The Impact of Presidential Behaviors on Institutional Movement towards Greater
Abundance in Community Colleges: An Exploratory Study

by

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This publication is dedicated to the two ladies of my life, my beautiful wife Keiva and our wonderful little girl Niriel, who gave up much of their time with me and supported me in reaching this shared accomplishment and without whom I could never have succeeded.

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Chapter I

The Problem and Purpose of the Study

The Problem

Powell and Snellman (2004, p. 201) proclaim the United State's economy has evolved, as future growth will be driven primarily by knowledge creation and delivery rather than through the delivery of commodities, services, or production. A knowledge economy is categorized by "production and services based on knowledge intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technological and scientific advance as well as equally rapid obsolescence." While disagreement exists among economists, governmental agencies, and researchers over America's economic classification, numerous factors prevalent at the local, state, regional, national, and even global levels point to an economic transformation. These indicators include a changing competitive marketplace that demands increases in organizational learning, networking, and collaboration; growth in the scope, breadth, and importance of knowledge work to a level at or approaching primacy; and an increasing need for divergence regarding missions, strategies, markets served, industry boundaries, and understanding both customers and competition (Foss, 2005; Magretta, 1999). In short, organizations across all industries will need to adjust operations and strategies to ensure future success and account for the evolving demands of a knowledge-driven and global economy.

Stajkovic and Luthans (1997) explain that traditional management approaches to improving efficiency, effectiveness, and performance are ineffective when dealing with evolving environments and note that new measures, such as focusing on the development of human resources, will emerge as the key competitive advantage. The authors posit that by focusing on the development of human capital, organizations open themselves to new avenues for improving productivity. While this is not new knowledge (Luthans & Jenson, 2002), managers have experienced great difficulty in attempting to apply these principles in their organizations. Pfeffer (1998) indicated in his book *The Human Equation* that fewer than half of organizations believe human resources matter, only half of those act upon the beliefs, and half of those (1/8 of all organizations) have continued to adopt and implement work practices focused on actively developing human capital toward greater performance. Larson and Luthans (2006) postulate that the two major barriers to incorporating more positive approaches into management are the difficulty in changing managerial behaviors and the need for managers to control their environments in an effort to ensure beneficial outcomes. The authors note that maintaining control over environments is often accomplished by attempting to fix problems by "fixing" the people behind them.

In contrast to fixing problems and people, the Positive Psychology movement is premised on building natural human strengths towards the goal of achieving wellness (vitality) rather than settling for health. The principles of wellness and building on strengths have been applied to organizations through Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) methodologies, both of which focus on the linkage between personal development and organizational performance. These

literature bases are promising and have been used to help develop a strengths-based model of positive performance enhancement within community colleges known as the Community College Abundance Model (CCAM). Alfred, Shults, and Jacquette (forthcoming, 2008) developed and tested this model during a recent study and found that exceptional leveraging – known as transcendent leveraging – of tangible, intangible, and leadership resources provides a new approach to priming community colleges for enhanced organizational performance. While the study focused on applying the concept of abundance within community colleges, it did not examine catalysts for movement towards greater abundance (enhanced leveraging of the various institutional resources). With numerous studies over the years indicating that college presidents are catalysts for organizational change (Birnbaum, 1992; Nordvall, 1987; Twombly & Amey, 1991), it is hypothesized that community college presidents will either enhance or decrease the likelihood that their colleges move towards greater abundance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is not to prove that organizational performance was enhanced as a result of movement towards greater abundance, but rather to explore how executive behaviors influence a community college's movement towards greater or lesser abundance. While the original study provided support for the model, no attempt was made to explore the processes associated with movement along the abundance continuum. During the data analysis phase of the initial study, researchers found that in some colleges experiencing movement towards enhanced organizational health, presidents engaged in behaviors designed to fully leverage the institution's resources. These behaviors included approaching leadership from a strengths-based perspective,

engaging the entire institution in direction, vision, and goal setting, and focusing on their college's internal health as well as external positioning through increased attention to network development. By building on these patterns, in addition to integrating research on positive leadership practices, this study will explore the relationship between the actions of community college presidents and their institution's movement towards greater abundance.

Research Question and Propositions

Based on information gathered during the original CCAM study, as well as literature indicating that college presidents are expected to guide their colleges toward positive, pervasive, and productive change (Birnbaum, 1992; Nordvall, 1987; Twombly & Amey, 1991), the researcher proposed that presidents are among the most vital catalysts for institutional movement towards greater abundance. The question designed to address this proposition was: *What actions undertaken by community college presidents are associated with their institution's movement towards greater abundance?* To provide a response to this question, a series of propositions developed from previous findings and POS and POB leadership bases guided the development of the behavioral categories, interview protocols, and analysis of the findings. These propositions were:

1. Presidents within community colleges moving towards greater abundance consciously and consistently engage in positivity and optimism

2. Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance treat the development of human potential as an organizational priority

3. Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance consciously work to ensure congruence between the organization and the environment

4. Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance relish the opportunity to act as organizational anchor and sensemaker

Rationale Behind the Study

A knowledge economy is one characterized by rapid and continuous change wherein innovation is rewarded and complacency punished and organizations operating within this new economy are impacted by changes occurring in external environments. Postindustrial environments require new thinking, enhanced organizational innovation and creativity, and appreciation of the speed at which change comes (Cameron, 1984); and institutions operating in this environment have little choice but to re-examine their operations and ponder necessary adaptations (Gumport & Pusser, 1997; Peterson & Dill, 1997). Higher education institutions will need to be more responsive and adaptive to changing conditions for the purpose of ensuring congruence between themselves and the turbulent environments in which they operate (Alfred & Associates, 2005). Ringel (2000, p. 15) adds that colleges and universities are enterprises and "an enterprise is lost if it assumes it will be serving the same market with the same product five years from now." He also proclaims that "great change dominates the world and unless we move with change we will become its victims." Higher education institutions operate in the same environments as corporations and community colleges must continuously adapt in order to meet changing stakeholder expectations and to compete with new entrants into the postsecondary knowledge industry.

