectors and, as the college presidents indicated, there is a need for greater collaboration and partnership to produce better success rates and provide opportunities for citizens. In this respect, there is a need for deeper research around community partnerships to ease student transitions and improve student outcomes. Amey and Eddy have looked at some of these issues in their work examining what they call partnership capital (Amey, 2010; Amey, Eddy, & Campbell, 2010; Eddy, 2010). Building on this work on collaboration, the scope of this inquiry could be expanded to include the views of partners from the K-12 sector, universities, business leaders, and other community organizations. While the factors that have contributed to the completion agenda have been driven by global competition, the downstream changes will have to occur locally through collaboration among community partners.

## APPENDIX A

### Informed Consent Form Research Participation Consent Form From Student Access to Student Success

#### Principal Researcher

Christopher Baldwin, Doctoral Candidate, University of Michigan

#### Description of the Research

The goal of this project is to better understand how community college leadership is addressing the growing push for improved student outcomes.

#### Description of Involvement

**Individual Interviews:** Individuals will be asked to engage in one-time individual interviews with the principal researcher. Participants will be asked to share experiences and reflections to the increasing emphasis on student success and completion. These interviews will be conducted either in face-to-face interviews or via the telephone. The interviews will be taped and transcribed with the subject's consent.

#### Length of Participation

Interview participants will engage in one 60-minute session.

#### Measures Taken to Minimize Risks and Discomforts

All participants will be selected on a voluntary basis and will have the opportunity to agree to the terms of consent prior to participation. Individuals may elect to voluntarily discontinue participation in the study at any time. In public reports and presentations, names, position titles, and other identifying information will be altered or removed to ensure that all individual identities remain confidential.

#### Expected Benefits

It is my hope that the process of sharing reflections about student access and student success will benefit the participant by providing an opportunity to comment on an important aspect of evolving institutional expectations. In addition, others may ultimately benefit from the knowledge obtained in this study.

#### Confidentiality

I plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you. There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly, including the University of Michigan.



## APPENDIX B

### Interview Protocol

- Q1 - Can you describe your professional background and experience?
- Q2 - How do you define the mission of community colleges?
- Q3 - How have the expectations of community colleges changed since you began your career?
- Q4 - How do you characterize institutional effectiveness?
- Q5 - How do you define high performance of your college?
- Q6 - What are your views of the increasing pressure to improve completion rates?
- Q7 - What do you see as the factors contributing to the emphasis on completion?
- Q8 - How will the emphasis on completion change the community college mission?



## REFERENCES

- 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges. (2012). *Reclaiming the American dream: Community colleges and the nation's future* (pp. 42). Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Achieving the Dream. (2007). *Success is what counts* (pp. 4). Chapel Hill, NC: Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count.
- Adelman, C. (2005). *Moving into town — and moving on: The community college in the lives of traditional-age students*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education
- Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Alfonso, M. (2006). The impact of community college attendance on baccalaureate attainment. *Research in Higher Education, 47*, 873-903.
- Alford, R. R., & Friedland, R. (1985). *Powers of theory: Capitalism, the state, and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Alfred, R. (1992). Making community colleges more effective: Leading through student success (pp. 1-33). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan - Community College Consortium.
- Alfred, R., Shults, C., Jaquette, O., & Strickland, S. (2009). *Community colleges on the horizon: Challenge, choice, or abundance*. Plymouth, UK: Rowan & Littlefield Education.
- Alfred, R. L. (1997). Competition for limited resources: Realities, prospects, and strategies. In D. Honeyman & J. Wattenbarger (Eds.), *A Struggle to Survive: Funding for Higher Education in the Next Century* (pp. 209-228). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Alfred, R. L. (2002). The future: Mastering the contradiction. *Community College Journal, 72*(3), 10-14.

- Almeida, D. A. (1991). Do underprepared students and those with lower academic skills belong in community colleges? A question of policy in light of the "mission". *Community College Review*, 18, 28-32.
- Amended Substitute House Bill Number 2, Amended Substitute House Bill Number 2, Ohio General Assembly § Ohio Revised Code: Chapter 3333: Ohio Board of Regents (2007).
- Amended Substitute House Bill Number 119, Amended Substitute House Bill Number 119, Ohio General Assembly § Ohio Revised Code: Chapter 3357: Technical Colleges (2007).
- American Association of Community Colleges. (2012). College completion challenge: A call to action Retrieved June 15, 2012, 2012, from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/default.aspx>
- Amey, M. (2005). Leadership as learning: Conceptualizing the process. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 29, 689-704.
- Amey, M. J. (2010). Leading partnerships: Competencies for collaboration. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 149(Spring), 13-23.
- Amey, M. J., Eddy, P. L., & Campbell, T. G. (2010). Crossing boundaries creating community college partnerships to promote educational transitions. *Community College Review*, 37, 333-347.
- Anderson, G. M., Alfonso, M., & Sun, J. C. (2006). Rethinking cooling out at public community colleges: An examination of fiscal and demographic trends in higher education and the rise of statewide articulation agreements. *Teachers College Record*, 108, 422-451.
- Andrews, H. A. (2004). Dual credit research outcomes for students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28, 415-422.
- Askin, J. A. (2007). Community college mission: Re(S)ources make a difference. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 31(12), 977-997.
- Attewell, P., Heil, S., & Reisel, L. (2010). Competing explanations of undergraduate noncompletion. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(3), 536-559.
- Attewell, P. A., Lavin, D. E., Domina, T., & Levey, T. (2006). New evidence on college remediation. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(5), 886-924.