For the foreseeable future, community colleges will find themselves stretched to financial and spatial capacity as more students, both traditional and nontraditional, seek higher education opportunities. In addition to the estimated thirty million students by 2015, non-traditional enrollment will increase dramatically as workers look to higher education institutions (primarily community colleges) for skill upgrades, retraining, and

career changes (Gladieux, Hauptman, & Knapp, 1997; Martinez, 2004; Rodriguez & Ruppert, 1997). Local governments, as well as business and industry, are pushing community colleges to expand their role in delivering workforce training, serving the increasing number and percentage of poorly-prepared high school students, and educating the increasing number of foreign born and minority students (Bailey, 2002). Additionally, local communities struggling to adjust to the demands of a knowledge economy desperately need community colleges to increase partnering and network building so that opportunities for economic growth are increased (Alfred et al., forthcoming 2008). In addition to this expanded workforce development role, community colleges will experience increased pressure to deliver high quality education focused on literary and critical thinking skills and to develop specialized job, technical, and soft skills

Despite the escalating expectations of external stakeholders, however, financial pressures from economic slowdowns, competing priorities, and an unwillingness to increase public tax revenues are preventing states from increasing expenditures to higher education institutions (Zumeta, 2001). In fact, public funding of higher education "seems to be increasingly falling out of favor with both voters and governments alike" (Rizzo, 2006, p. 3). State funding allocated to higher education has decreased by over 1/3 in the last thirty years, state appropriations per student have remained stagnant (when accounting for inflation) from 1974-2004 (Ehrenberg, 2006), and institutional efforts to raise private funds has been met with deeper budget cuts (Rizzo, 2006). Additionally, demands for accountability have increased dramatically in recent years as "we seem to be witnessing the initial phases of a sharp, historically significant ramp-up in the degree of government involvement in academic matters" (Zumeta, 2001, p. 155).

Lowered levels of funding, increasing student expectations of convenience and industry relevance, and increasingly competitive environments have created more hostile and volatile markets for community colleges. In addition, the increasing number and scope of competitors (traditional and non-traditional) is emboldening those pushing for greater accountability and will inevitably increase pressure on institutions to innovate and meet emerging legislative edicts and responding to these pressure will require higher education institutions to increase organizational adaptability, flexibility, and amenability to change (Heller, 2001b). Development of institutional flexibility and adaptability, however, requires the college to continuously adjust organizational thinking, build upon existing and emerging strengths, shore up weaknesses, and increase organizational sensemaking through development of a well-understood and shared vision (Alfred & Associates, 2005; Argyris, 1993; Heydinger, 1997). Engaging in this process of organizational rethinking demands that higher education institutions forgo the traditional "find and fix" management mentality and engage, instead, in a "broaden and strengthen" (Frederickson, 2003) management approach focused on fully developing the human capital available that exists in all organizations.

Embracing this broaden and build ideology may prove difficult for community colleges, however, as psychological and organizational studies indicate that both practitioners and researchers are guided by the assumptions of the illness approach (Cameron & Lavine, 2006; Daly & Chrispeels, 2005; Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Seligman, 2002, 2003). Seligman (2002) found that more than 95% of psychological research published in the last fifty years has focused on the disease model and Luthans (2002a), while researching psychology journal articles, found nearly four hundred articles dealing

with negative emotions (fear, anger, depression, anxiety) for every *single* article focused on positive concepts such as hope and resilience. Cameron and Caza (2004) conducted a similar study within various literature bases and found similar results. They cite studies from Czapinski (1985), who discovered a 2:1 coding ratio of negative to positive and neutral psychology articles, from Mayne (1999), who uncovered eleven articles examining negative phenomena for every study focused on positive experiences, and Walsh (2000), who observed a four-fold increase in negatively biased words. Studies focused on negative and unhealthy phenomena, with health as the optimal outcome, and based upon correcting weaknesses and fixing people ignore the opportunities to build productive, thriving, and outstanding organizations composed of workers who flourish (Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Lavine, 2006; Seligman, 2002)

Competing and thriving within the evolving higher education industry will increasingly depend upon the ability to develop human resources, enable deep and lasting change within all organizational levels, and discover and grow existing organizational strengths – all potential foundations for enhanced organizational performance. In fact, human capital is more connected to organizational performance now than at any point in history due to the pervasiveness of technology and elimination of historical advantages (e.g. location, size, industry boundaries, etc.). Bill Gates famously noted that Microsoft's "most valuable resource walks out the door every night" and many researchers agree that the employees at all levels are not only crucial to organizational success, but their tacit knowledge is the modern organization's most readily available competitive advantage (Gallup Management Journal, 2007; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Pfeffer, 1995). Simply realizing that tacit knowledge exists throughout the college is not enough, however, as

organizations must assist members in developing this knowledge, create environments

that encourage knowledge sharing, and maintain systems and processes designed to apply

this newly discovered institutional resource.

POS and POB approaches provide guidance into developing and accessing tacit

knowledge and while there are philosophical, epistemological, and methodological

differences between them (Roberts, 2006), both are founded on the notion that a positive

approach to organizational development is linked to improved organizational outcomes.

Additionally, both are heavily influenced by the Positive Psychology movement of the

late 1990s, an approach stating, "goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease,

disorder, and distress" (Peterson & Seligman, 2003, p. 16). While both models represent

a theoretical shift to approaching organizational enhancement, neither focuses on the

transcendent leveraging (to be discussed later) of organizational capabilities and

resources nor do they account for the organizational dynamics specific to colleges and

universities. These dynamics include the dichotomy of an administrative and academic

culture (Becher, 1981; Etzioni, 1991; Mintzberg, 1989; Schoenfeld, 1994), existence as a

value rational rather than profit-driven organizations[1] (Dill, 1982; Miner, Crane, &

Vandenberg, 1994; Satow, 1975), and status as publicly subsidized organizations

accountable to and dependent upon taxpayers and governmental entities. Another

important dynamic, and one associated most with community colleges, is the union

culture. This culture is responsible for the creation of complex dynamics as unionized

faculty and staff are often pitted against administrators and non-unionized staff in a

typically adversarial relationship designed to protect competing interests and resource

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[1] This statement refers to the non-profit sector of higher education. Proprietary colleges typically operate
from a business model and profit is one of the primary driving forces behind their operations.

allocation. In an effort to design a strengths-based approach to organizational

performance enhancement within community colleges, Alfred et al. (forthcoming, 2008)

conducted a study to develop a new approach to enhancing organizational performance –

the Community College Abundance Model (CCAM). The CCAM is a strengths-based

approach to improving organizational health and vitality within community colleges and

is driven by the assumption that organizational potential is enhanced and realized through

intentional and effective leveraging of tangible, intangible, and leadership resources.

Influenced heavily by the health continuum as applied to organizations (Cameron, 2003),

the model is based on an understanding of health ranging from illness at the far left to

wellness (vitality) at the far right. In the middle of the continuum is a large gray area

characterized by health, a state that is absent of both illness and vitality (figure 1).

Figure 1: College Typologies along the Organizational Health Continuum
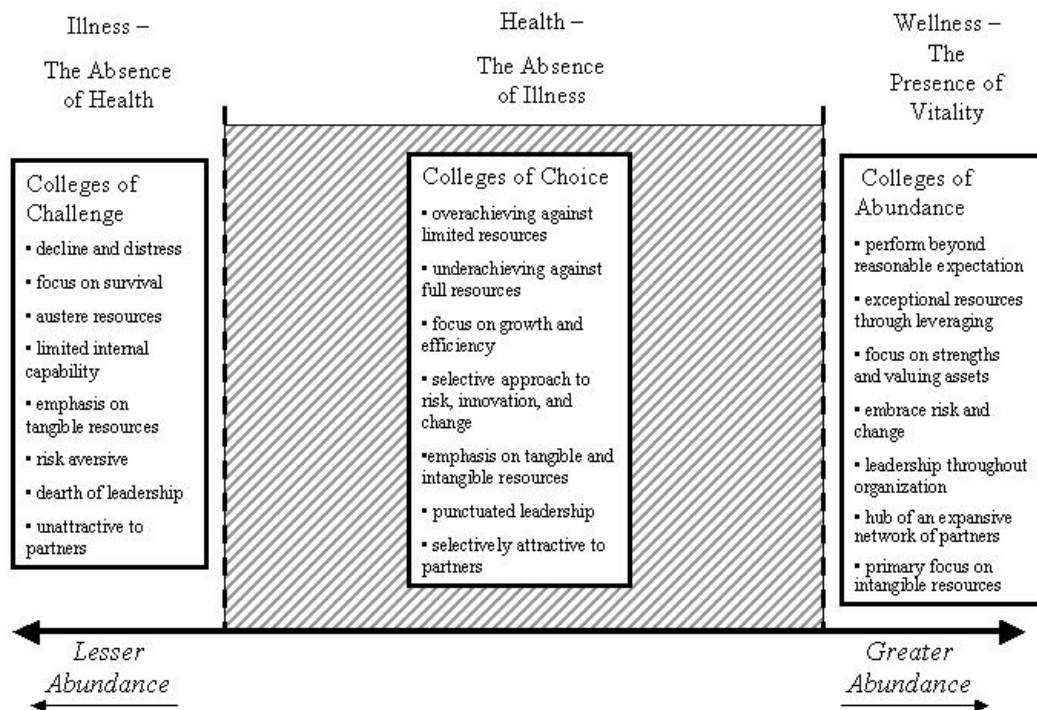
Within the CCAM, these categories are classified by terms describing the trajectory and current pathway of colleges. Colleges located within the illness region are referred to as *colleges of challenge* (due to the state of organizational distress), colleges in the health region are referred to as *colleges of choice* (due to varying levels of control over trajectory), and colleges located in the wellness region are referred to as *colleges of abundance* (due to a state of organizational vitality). This continuum is based upon movement towards greater or lesser abundance rather than a lockstep evolution towards vitality since environments are turbulent and movement along the continuum is dependent upon not only the level of institutional leveraging, but also the degree of sustained organizational effort. It differs from POS as its underlying goal is developing and leveraging available resources toward enhanced performance and from POB as it seeks to shift the values and philosophies shaping institutional climate. Additionally, this model accounts for the fact that profit is not the preeminent performance indicator within community colleges. Instead, success within public two-year colleges is defined by meeting the needs of stakeholders and delivering upon a value-driven mission. While data collected from the original abundance study is the basis for the CCAM, it did not focus on catalysts or inhibitors impacting a community college's movement towards greater abundance.