- Ayers, D. (2011). Community colleges and the politics of sociospatial scale. *Higher Education*, 62(3), 303-314.
- Ayers, D. F. (2005). Neoliberal ideology in community college mission statements: A critical discourse analysis. *The Review of Higher Education*, 28(4), 527-549.
- Bahr, P. (2007). Double jeopardy: Testing the effects of multiple basic skill deficiencies on successful remediation. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(6), 695-725.
- Bahr, P. (2008a). Cooling out in the community college: What is the effect of academic advising on students' chances of success? *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 704-732.
- Bahr, P. (2008b). Does mathematics remediation work?: A comparative analysis of academic attainment among community college students. *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 420-450.
- Bahr, P. (2009). Educational attainment as process: Using hierarchical discrete-time event history analysis to model rate of progress. *Research in Higher Education*, 50, 691-714.
- Bahr, P. (2010a). The bird's eye view of community colleges: A behavioral typology of first-time students based on cluster analytic classification. *Research in Higher Education*, 51, 724-749.
- Bahr, P. (2010b). Revisiting the efficacy of postsecondary remediation: The moderating effects of depth/breadth of deficiency. *The Review of Higher Education*, 33(2), 177-205.
- Bahr, P. (2012). Deconstructing remediation in community colleges: Exploring associations between course-taking patterns, course outcomes, and attrition from the remedial math and remedial writing sequences. *Research in Higher Education*, 53, 661-693.
- Bahr, P. (in press). Classifying community colleges based on students' pattern of use. *Research in Higher Education*, 54.
- Bailey, T. (2008). Bridging the high school-college divide. In H. F. Ladd & E. B. Fiske (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy* (pp. 724-737). Gainesville, FL: American Education Finance Association.

- Bailey, T. (2009). Challenge and opportunity: Rethinking the role and function of developmental education in community college. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 11-30.
- Bailey, T., & Averianova, I. E. (1998). Multiple missions of community colleges: Conflicting or complementary? New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College.
- Bailey, T., & Averianova, I. E. (2001). Multiple missions of community colleges: Conflicting or complementary? *The Catalyst*, 5, 5-12.
- Bailey, T., Calcagno, J. C., Jenkins, D., Kienzl, G., & Leinbach, T. (2005). The effects of institutional factors on the success of community college students (pp. 60): Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Bailey, T., Calcagno, J. C., Jenkins, D., Leinbach, T., & Kienzl, G. (2006). Is student-right-to-know all you should know? An analysis of community college graduation rates. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(5), 491-519.
- Bailey, T., Jaggars, S. S., & Jenkins, D. (2011). Introduction to the CCRC assessment of evidence series. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Bailey, T., Jenkins, D., & Leinbach, T. (2005). Is student success labeled institutional failure?: Student goals and graduation rates in the accountability debate at community colleges (pp. 48). New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S.-W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 29(2), 255-270.
- Bailey, T., & Morest, V. S. (2004). The organizational efficiency of multiple missions for community colleges (pp. 44). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Bailey, T., & Morest, V. S. (2006a). The community college equity agenda in the twenty-first century: Moving from access to achievement. In T. Bailey & V. S. Morest (Eds.), *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda* (pp. 246-270). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bailey, T., & Morest, V. S. (2006b). Introduction: Defending the community college equity agenda. In T. Bailey & V. S. Morest (Eds.), *Defending the Community*

*College Equity Agenda* (pp. 1-27). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Bailey, T. R., & Alfonso, M. (2005). Paths to persistence : An analysis of research on program effectiveness at community colleges (pp. 38). Indianapolis: Lumina Foundation for Education.
- Baker, T. L., & Velez, W. (1996). Access to and opportunity in postsecondary education in the United States: A review. *Sociology of Education*, 69, 82-101.
- Baldwin, C., Bensimon, E. M., Dowd, A., & Klieman, L. (2011). Measuring student success. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 153(Spring 2011), 75-88.
- Bastedo, M. N. (2005). The making of an activist governing board. *Review of Education Research*, 28, 551-570.
- Bastedo, M. N. (2009). Convergent institutional logics in public higher education: State policymaking and governing board activism. *The Review of Higher Education*, 32(2), 209-234.
- Bastedo, M. N., & Bowman, N. (2011). College rankings as an interorganizational dependency: Establishing the foundation for strategic and institutional accounts. *Research in Higher Education*, 52, 3-23.
- Bastedo, M. N., & Gumpert, P. J. (2003). Access to what? Mission differentiation and academic stratification in U.S. public higher education. *Higher Education*, 46, 341-359.
- Bastedo, M. N., & Jaquette, O. (2011). Running in place: Low-income students and the dynamics of higher education stratification. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 33, 318-339.
- Battilana, J., Leca, B., & Boxenbaum, E. (2009). How actors change institutions: Towards a theory of institutional entrepreneurship. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 65-107.
- Beach, J. M. (2011). *Gateway to opportunity?: A history of the community college in the United States*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Belfield, C., & Crosta, P. M. (2012). Predicting success in college: The importance of placement tests and high school transcripts *CCRC Working Paper No. 42* (pp. 41).

New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

- Belfield, C. R., & Bailey, T. (2011). The benefits of attending community college: A review of the evidence. *Community College Review*, 39(1), 46-68.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Bers, T. (2005). Parents of traditionally aged community college students: Communications and choice. *Research in Higher Education*, 46(4), 413-436.
- Bettinger, E. P., & Long, B. T. (2005). Remediation at the community college: Student participation and outcomes. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 129(Spring), 17-26.
- Bettinger, E. P., & Long, B. T. (2007). *Addressing the needs of under-prepared students in higher education: Does college remediation work?*
- Bogart, Q. J. (1994). The community college mission. In G. A. Baker (Ed.), *A Handbook on the Community College in America* (pp. 60-73). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers.
- Boggs, G. R. (2003). Leadership context for the twenty-first century. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 123(Fall), 15-25.
- Boggs, G. R. (2011). Community colleges in the spotlight and under the microscope. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 156(Winter), 3-22.
- Bogue, J. P. (1950). *The community college*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.
- Boswell, K. (2001). State policy and postsecondary enrollment options: Creating seamless systems. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 113(Spring), 7-14.
- Bosworth, B. (2010). Certificates count: An analysis of sub-baccalaureate certificates (pp. 48). Washington, DC: Complete College America.
- Bragg, D. D. (2001). Community college access, mission, and outcomes: Considering intriguing intersections and challenges. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 76(1), 93-116.