Outline of the Study

Chapter one introduces the reader to the concepts responsible for the development of the CCAM, the rationale behind its development, and the purpose of the study. Generally speaking, this study will seek to expand upon the understanding of a positive approach (guided largely by POS and POB) to organizational enhancement within

community colleges by examining the impact of presidential behaviors on the college's movement towards or away from greater abundance. Additionally, this chapter provides a brief synopsis of the questions and assumptions underlying the study and provides a roadmap to understanding what content will be included in subsequent chapters.

Chapter two provides a detailed rationale for why changing economic conditions necessitate a new approach to understanding and enhancing organizational health, elucidates the benefits of a positive approach to human and organizational functioning through examinations into Positive Psychology, POS, and POB, and a detailed explanation of the CCAM, an analysis of the type of behaviors associated with a community college's movement towards greater abundance, and an explanation of what the model is and what it is not. Especially important is the explanation of the CCAM as the concepts of transcendent leveraging and positive spiraling are discussed within the context of the community college structure. Also important is the section providing insight on what the model has been designed to accomplish as misinterpretations surrounding the model could lead to unfair and unfounded opinions of community college presidents.

Chapter three focuses on the study's methodology and explains the decision to utilize both a case study approach designed to identify abundant leadership behaviors and a questionnaire intended to ascertain information on concrete indicators of abundance. The concrete indicators were developed by analyzing the original abundance book, drawing upon the assumptions of effective leadership within the POS and POB literature bases, and engaging numerous community college presidents (not included in the study) in discussions about the abundance approach. Additionally, premises behind the

propositions and assumptions under girding the study, the rationale for utilizing a multi-case site analysis, and explanations for how trustworthiness and dependability were assured are addressed.

Chapters four through eight encompass the results sections and constitute approximately seventy percent of the study. Although numerous results sections do not follow the normal protocol for dissertation studies, the researcher felt that attempting to condense the immense amount of information gathered from the four sites and nearly sixty interviewees across numerous subcultures would rob the reader of the tremendous amount of new material uncovered during the study and dilute the contextual elements of the individual case sites. Chapters four through seven were developed by employing a three-stage coding process on interview data gathered at each institution – colleges identified in the study by the Greek letters Alpha, Gamma, Iota, and Theta. Each president, while engaging in many of the same behaviors, possessed different leadership styles, lead their institutions for differing lengths of times, and guided institutions with unique histories. In an effort to protect the institutional context and more effectively address organizational perceptions of presidential behaviors, the decision was made to analyze results at both the college and overarching study level. Chapter eight represents a cross-case results section as the leadership behavior categories transcend the individual case sites, but also include the unique behaviors and perceptions identified within the individual college chapters. This chapter is based upon the four overarching behavior categories identified in the introductory and methodology chapters, but present the unique executive behaviors as discussed by presidents, their executive team, and non-executive

staff dependent upon interpretations and perceptions of executive behavior due to limited

direct interaction.

Chapter nine is the final chapter and includes a discussion of the results, study

limitations, avenues for future research, and the conclusion. The discussion section

provides a synthesis of new information gleaned from the study and introduces the reader

to the push-pull effect of executive behaviors uncovered during the study. While not a

groundbreaking finding, it reveals the importance of follower perceptions and details

behaviors that enhance institutional buy-in and prime organizational members to provide

their tacit knowledge and best efforts. Additionally, the chapter provides insight into how

the results of the study can supplement existing leadership programs or lead to the

development of entirely new leadership preparation programs

Significance of the Study

The environments community colleges operate within have changed dramatically

and their impacts are felt throughout the higher education industry. These impacts include

a "significant ramp up" in government intervention (Zumeta, 2001, p. 155), a societal

mentality that opposes tax increases (Heller, 2001a), and an explosion of competition due

to technological advances and increasing permeability of industry and market boundaries

(Bailey, 2002, Swearingen, 2000). In addition, the very nature of the economy has

changed; due in part to a technological revolution (Friedman, 2006), and economic

growth is increasingly being driven by knowledge production and dissemination rather

than delivery of commodities or services. With greater expectations, scrutiny, and

competition, community colleges must re-examine operations, performance, the delivery

of value, and competitive advantage through new lenses.

The original abundance study and CCAM represent the first entrée into a strengths-based approach for organizational enhancement within institutions of higher education. Heavily influenced by Positive Psychology, POS, and POB, but developed specifically for community colleges, this model provides a new approach to priming community colleges for enhanced organizational performance. It approaches performance and potential as factors greatly under the control of the colleges themselves, not simply the environments in which they are located. This model does not neglect the importance of changing conditions nor does it assume a Pollyanna approach to organizational struggles; rather, it assumes that the intentional development of tangible, intangible, and leadership resources provides colleges with opportunities to realize organizational potential and deliver unique and exceptional value to stakeholders. With expanding competition, decreasing financial support, and increasingly savvy and value conscious students, it is imperative that community colleges realize their influence over protecting and growing their markets and delivering exceptional value to stakeholders.

Additionally, there is great potential for the information gathered from this study to impact both professional and leadership development. The institutions classified as abundant (before the data collection) do not have exceptional monetary resources; rather, they achieved their "Olympic level" performance (Cameron & Lavine, 2006) through transcendent leveraging – a process largely dependent upon the executive manager. This exploration into the behaviors of executive leaders associated with movement towards either greater or lesser abundance may prove useful for restructuring programs designed to prepare the next generation of leaders within community colleges. Information that can be used to guide the development of leadership programs is crucial as the number of

executives and administrators retiring from community colleges in the coming years are

predicted to reach dire levels (Shults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughan, 2007).

Chapter II

Literature Review – The Theory Behind the CCAM

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the CCAM and classification of abundant presidential behaviors guiding the study. This chapter begins with arguments that changing economic and industry conditions will force higher education institutions to consider new approaches to enhancing organizational effectiveness. Next, the researcher provides a brief examination of the Positive Psychology, POS, and POB literature responsible for the theoretical underpinnings of the CCAM. After providing a synopsis of the literature under girding the model, the chapter analyzes what the CCAM is, what are its underlying assumptions, and information from the initial abundance study. With information on the CCAM detailed, the chapter shifts into an exploration of the strengths-based literature that guided the development of the study's classification of presidential behaviors. Next, the chapter provides information on the three-stage coding process responsible for classifying more than fifty individual behaviors into four overarching abundant behavior categories and the rationale for why the behaviors were chosen. Finally, the researcher provides explicit information on what the model and study are designed to accomplish as well as a section cautioning readers and researchers against misinterpretation of the presidents, colleges, or findings.

Literature Review

Peterson and Luthans (2002), Luthans, Vogelgesang, and Lester (2006), and Luthans (2002b) paint an honest, but sobering picture about the environments that all organizations operate within. Uncertainty, a slumping economy, rampant mergers and acquisitions, constant competitive pressures, escalating technology, and terrorism fears have negatively impacted organizations and led to feelings of hopelessness across all industries and occupations. The authors also note that negativity and hopelessness are increased by standard business practices like job reengineering, layoffs, downsizing, rightsizing, furloughing, and role redesign. Luthans, Luthans, Hodgetts, and Luthans (2001) expand on these concepts by indicating the increasing pervasiveness of globalization and its cascading effects that result in scenarios where economic downturns in the Japanese, central European, Chinese, and Russian economies negatively impact American companies and interests, and vice-versa increase fear at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. Finally, negative trends within the American economy like the dot com burst, sagging earnings in technology firms, continued hardships in the auto industry, and the impact of a slumping dollar on the cost of oil, energy, and travel industries have adversely impacted companies and depending upon standard management and performance enhancement practices are not only ineffective, but actually exacerbate the feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty.

In addition to the external factors impacting the economy, a fundamental shift to the economy itself poses serious challenges to organizations. Larson and Luthans (2006) posit that although work environments have always experienced change (often the only constant), change that is both turbulent and dramatic has become the norm. Friedman (2006) explains that the nature of work has shifted from an environment characterized by

relative stability and structure to one of fluidity and boundryless operations where time and space are increasingly irrelevant. The impact of technological has been amplified over the past decade and global economies have been transformed as exceptional GNP and GDP growth in developed countries increasingly depends (with the notable exceptions of China and India) on the production of knowledge rather than products, services, and commodities.

In defining the knowledge or creation economy, Houghton and Sheehan (2000, p. 1) explain, "In an agricultural economy, land is the key resource. In an industrial economy, natural resources, such as coal and iron ore, and labour are the main resources. A knowledge economy is one in which knowledge is the key resource." Romer (1990) adds that a knowledge-based economy is characterized by knowledge accumulation and distribution as the primary catalyst for economic growth. Magretta (1999) explains that within a knowledge economy, the development and expansion of networks is a core requirement for survival, an access point to competitive advantage, and primary driver of tremendous growth. She proposes that each industry experiences these forces in unique ways, however, the "direction in which these forces drive industries is always the same: toward more dynamic, fast-paced competition and change" (vii). Underpinning this analysis on the impacts of a knowledge economy are the assertions that institutional survival and success will be premised on an organization's ability to effectively address competition, reject statusquoism, engage in continuous organizational learning processes, and work to deconstruct of markets and industry boundaries.