- Bragg, D. D. (2011). Examining pathways to and through the community college for youth and adults. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 26, 355-393.
- Breneman, D. W. (1998). Remediation in higher education: Its extent and cost (pp. 359-370). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Brint, S. (2003). Few remaining dreams: Community colleges since 1985. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 16-37.
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1989a). American education, meritocratic ideology, and the legitimation of inequality: The community college and the problem of American exceptionalism. *Higher Education*, 18(6), 725-735.
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1989b). *The diverted dream: Community colleges and the promise of educational opportunity in America, 1900-1985*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1991). Institutional origins and transformations: The case of American community colleges. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (pp. 337-360). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bueschel, A. C. (2004). The missing link: The role of community colleges in the transition between high school and college. In M. W. Kirst & A. Venezia (Eds.), *From High School to College: Improving Opportunities for Success in Postsecondary Education* (pp. 252-284). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Burley, H., Butner, B., & Cejda, B. (2001). Dropout and stopout patterns among developmental education students in Texas community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 25, 767-782.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Calcagno, J., Bailey, T., Jenkins, D., Kienzl, G., & Leinbach, T. (2008). Community college student success: What institutional characteristics make a difference? *Economics of Education Review*, 27, 632-645.
- Calcagno, J., Crosta, P., Bailey, T., & Jenkins, D. (2007a). Does age of entrance affect community college completion probabilities? Evidence from a discrete-time hazard model. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 29(3), 218-235.

- Calcagno, J., Crosta, P., Bailey, T., & Jenkins, D. (2007b). Stepping stones to a degree: The impact of enrollment pathways and milestones on community college student outcomes. *Research in Higher Education, 48*(7), 775-801.
- Calcagno, J. C., & Long, B. T. (2008). The impact of postsecondary remediation using a regression discontinuity approach: Addressing endogenous sorting and noncompliance (pp. 46). New York: National Center for Postsecondary Research.
- Carnevale, A. P. (2007). Confessions of an education fundamentalist: Why grade 12 is not the right end point for anyone. In N. Hoffman, J. Vargas, A. Venezia & M. S. Miller (Eds.), *Minding the Gap: Why Intergrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It* (pp. 15-26). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Stohl, J. (2010). Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018. Washington DC: Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.
- Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2012). A matter of degrees: Promising practices for community college student success. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program.
- Center for Law and Social Policy. (2012). Eliminating “Ability to Benefit” student aid options: Closes door to college credentials for thousands and undermines innovation (pp. 2). Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- Charlier, H. D., & Williams, M. R. (2011). The reliance on and demand for adjunct faculty members in America's rural, suburban, and urban community colleges. *Community College Review, 39*(2), 160-180.
- Christensen, C. (2008). The employment of part-time faculty at community colleges. *New Directions for Higher Education, 143*(Fall), 29-36.
- Clark, B. R. (1960). The "cooling out" function in higher education. *American Journal of Sociology, 65*(6), 569-576.
- Clark, B. R. (1980). The “cooling out” function revisited. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 32*, 15-31.
- Clemens, E. S., & Cook, J. M. (1999). Politics and institutionalism: Explaining durability and change. *Annual Review of Sociology, 25*(1), 441-466.



- Clowes, D. A., & Levin, B. H. (1989). Community, technical, and junior colleges: Are they leaving higher education? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 60(3), 349-355.
- Cohen, A. M. (1985). Student access and the collegiate function in community colleges. *Higher Education*, 14(2), 149-163.
- Cohen, A. M. (1990). The case for the community college. *American Journal of Education*, 98(4), 426-442.
- Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (1987). *The collegiate function of community colleges: Fostering higher learning through curriculum and student transfer*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (2008). *The American community college* (5th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Collins, M. L. (2006). By the numbers: State goals for increasing postsecondary attainment (pp. 25). Boston: Jobs for the Future.
- Committee on Measures of Student Success. (2011). *A report to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan*. Washington, DC.
- Complete College America. (2010). The completion shortfall.
- Completion by Design. (2012). Completion by Design pathway principles (pp. 2). Seattle, WA: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Creed, W. E. D., Scully, M. A., & Austin, J. R. (2002). Clothes make the person? The tailoring of legitimating accounts and the social construction of identity. *Organization Science*, 13(5), 475-496.
- Crews, D. M., & Aragon, S. R. (2007). Developmental education writing: Persistence and goal attainment among community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 31(8), 637-652.
- Cross, K. P. (1981). Community colleges on the plateau. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 52(2), 113-123.
- Cross, K. P. (1985). Determining missions and priorities for the fifth generation. In W. L. Deegan & D. Tillery (Eds.), *Renewing the American Community College* (pp. 34-50). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Cross, K. P., & Fideler, E. F. (1989). Community college missions: Priorities in the mid-1980s. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 60(2), 209-216.
- Currie, W. L., & Guah, M. W. (2007). Conflicting institutional logics: A national programme for IT in the organisational field of healthcare. *Journal of Information Technology*, 22, 235-247.
- Deegan, W. L., & Tillery, D. (1985). *Renewing the American community college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Deil-Amen, R. (2011). Socio-academic integrative moments : Rethinking academic and social integration among two-year college students in career-related programs. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 82(1), 54-91.
- Deil-Amen, R., & Rosenbaum, J. E. (2002). The unintended consequences of stigma-free remediation. *Sociology of Education*, 75(3), 249-268.
- Deil-Amen, R., & Rosenbaum, J. E. (2003). The social prerequisites of success: Can college structure reduce the need for social know-how? *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 120-143.
- Déjean, F., Gond, J.-P., & Leca, B. (2004). Measuring the unmeasured: An institutional entrepreneur strategy in an emerging industry. *Human Relations*, 57(6), 741-764.
- Deli-Amen, R., & Rosenbaum, J. E. (2003). The social prerequisites of success: Can college structure reduce the need for social know-how. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 120-143.
- Desai, S. A. (2012). Is comprehensiveness taking its toll on community colleges?: An in-depth analysis of community colleges' missions and their effectiveness. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 36(2), 111-121.
- Dillard, J. F., Rigsby, J. T., & Goodman, C. (2004). The making and remaking of organization context: Duality and the institutionalization process. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 17(4), 506-542.
- DiMaggio, P. (1988). Interest and agency in institutional theory. In L. Zucker (Ed.), *Institutional Patterns and Organizations* (pp. 3-22). Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147-160.

- Dougherty, K. J. (1987). The effects of community colleges: Aid or hinderance to socioeconomic attainment. *Sociology of Education*, 60(2), 86-103.
- Dougherty, K. J. (1991). The community college at the crossroads: The need for structural reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61(3), 311-336.
- Dougherty, K. J. (1992). Community colleges and baccalaureate attainment. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 63(2), 188.
- Dougherty, K. J. (2001). *The contradictory college: The conflicting origins, impacts, and futures of the community college*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Dougherty, K. J. (2002). The evolving role of the community college: policy issues and research questions. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 17, 295-348.
- Dougherty, K. J., & Kienzl, G. S. (2006). It's not enough to get through the open door: Inequalities by social background in transfer from community colleges to four-year colleges. *Teachers College Record*, 108, 452-487.
- Dougherty, K. J., & Natow, R. (2009). The demise of higher education performance funding systems in three states (pp. 45). New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Dougherty, K. J., & Reid, M. (2007). Fifty states of Achieving the Dream: State policies to enhance access to and success in community colleges across the United States (pp. 56). New York.
- Dougherty, K. J., & Townsend, B. K. (2006). Community college missions: A theoretical and historical perspective. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 136(Winter), 5-15.
- Dowd, A., & Melguizo, T. (2008). Socioeconomic stratification of community college transfer access in the 1980s and 1990s: Evidence from HS&B and NELS. *The Review of Higher Education*, 31(4), 377-400.
- Dowd, A. C. (2003). From access to outcome equity: Revitalizing the democratic mission of the community college. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 92-119.

- Dowd, A. C. (2006). The effect of loans on the persistence and attainment of community college students. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(1), 33-62.
- Dowd, A. C. (2007). Community colleges as gateways and gatekeepers: Moving beyond the access "saga" and toward outcome equity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 77(4), 407-419.
- Downey, J. A., Pusser, B., & Turner, J. K. (2006). Competing missions: Balancing entrepreneurialism with community responsiveness in community college continuing education divisions. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 136(Winter), 75-82.
- Dressel, P. L. (1987). Mission, organization, and leadership. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 58(1), 101-109.
- Durand, R., & McGuire, J. (2005). Legitimizing agencies in the face of selection: The case of AACSB. *Organization Studies*, 26(2), 165-196.
- Eagan, K. (2005). A national picture of part-time community college faculty: Changing trends in demographics and employment characteristics. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 140(Winter), 5-14.
- Eagan, M. K., & Jaeger, A. (2009). Effects of exposure to part-time faculty on community college transfer. *Research in Higher Education*, 50, 168-188.
- Eaton, J. S. (1988). *Colleges of choice: The enabling impact of the community college*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Eaton, J. S. (1994). *Strengthening collegiate education in community colleges*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Eddy, P. L. (Ed.). (2010). *Special issue: Partnerships and collaborations in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Eells, W. C. (1931). *The junior college*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Fike, D. S., & Fike, R. (2008). Predictors of first-year student retention in the community college. *Community College Review*, 36(2), 68-88.
- Fligstein, N. (1997). Social skill and institutional theory. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40(4), 397-405.

- Fligstein, N. (2001). Social skill and the theory of fields. *Sociological Theory*, 19(2), 105-125.
- Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (2005). Perspectives on the community college baccalaureate (pp. 1-7). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Friedland, R., & Alford, R. R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (pp. 232-263). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.
- Frye, J. H. (1992). *The vision of the public junior college, 1900-1940: Professional goals and popular aspirations*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Gappa, J. M. (1984). The national profile of part-time faculty. *ASHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report*, 13(3), 10-21.
- Girardi, A. G., & Stein, R. B. (2001). State dual credit policy and its implication for community colleges: lessons from Missouri for the 21st century. In B. K. Townsend & S. B. Twombly (Eds.), *Community Colleges: Policy in the Future Context* (pp. 149-172). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Gleazer, E. J. (1980). *The community college: Values, vision and vitality*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.
- Glynn, M. A., & Abzug, R. (2002). Institutionalizing identity: Symbolic isomorphism and organizational names. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 267-280.
- Goldrick-Rab, S. (2010). Challenges and opportunities for improving community college student success. *Review of Education Research*, 80(3), 437-469.
- Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy. (2004). *Building on knowledge, investing in people: Higher education and the future of Ohio's economy*. Columbus, Ohio: Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy.
- Governor Ted Strickland. (2007). *Executive Order: Establishing the University System of Ohio*. Columbus, OH: Governor, State of Ohio.

- Green, D. W. (2007). Adjunct faculty and the continuing quest for quality. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 140(Winter), 29-39.
- Green, S. E., Babb, M., & Alpaslan, C. M. (2008). Institutional field dynamics and the competition between institutional logics: The role of rhetoric in the evolving control of the modern corporation. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22(1), 40-73.
- Greene, T. G., Marti, C. N., & McClenney, K. (2008). The effort–outcome gap: Differences for African American and Hispanic community college students in student engagement and academic achievement. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), 513-539.
- Greenwood, R., Díaz, A. M., Li, S. X., & Lorente, J. C. (2010). The multiplicity of institutional logics and the heterogeneity of organizational responses. *Organization Science*, 21(2), 521-539.
- Greenwood, R., Suddaby, R., & Hinings, C. R. (2002). Theorizing change: The role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 58-80.
- Grubb, W. N. (1989). The effects of differentiation on the educational attainment: The case of community colleges. *The Review of Higher Education*, 12(4), 349-374.
- Grubb, W. N., Badway, N., & Bell, D. (2003). Community colleges and the equity agenda: The potential of noncredit education. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 218-240.
- Grubb, W. N., & Lazerson, M. (2004). *The education gospel: The economic power of schooling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grubb, W. N., & Lazerson, M. (2005). Vocationalism in higher education: The triumph of the education gospel. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(1), 1-25.
- Grubb, W. N., Worthen, H., Byrd, B., Webb, E., Badway, N., Case, C., . . . Villeneuve, J. C. (1999). *Honored but invisible: An inside look at teaching in community colleges*. New York: Routledge.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Gumport, P. J. (2003). The demand-response scenario: Perspectives of community college presidents. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 38-61.
- Gumport, P. J., & Bastedo, M. N. (2001). Academic stratification and endemic conflict: remedial education policy at CUNY. *The Review of Higher Education*, 24, 333-349.
- Hagedorn, L. S. (2010). The pursuit of student success: The directions and challenges facing community colleges. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 25, 181-218.
- Hall, C., & Thomas, S. L. (2012). 'Advocacy philanthropy' and the public policy agenda: The role of modern foundations in American higher education. Paper presented at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, Canada.
- Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2008). Institutional entrepreneurship. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Suddaby & K. Sahlin (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (pp. 198-217). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Hardy, C., & Phillips, N. (1999). No joking matter: Discursive struggle in the Canadian refugee system. *Organization Studies*, 20(1), 1-24.
- Haveman, H. A., & Rao, H. (1997). Structuring a theory of moral sentiments: Institutional and organizational coevolution in the early thrift industry. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6), 1606-1651.
- Hendrick, R. Z., Hightower, W. H., & Gregory, D. E. (2006). State funding limitations and community college open door policy: Conflcting priorities? *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30(8), 627-640.
- Herremans, I., Herschovis, M., & Bertels, S. (2009). Leaders and laggards: The influence of competing logics on corporate environmental action. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 89, 449-472.
- Hilmer, M. J. (1997). Does community college attendance provide a strategic path to a higher quality education? *Economics of Education Review*, 16(1), 59-68.
- Hoachlander, G., & Carroll, C. D. (2003). Community college students: Goals, academic preparation, and outcomes *Postsecondary Education Descriptive Analysis Reports*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