Movement from an industrial or service-based economy to one influenced by knowledge creation and dissemination has tremendous ramifications for business

environments and postindustrial environments (Gumport & Pusser, 1997; Peterson &

Dill, 1997) including the increased need for creativity, innovation, risk-taking,

environmental analysis, networking, and pervasive strategizing (Bedeian & Armenakis,

1998). The authors also indicate that of all organizations, colleges and universities are

among the "least partially protected from immediate market conditions." Additionally,

colleges and universities are confronted with the reality that increasing responsiveness

and adaptability, delivering exceptional value to stakeholders, and working across

traditional boundaries and market understandings are quickly becoming tactics for

competition rather than avenues for sustainable competitive advantage (Alfred &

Associates, 2005; Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007; Alfred et al., forthcoming 2008). Only

by anticipating the impact of changing conditions, modifying operations and direction,

and effectively competing in more hostile and dynamic environments will community

colleges effectively meet the ever-evolving needs of the multiple stakeholder groups.

Alfred et al. (2007) identified five major environmental concerns that

disproportionately impact community colleges including: changing markets,

globalization, advancing technology, performance and accountability, and networks. Two

major changes identified by the authors in regards to changing markets are the

continuously evolving needs and expectations of stakeholders and the pervasiveness of

competition. With up to five generations of students on their campuses, community

colleges are forced to increase the use of technology, expand conceptualizations of what

constitutes a program, course, and degree, and ensure that offerings are relevant and meet

the demands of its constituents. Additionally, competition can no longer be interpreted as

brick and mortar facilities with traditional operations and regional accreditation. Students

are taking courses from proprietary distance education providers, MIT and other research universities, and non-traditional, online content providers. Globalization, in the current environment, entails more than increasing foreign language offerings, providing study abroad programs, crafting cultural exchanges, and globalizing the curriculum. Colleges will be forced to consider how foreign investment in American companies, expansion of local companies into international markets, and global issues such as environmentalism and sustainability will impact the curriculum, programmatic offerings, definition and identification of competitors, and development of networks. Advancing technology involves more than increasing online offerings and services, ensuring faculty training in technology, and expanding multimedia in the classroom. Rather, truly advancing technology within the organization requires that colleges moves in sync with and embraces technological advances by expanding course content to PDA, MP3, and voice media, substantially increasing capacity through multiple distance education opportunities, and expanding networks to include non-traditional partners. Performance and accountability measures, often viewed with disdain by administrators, faculty, and institutional researchers, will also need to be pushed as an organizational priority and tactic for continuous learning and development. With increasing attention at the federal level on educational outcomes, decreasing public financial support, and the persistence of policymakers to demand inappropriate accountability measures from community colleges, these institutions must take a proactive stance in addressing the issue of performance and accountability. Additionally, networking will replace traditional understandings of partnering as colleges will benefit greatly from initiating the development of consortia and relationships that span traditional boundaries and involve

new definitions of their markets, business, and industry. Truly advanced institutions will establish themselves as network incubators engaged in creating new, innovative, and non-traditional networks charged with improving the lives and well-being of their constituents and health of their service areas.

Changing economic dynamics have also expanded the role of higher education in advancing the growth and the survival of all industries. Community colleges have historically been viewed as economic engines responsible for attracting emerging industries and developing the requisite workforce. Maintaining America's status as a "Superpower" will require higher education institutions to increase lifelong education, workforce development, and strategic alliance building designed to increase the accumulation and transfer of knowledge (Tornatzky, Waugaman, & Gray, 2002). As noted earlier, however, increasing stakeholder expectations are not being met with increasing resources or autonomy (Ehrenberg, 2006; Heller, 2001a; Rizzo, 2006; Zumeta, 2001), a situation creating a gap between expectations and resources. To survive, let alone thrive within the ever-changing postsecondary knowledge industry, colleges and universities must be amenable to change and willing/able to continuously shift organizational thinking and direction (Alfred & Associates, 2005; Argyris, 1993; Heydinger, 1997). Adjusting the trajectory of higher education institutions, however, is difficult as these institutions are rarely built to adapt quickly, consist of multiple organizational subcultures, and often resist being classified as businesses. Moving towards future survival and thriving, however, will require community colleges to appreciate and work towards the development of human potential and embrace the evolutionary move into learning colleges.

As stated earlier, researchers found traditional approaches to improving performance (focusing primarily on problems, weaknesses, and gaps) inadequate for effectively competing within a knowledge economy based on the theory that organizations will reach superior performance only by focusing on the development and enhancement of workers (Luthans & Jenson, 2002; Pfeffer, 1998; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997). Truly embracing the development of human capital requires colleges to reject traditional command and control management practices, practices identified as more common to community college presidents (Bensimon, 1989; Petrides, 2003) and compared to treating employees as mere "machines" used to achieve organizational outcomes (Larson & Luthans, 2006, pg. 45). Two organizational approaches, Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and Positive Organizational Behavior (POB), are premised on utilizing a strengths-based and person-centered approach to management. POS and POB are rooted in the Positive Psychology movement responsible for promoting wellness (superior health) as the ultimate human condition. These approaches have applied the theory of increasing human wellness to organizations through the assertion that enhanced organizational performance is primarily influenced by the development of human capital. The CCAM, an organizational performance model specific to community colleges, builds upon the contributions of POS and POB, but also accounts for the unique nature of community colleges. To fully explain the CCAM, however, one must have some understanding of the assumptions inherent within the Positive Psychology, POS, and POB literature bases.