- Hoffman, N., Vargas, J., Venezia, A., & Miller, M. S. (2007). *Minding the gap: Why integrating high school with college makes sense and how to do it*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Hom, W. C. (2009). The denominator as the "target". *Community College Review*, 37, 136-152.
- Horn, C., McCoy, Z., Campbell, L., & Brock, C. (2009). Remedial testing and placement in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 33(6), 510-526.
- Horn, L., & Weko, T. (2009). On track to complete? A taxonomy of beginning community college students and their outcomes 3 years after enrolling: 2003–04 through 2006 (pp. 98). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Hoyt, J. E. (1999). Remedial education and student attrition. *Community College Review*, 27, 51-72.
- Hughes, K. L., & Scott-Clayton, J. (2011). Assessing developmental assessment in community colleges. *Community College Review*, 39(4), 327-351.
- Hunt, E., & Carroll, C. E. (2006). Florida's dual enrollment initiative: How state policy influences community colleges' service to underrepresented youth. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 135(Fall), 39-47.
- Hutcheson, P. A. (1999). Reconsidering the community college. *History of Education Quarterly*, 39(3), 307-320.
- Ignash, J. M. (1997). Who should provide postsecondary remedial/developmental education? *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 100, 5-20.
- Ishitani, T. (2008). How do transfers survive after “transfer shock”? A longitudinal study of transfer student departure at a four-year institution. *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 403-419.
- Jacoby, D. (2006). Effects of part-time faculty employment on community college graduation rates. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(6), 1081-1103.
- Jaeger, A. J., & Eagan, M. K. (2009). Unintended consequences: Examining the effect of part-time faculty members on associate's degree completion. *Community College Review*, 36(3), 167-194.



- Jenkins, D. (2007). Institutional effectiveness and student success: A study of high- and low-impact community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 31(12), 945-962.
- Jenkins, D., & Boswell, K. (2002). State findings on community college remedial education: Findings from a national survey (pp. 12). Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, Center for Community College Policy.
- Jenkins, D., & Cho, S.-W. (2012). Get with the program: Accelerating community college students' entry into and completion of programs of study. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Jones-White, D. R., Radcliffe, P. M., Huesman, R. L., & Kellogg, J. P. (2009). Redefining student success: Applying different multinomial regression techniques for the study of student graduation across institutions of higher education. *Research in Higher Education*, 51, 154-174.
- Kane, T. J., & Rouse, C. E. (1999). The community college: Educating students at the margin between college and work. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 13(1), 63-84.
- Karp, M. M. (2011). Toward a new understanding of non-academic student support: Four mechanisms encouraging positive student outcomes in the community college *Assessment of Evidence Series*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Katsinas, S. G. (2003). Two-year college classifications based on institutional control, geography, governance, and size. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 122(Summer), 17-28.
- Katsinas, S. G., D'Amico, M. M., & Friedel, J. N. (2011). Challenging success: Can college degree completion be increased as states cut budgets? (pp. 8). Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama, Education Policy Center.
- Kelly, P., & Strawn, J. (2011). Not just kid stuff anymore: The economic imperative for more adults to complete college (pp. 7). Washington DC: Center for Law and Social Policy and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.
- Kim, K. A. (2002). Exploring the meaning of "nontraditional" at the community college. *Community College Review*, 30(1), 74-89.

- Kirst, M. W., & Venezia, A. (2004). *From high school to college: Improving opportunities for success in postsecondary education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Knapp, L. G., Kelley-Reid, J. E., & Ginder, S. A. (2012). *Enrollment in postsecondary institutions, Fall 2010; financial statistics, Fiscal Year 2010; and graduation rates, selected cohorts, 2002-07 (NCES 2012-280)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.
- Koos, L. V. (1925). *The junior-college movement*. Boston: Ginn and Company.
- Kozeracki, C. A. (2002). Issues in developmental education. *Community College Review*, 29(4), 83-100.
- Kraatz, M. S., & Moore, J. H. (2002). Executive migration and institutional change. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 120-143.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (Third ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Laanan, F. S., Hardy, D. E., & Katsinas, S. G. (2006). Documenting and assessing the role of community colleges in developing human capital. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30(10), 855-869.
- Lane, J. E. (2003). Studying community colleges and their students: Context and research issues. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 118(Summer), 51-67.
- Leblebici, H., Salancik, G. R., Copay, A., & King, T. (1991). Institutional change and the transformation of interorganizational fields: An organizational history of the U.S. radio broadcasting industry. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36(3), 333-363.
- Lee, V. E., Mackie-Lewis, C., & Marks, H. M. (1993). Persistence to the baccalaureate degree for students who transfer from community college. *American Journal of Education*, 102(1), 80-114.
- Leigh, D. E., & Gill, A. M. (2003). Do community colleges really divert students from earning bachelor's degrees? *Economics of Education Review*, 22, 23-30.
- Leigh, D. E., & Gill, A. M. (2009). How well do community colleges respond to the occupational training needs of local communities? Evidence from California. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 146(Summer), 95-102.