Positive Psychology

Seligman (2002) states that the focus of psychology in the last fifty years has been on the illness/disease model, and more specifically in assisting individuals in moving from illness to health. Designed to focus on positive traits that include, but are not limited to optimism, hope, virtuousness, and prudence (Nansook & Peterson, 2003), Positive Psychology emphasizes the potential for exceptional mental and physical wellness and examines the "well-springs, processes, and mechanisms that lead to desirable outcomes" (Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006, p. 8). Positive Psychology also stresses that exceptional wellness is available to every individual and constitutes the "scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues" (Sheldon & King, 2001, p. 216). Exceptional wellness (or vitality) is the optimal state of health achievable by identifying exceptional behaviors responsible for pushing individuals beyond health – a condition typified by the absence of illness (Roberts, 2006). Keyes and Lopez (2002, p. 55) add that Positive Psychology "recognizes that health is not merely the absence of illness symptoms, but also the presence of symptoms of well-being."

Among Positive Psychology's core philosophies is the assertion that developing and nurturing strengths not only prevents illness, but moves people to a state typified by life fulfillment and exceptional mental health (Seligman, 2003). Again, Positive Psychology is premised on the principle that psychological strengths are present, even if dormant, in all persons and when discovered and developed, the individual experiences tremendous healthful benefits. Interestingly, some of the research in this field indicates that the discovery and development of strengths requires a catalyst, often a situation when a person is under tremendous stress or undergoing a crisis (Ryff & Singer, 2003). Engaging in the exploration of the right side of the psychological health continuum

(vitality or superior health) instead of the left side (illness) marks a philosophical shift in psychological and organizational studies and opens up new areas of understanding and research into organizational vitality. While Positive Psychology focuses on human health, POS and POB apply the principles of wellness to organizations. Both POS and POB assert that organizational vitality is achievable only when employees are effectively developed and note that human capital is the most crucial institutional resource, a premise supported by Rousseau and Ling (2007). The authors explain that the development of the human element, especially behaviors developing positive organizational relationships, is crucial as building up this valuable organizational resource is a catalyst for push greater productivity and effectiveness.

Positive Organizational Scholarship

POS signifies a new organizational approach to developing human potential and is defined as "a new movement in organizational science that focuses on the dynamics leading to exceptional individual and organizational performance such as developing human strength, producing resilience and restoration, and fostering vitality" (Cameron & Caza, 2004, p. 731). The primary goal is assisting individuals, and thereby organizations, in reaching vitality and optimal functioning by focusing on the development of positive traits. Quinn (2003) explains that optimal functioning, labeled as flow, is an important construct because if provides insight into the non-quantifiable activities that impact organizational performance and functioning. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2003, pp. 88-89) define flow as a human state of "intense and focused concentration on the here and now" that enables an individual to view an "activity as rewarding in and of itself, regardless of the outcome." Flow is a natural result of absorption, that is, an intense

intrinsic motivation to accomplish goals, overcome challenges, and stretch existing skills to meet emerging demands (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Absorption is a precursor to optimal individual and organizational functioning (vitality) because of the increased level of engagement in activities and commitment to tasks, relationships, and organization mission.

POS includes terms like positive spirals, positive deviance, and virtuousness, all of which represent ideal outcomes within organizations. This approach is directly connected to Positive Psychology through its focus on enabling flourishing at the individual level, a situation leading to organizational flourishing through positive spiraling (Cameron, 2003). While POS and POB both examine the linkages between human development and organizational improvement, POS approaches human capital development as crucial for the sake of the organizational members, while POB focuses on the methods, tactics, and approaches that enable an organization to realize enhanced performance through human development.

Positive Organizational Behavior

With an emphasis on organizational performance enhancement through human capital development, POB is "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (Luthans, 2002b, p.59). POB studies are guided by criteria distinguishing these works from other positively oriented theories (including POS and non-academic "self-help" style literature). Luthans, Avolio, Owalumbwa, and Li (2005) explain that studies utilizing a POB approach must be,

- Positive, strength-based, and relatively unique to the organizational behavior field
- Theory and research based
- Researched and understood using valid measures
- Guided by state-like concepts open to development and performance management

The first criterion, positivity and a strengths-based approach, reflects its Positive Psychology influence and is premised on a decision to emphasize what is right about people instead of working to "fix" weaknesses (Luthans, 2001; Luthans 2002c). Authors within this field explain that increasingly dynamic environments require a strengths-based approach to management as it provides an avenue for competitive advantage over organizations operating under traditional management assumptions (Gallup Management Journal, 2007; Pfeffer, 1995; Wooten & Crane, 2004). Luthans et al. (2005) indicate that the theory and research base criterion is essential to POB as it differentiates the results of these studies from management books like *Who Moved my Cheese*, and the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Youssef and Luthans (2007) note that meeting the criteria of valid measures is essential in today's workplace since organizations have limited resources and these are rarely secured without demonstration of measurable and sustainable positive outcomes (increasing profitability, enhanced productivity, etc.). Luthans et al. (2001) posit that POB is an ideal approach to enhancing organizational performance since concepts like optimism, hope, and resilience can be developed at the individual level and come to describe the organization as well. This open to development requirement, according to POB researches, is the approach's greatest contribution because these studies effectively measure the impact of human development on an organization's bottom line (Luthans, 200b). Luthans and Youssef (2007) add that the state-like resources and capacities are malleable and thus more open to change and development than trait-like personality and

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self-evaluation constructs. This criterion is based on the differentiation between traits and

states and is, perhaps, the most controversial aspect as this differentiation can be viewed

as an arbitrary distinction (Allen & Potkay, 1981; 1983; Zuckerman, 1983, as cited in

Luthans, 2001).