- Lenihan, C. (2012). *IPEDS analytics: Delta Cost Project database 1987-2010 (NCES 2012-823)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.
- Lesik, S. (2007). Do developmental mathematics programs have a causal impact on student retention? An application of discrete-time survival and regression-discontinuity analysis. *Research in Higher Education, 48*(5), 583-608.
- Levin, H., & Calcagno, J. C. (2008). Remediation in the community college: An evaluator's perspective. *Community College Review, 35*(3), 181-207.
- Levin, J. S. (1998). Presidential influence, leadership succession, and multiple interpretations of organizational change. *The Review of Higher Education, 21*(4), 405-425.
- Levin, J. S. (2000). The revised institution: The community college mission at the end of the twentieth century. *Community College Review, 28*(2), 1-25.
- Levin, J. S. (2001). The buffered and buffeted institution: Globalization and the community college. In B. K. Townsend & S. B. Twombly (Eds.), *Community Colleges: Policy in the Future Context* (pp. 77-100). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Levin, J. S. (2004). The community college as a baccalaureate-granting institution. *The Review of Higher Education, 28*(1), 1-22.
- Levin, J. S. (2007). Multiple judgments: Institutional context and part-time faculty. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 140*(Winter), 15-20.
- Levin, J. S., Cox, E. M., Cerven, C., & Haberler, Z. (2010). The recipe for promising practices in community colleges. *Community College Review, 38*(1), 31-58.
- Lingenfelter, P. E. (2011). State higher education finance: FY 2010 (pp. 83). Boulder, CO: State Higher Education Executive Officers.
- Long, B. T., & Kurlaender, M. (2009). Do community colleges provide a viable pathway to a baccalaureate degree? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 31*(1), 30-53.
- Lorenzo, A. L. (1994). The mission and functions of the community college: An overview. In G. A. Baker, III (Ed.), *A handbook of the community college in*

*America: Its history, mission and management* (pp. 111-122). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

- Lounsbury, M. (2002). Institutional transformation and status mobility: The professionalization of the field of finance. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 255-266.
- Lounsbury, M. (2007). A tale of two cities: Competing logics and practice variation in the professionalizing of mutual funds. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(2), 289-307.
- Lounsbury, M., & Glynn, M. A. (2001). Cultural entrepreneurship: stories, legitimacy, and the acquisition of resources. *Strategic Management Journal*, 22(6-7), 545-564.
- Lumina Foundation for Education. (2009). Goal 2025: Lumina Foundation' strategic plan. Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation for Education.
- Maguire, S., Hardy, C., & Lawrence, T. B. (2004). Institutional entrepreneurship in emerging fields: HIV/AIDS treatment advocacy in Canada. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 47(5), 657-679.
- Manning, K., & Stage, F. K. (2003). What is your research approach? In F. K. Stage & K. Manning (Eds.), *Research in the College Context: Approaches and Methods* (pp. 19-31). New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Marcotte, D. E., Bailey, T., Borkoski, C., & Kienzl, G. S. (2005). The returns of a community college education: Evidence from the national education longitudinal survey. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 27(2), 157-175.
- Marquis, C., & Lounsbury, M. (2007). Vive la resistance: Competing institutional logics and the consolidation of U.S. community banking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4), 799-820.
- Marti, C. N. (2008). Latent postsecondary persistence pathways: Educational pathways in American two-year colleges. *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 317-336.
- Mattingly, J. E., & Hall, H. T. (2008). Who gets to decide? The role of institutional logics in shaping stakeholder politics and insurgency. *Business and Society Review*, 113(1), 63-89.

- Mazzeo, C. (2002). Stakes for students: Agenda-setting and remedial education. *The Review of Higher Education*, 26(1), 19-39.
- McCartan, A.-M. (1983). The community college mission: Present challenges and future visions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 54(6), 676-692.
- McLendon, M., Heller, D. E., & Lee, S. (2009). High school to college transition policy in the American states. *Educational Policy*, 23(2), 385-418.
- McPhail, C. J., & McPhail, I. P. (2006). Prioritizing community college missions: A directional effort. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 136(Winter), 91-100.
- Medsker, L. L. (1960). *The junior college: Progress and prospect*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.
- Medsker, L. L., Tillery, D., & Education, T. C. C. o. H. (1971). *Breaking the access barriers: A profile of two-year colleges*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Melguizo, T. (2009). Are community colleges an alternative path for Hispanic students to attain a bachelor's degree? *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 90-123.
- Melguizo, T., & Dowd, A. C. (2009). Baccalaureate success of transfers and rising 4-year college juniors. *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 55-89.
- Melguizo, T., Hagedorn, L. S., & Cypers, S. (2008). Remedial/developmental education and the cost of community college transfer: A Los Angeles County sample. *The Review of Higher Education*, 31(4), 401-431.
- Melguizo, T., Kienzl, G. S., & Alfonso, M. (2011). Comparing the educational attainment of community college transfer students and four-year college rising juniors using propensity score matching methods. *Journal of Higher Education*, 82(3), 265-291.
- Mendoza, P., Basham, M. J., Dale, F., O'Daniels, T. M., Malcolm, Z., Felton, S., . . . Douma, D. (2009). Missions, values, and "flying monkeys": Critical issues for community colleges today and in 2019. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 33(11), 866-882.
- Meredith, M. (2004). Why do universities compete in the rankings game? An empirical analysis of the effects of the U.S. News and World Report college rankings. *Research in Higher Education*, 45, 443-461.

- Merisotis, J. P., & Shedd, J. M. (2003). Using IPEDS to develop a classification system for two-year postsecondary institutions. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 122(Summer), 47-61.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340-363.
- Meyer, R. E., & Hammerschmid, G. (2006). Changing institutional logics and executive identities: A managerial challenge to public administration in Austria. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49(7), 1000-1014.
- Monks, J., & Ehrenberg, R. G. (1999). The impact of U.S. News & World Report college rankings on admissions outcomes and pricing policies at selective private institutions. *Working Paper #7227*: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Morest, V. S. (2006). How the attempt to balance multiple missions is shaping the future of community colleges. In T. Bailey & V. S. Morest (Eds.), *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda* (pp. 28-50). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Morest, V. S., & Jenkins, D. (2007). Institutional research and the culture of evidence at community colleges *Achieving the Dream Culture of Evidence Series* (pp. 15). New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Morrison, D. G. (1961). What is the place of the community college among higher education institutions? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 32(8), 462-463.
- Moss, B. G., & Yeaton, W. H. (2006). Shaping policies related to developmental education: An evaluation using the regression-discontinuity design. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 28(3), 215-229.
- Mullin, C. M. (2010). Rebalancing the mission: The community college completion challenge (pp. 10). Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Mullin, C. M., & Honeyman, D. S. (2007). The funding of community colleges: A typology of state funding formulas. *Community College Review*, 35(2), 113-127.

- Mullin, C. M., & Honeyman, D. S. (2008). The funding of community colleges: Formulas and governance *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 32(7), 512-524.
- Mullins, D. (2006). Competing institutional logics? Local accountability and scale and efficiency in an expanding non-profit housing sector. *Public Policy and Administration*, 21(3), 6-24.
- Murray, J. P. (2001). Faculty development in publicly supported two-year colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 25(7), 487-502.
- National Academies of Science. (2005). *Rising above the gathering storm: Energizing and employing America for a brighter economic future*. Washington, DC: National Academies of Science Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11463.html>.
- National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. (2012). National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis Retrieved June 15, 2012, 2012, from <http://www.higheredinfo.org/>
- National Commission on Community Colleges. (2008). *Winning the skills race and strengthening America's middle class: An action agenda for community colleges*. New York: The National Commission on Community Colleges.
- North Central Association - Higher Learning Commission. (2007). *Academic quality improvement program: Introduction to AQIP* (pp. 10). Chicago, IL: The Higher Learning Commission
- O'Banion, T. (2010). To what end? *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2010/08/16/obanion>
- Ohio Association of Community Colleges. (2008). *Response to the University System of Ohio strategic plan for higher education 2008-2017* (pp. 11). Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Association of Community Colleges.
- Ohio Association of Community Colleges. (2010). *Recommendations on the use of success points in the community college formula* (pp. 19). Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Association of Community Colleges.
- Ohio Association of Community Colleges. (2011). *Developmental education policy recommendations*. Columbus, OH: Retrieved from <http://www.ohiocommunitycolleges.org/assets/images/public-pages/2498a07ea52e0907b8669cd436be0e2f.pdf>.

- Ohio Board of Regents. (2010). *Full-time equivalent enrollment, FY 2001 to FY 2010: University System of Ohio institutions*. Columbus, OH.
- Ohio Board of Regents. (2011a). *Instruction by faculty type at University System of Ohio institutions: Fall 2005 to Fall 2009*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Board of Regents.
- Ohio Board of Regents. (2011b). *Percent of first-year students taking remedial coursework: FY 2010*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Board of Regents.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2005). *Education at a glance 2005: OECD indicators* OECD Publishing Retrieved from [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2005\\_eag-2005-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2005_eag-2005-en).
- Orr, M. T., & Bragg, D. D. (2001). Policy directions for K-14 education: Looking to the future. In B. K. Townsend & S. B. Twombly (Eds.), *Community Colleges: Policy in the Future Context* (pp. 101-128). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Osterman, P. (2010). *Community colleges: Promise, performance, and policy*. Paper presented at the Reinventing the American University: The Promise of Innovation in Higher Education, American Enterprise Institute.
- Pache, A.-C., & Santos, F. (2010). When worlds collide: The internal dynamics of organizational responses to conflicting institutional demands. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(3), 455-476.
- Pennington, H., & Milliron, M. D. (2010). Completion by Design concept paper. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Perin, D. (2006). Can community colleges protect both access and standards? The problem of remediation. *Teachers College Record*, 108(3), 339-373.
- Perin, D., & Charron, K. (2006). "Lights just click on every day". In T. Bailey & V. S. Morest (Eds.), *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda* (pp. 155-194). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Phillippe, K. (2011). Voluntary framework of accountability: Metrics manual version 1.0 (pp. 48). Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Phillips, N., & Tracey, P. (2007). Opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial capabilities and bricolage: connecting institutional theory and entrepreneurship in strategic organization. *Strategic Organization*, 5(3), 313-320.



- Pincus, F. L. (1994). How critics view the community college's role in the twenty-first century. In G. A. Baker (Ed.), *A Handbook on the Community College in America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- President's Commission on Higher Education. (1947). A report of the President's Commission on Higher Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- President Barack Obama. (2009). Investing in education: The American graduation initiative.
- Provasnik, S., & Planty, M. (2008). Community colleges: Special supplement to the condition of education 2008 (pp. 75). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Rao, H., Monin, P., & Durand, R. (2003). Institutional change in Toque Ville: Nouvelle cuisine as an identity movement in French gastronomy. *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(4), 795-843.
- Ratcliff, J. L. (1987). "First" public junior colleges in an age of reform. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 58(2), 151-180.
- Ratcliff, J. L. (1994). Seven streams in the historical development of the American community college. In G. A. Baker (Ed.), *A Handbook on the Community College in America* (pp. 3-16). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Reay, T., & Hinings, C. R. (2009). Managing the rivalry of competing institutional logics. *Organization Studies*, 30(6), 629-652.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations* (5th ed.). New York: Free press.
- Roksa, J. (2006). Does the vocational focus of community colleges hinder student's educational attainment? *The Review of Higher Education*, 29(4), 499-526.
- Roksa, J. (2010). Bachelor's degree completion across state contexts: Does the distribution of enrollments make a difference? *Research in Higher Education*, 51, 1-20.
- Romano, R. M. (2011). A brief look at what economists are saying about the community college. *Community College Review*, 39(1), 69-87.

- Rosenbaum, J. E., Deil-Amen, R., & Person, A. E. (2006). *After admission: From college access to college success*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Rouse, C. E. (1998). Do two-year colleges increase overall educational attainment? Evidence from the states. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17(4), 595-620.
- Russell, A. (2011). A guide to major U.S. college completion initiatives *Policy Matters* (October 2011 ed.). Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- Rutschow, E. Z., Richburg-Hayes, L., Brock, T., Orr, G., Cerna, O., Cullinan, D., . . . Martin, K. (2011). Turning the tide: Five years of Achieving the Dream in community colleges (pp. 210). New York: MDRC and Community College Research Center.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Fields Methods*, 15(1), 85-109.
- Scott, W. R., Ruef, M., Mendel, P. J., & Caronna, C. A. (2000). *Institutional change and healthcare organisations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Seo, M.-G., & Creed, W. E. D. (2002). Institutional contradictions, praxis, and institutional change: A dialectical perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(2), 222-247.
- Shannon, H. D., & Smith, R. C. (2006). A case for the community college's open access mission. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 136(Winter), 15-22.
- Shaw, K. M. (1997). Remedial education as ideological battleground: Emerging remedial education policies in the community college. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19(3), 284-296.
- Shaw, K. M. (2001a). Reframing remediation as a systemic phenomenon: A comparative analysis of remediation in two states. In B. K. Townsend & S. B. Twombly (Eds.), *Community Colleges: Policy in the Future Context* (pp. 193-222). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.

- Shaw, K. M. (2001b). Reframing remediation as a systemic phenomenon: A comparative analysis of remediation in two states. In B. K. Townsend & S. B. Twombly (Eds.), *Community colleges: Policy in the future context* (pp. 193-222). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Shaw, K. M., & Jacobs, J. A. (2003). Community colleges: New environments, new directions. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 586, 6-15.
- Shulock, N., & Moore, C. (2005). Diminished access to the baccalaureate for low-income and minority students in California: The impact of budget and capacity constraints on the transfer function. *Educational Policy*, 19(2), 418-442.
- Shulock, N., & Moore, C. (2007). Rules of the game: How state policy creates barriers to degree completion and impedes student success in the California community colleges (Vol. 36, pp. 16). Sacramento, CA.
- Shults, B. C. (2001). The critical impact of impending retirements on community college leadership *Leadership Series Research Brief* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-12).
- Shults, C. W. (2009). The impact of presidential behaviors on institutional movement towards greater abundance in community colleges: An exploratory study.
- Smith, D. (2007). Why expand dual-credit programs? *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 31(5), 371-387.
- Sonpar, K., Handelman, J. M., & Dastmalchian, A. (2009). Implementing new institutional logics in pioneering organizations: The burden of justifying ethical appropriateness and trustworthiness. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90, 345-359.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Suddaby, R., & Greenwood, R. (2005). Rhetorical strategies of legitimacy. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(1), 35-67.
- Summers, M. D. (2003). Attrition research at community colleges. *Community College Review*, 30(4), 64-84.
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2009). Postsecondary success. Seattle, WA: The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

- The Institute for College Access & Success. (2012). College InSight database. from The Institute for College Access & Success <http://college-insight.org>
- Thelin, J. R. (2004). *A history of American higher education*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Thompson, M. D., & Riggs, R. (2000). Institutional expenditure patterns and the facilitation of mission. *Community College Review*, 27(4), 1-15.
- Thornton, J. W. (1972). *The community junior college* (Vol. Third). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Thornton, P. H. (2002). The rise of the corporation in a craft industry: Conflict and conformity in institutional logics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 81-101.
- Thornton, P. H., & Ocasio, W. (1999). Institutional logics and the historical contingency of power in organizations: Executive succession in the higher education publishing industry, 1958-1990. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(3), 801-843.
- Thornton, P. H., & Ocasio, W. (2008). Institutional logics. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Suddaby & K. Sahlin (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (pp. 99-129). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional logics perspective: A new approach to culture, structure, and process*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Tillery, D., & Deegan, W. L. (1985). The evolution of two-year colleges through four generations. In D. Tillery & W. L. Deegan (Eds.), *Renewing the American Community College* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Townley, B. (1997). The institutional logic of performance appraisal. *Organization Studies*, 18(2), 261-285.
- Townsend, B. K. (2001). Blurring the lines: Transforming terminal education to transfer education. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 115(Fall), 63-72.
- Townsend, B. K. (2005). A cautionary view. In D. L. Floyd, M. L. Skolnik & K. P. Walker (Eds.), *The Community College Baccalaureate: Emerging Trends and Policy Issues* (pp. 179-190). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

- Townsend, B. K. (2007a). Community college faculty: overlooked and undervalued. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 32, 1-163.
- Townsend, B. K. (2007b). Interpreting the influence of community college attendance upon baccalaureate attainment. *Community College Review*, 35(2), 128-136.
- Townsend, B. K., & Wilson, K. B. (2006). The transfer mission: Tried and true, but troubled? *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 136(Winter), 33-42.
- Twombly, S., & Townsend, B. K. (2008). Community college faculty: What we know and need to know. *Community College Review*, 36(1), 5-24.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of U.S. higher education*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *College completion toolkit*. Washington, DC.
- University System of Ohio. (2008). *Strategic plan for higher education 2008-2017*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Board of Regents.
- Van Noy, M., & Jacobs, J. (2009). The outlook for noncredit workforce education. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, Summer, 87-94.
- VanDerLinden, K. (2002). Credit student analysis: 1999 and 2000 *Faces of the Future: A Portrait of America's Community College Students* (pp. 16). Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.
- Vanwagoner, R. J., Bowman, L. S., & Spraggs, L. D. (2005). The significant community college. *Community College Review*, 33(1), 38-50.
- Vaughan, G. B. (1983). Historical perspective: President Truman endorsed community college manifesto. *Community and Junior College Journal*, 53, 21-24.
- Vaughan, G. B., & Weisman, I. M. (1998). *The community college presidency at the millennium*.
- Voorhees, R. A., & Zhou, D. (2000). Intentions and goals at the community college: Associating student perceptions and demographics. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 24, 219-233.

- Vurro, C., Dacin, M., & Perrini, F. (2010). Institutional antecedents of partnering for social change: How institutional logics shape cross-sector social partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics, 94*, 39-53.
- Walker, K. P. (2005). History, rationale, and the community college baccalaureate association. In D. L. Floyd & M. L. Skolnik (Eds.), *The Community College Baccalaureate: Emerging Trends and Policy Issues* (pp. 9-23). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Wallin, D. L. (2007). Part-time faculty and professional development: Notes from the field. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 140*(Winter), 67-73.
- Wang, X. (2009). Baccalaureate attainment and college persistence of community college transfer students at four-year institutions. *Research in Higher Education, 50*, 570-588.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Wells, R. (2008). The effects of social and cultural capital on student persistence: Are community colleges more meritocratic? *Community College Review, 36*(1), 25-46.
- West, C., Shulock, N., & Moore, C. (2012). Measuring institutional conditions that support student success in the California community colleges. Caremento, CA: Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy.
- Wirth, R. M., & Padilla, R. (2008). College student success: A qualitative modeling approach. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 32*(9), 688-711.
- Young, R. B. (1977). The identity crisis of the community college: A dilemma in dialectic. *The Journal of Higher Education, 48*(3), 333-342.
- Zigerell, J. J. (1970). The community college in search of an identity. *The Journal of Higher Education, 41*(9), 701-712.