The Community College Abundance Model

“An abundance approach refers to a positive emphasis, or an emphasis on

achieving the best of the human condition, striving for positive deviance, and working to

fulfill the highest potential of organizations and individuals. It focuses on thriving

outcomes and on virtuousness, and it stands in contrast to a problem-solving or deficit

approach to change” (Cameron, Lavine, Roberson, & Tuor, 2006, p. 11). To illustrate the

difference between abundance and illness, Cameron (2003) provides a continuum

showing the expectations of each (figure 2). Some of the important organizational

evolutions include movement from ineffectiveness to excellence, inefficiency to

Figure 2: Positive Deviance Continuum

	Illness	Health	Wellness
Physiological	Illness	Health	Wellness
Psychological	Illness	Health	Flow

| | Negative Deviance | Normal | Positive Deviance |

Organizational:

	Negative Deviance	Normal	Positive Deviance
Effectiveness	Ineffective	Effective	Excellence
Efficiency	Inefficient	Efficient	Extraordinary
Quality	Error-prone	Reliable	Flawless
Ethics	Unethical	Ethical	Benevolence
Relationships	Harmful	Helpful	Honoring
Adaptation	Threat-rigidity	Coping	Flourishing
Revenues	Losses	Profits	Generosity

| *Orientation:* | **Problem solving** | | **Virtuousness** |

Graphic from Cameron, 2003, p. 53

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extraordinary efficiency, threat rigidity to flourishing (exceptional adaptability) and harmful to honoring relationships. Cooperrider and Sekerka (2003) add that an abundance approach (in opposition to one focused on health) provides organizations with the ability to approach organizational change as opportunities to optimize functioning instead of simply fixing problems (reaching health). Optimizing functioning involves the improvement of members' lives through committing to meet the individual sensemaking and development needs and improving organizational impact by delivering exceptional value to the multitude of stakeholders. The authors note that this degree of commitment is prevalent in organizations guided by climates of continuous learning where individuals embrace change and seek to continuously move the organization forward. Continuously adapting is a major feature of the abundance approach and utilizing such an approach requires colleges to develop and maintain an internally driven culture. This internally focused culture is driven by the philosophy that adapting to changing environmental conditions and meeting emerging stakeholder needs is largely under the control of the college, not environmental conditions and external constituents.

While the majority of research on abundance and vitality deals with individuals, ample evidence suggests these concepts are applicable at the organizational level. Frederickson (2003) has developed a broaden and build theory, a theory indicating that positive emotions broaden people's modes of thinking and action and, over time, builds enduring personal and social resources. These resources are then made available to the organization, a situation resulting in increased (even optimal) organizational functioning. The rationale behind this theory is that positive emotions reverberates throughout the organization and across interpersonal transactions and lead to positive spiraling where

these emotions fuel a search for optimal functioning and move towards vitality (an exceptionally high level of thriving). This theory is supported by research indicating that positive emotions (relative to neutral states) produce greater flexibility, creativity, integrative behaviors, efficiency, and resiliency. The central finding is that individual and organizational health is inexorable linked and increasing positivity in one leads to increased positivity in the other because an organization driven by positive emotions contains a healthy climate that can lead to further development of positive emotions at the individual level.

The community college abundance model (CCAM) builds upon the strengths of the Positive Psychology, POS, and POB approaches and contributes a unique contribution (Luthans, 2001) within the realm of organizational studies by its focus on the transcendent leveraging of tangible, intangible, and leadership resources. Developed with guidance from the health continuum (Cameron, 2003) and appreciation for the community college context, the CCAM explores the concept of physiological health as it applies to community colleges. The model applies the concept of physiological health to college physiology and assumes that the majority of community colleges are working to maintain a state of health (colleges of choice). This is accomplished by avoiding the crises and disasters that push organizations into a debilitating state of illness (colleges of challenge), but colleges seeking to maintain health fail to reach for the exceptional functioning (colleges of abundance) available through transcendent leveraging. While influenced by the health continuum and the focus on wellness or abundant health, the terminology within the CCAM is specific to colleges. For example, community colleges identified as under-performing, under-leveraged, underfunded, and in severe decline

(illness) are labeled as colleges of challenge. The rationale is that institutions within this classification are challenged to meet basic college functions since these colleges, like people who are ill, are in a desperate state where even the most basic operations are impaired (i.e. providing financial aid, ensuring programmatic offerings, delivering on institutional mission). Additionally, colleges of challenge, like people in a state of illness, cannot remain as such for long periods of time without substantial and potentially irreversible consequences. Colleges of challenge are difficult to study because there are only two trajectories; either the institution moves towards greater abundance and reaches the classification of choice, or it closes.

Community colleges meeting expectations in regards to performance, funding, and leveraging are identified as healthy since they are neither excelling nor in distress. These institutions are located within the health region and classified as colleges of choice since they maintain some degree of control over their trajectory and are able to accomplish basic functions with little difficulty. Despite the control over its trajectory, however, even the most secure community college can be pushed toward or into challenge as a result of unethical leadership, widespread corruption, a series of bad decisions, or exceptionally poor planning. The opposite is also true as exceptional executive management, widespread leadership, and aggressive, strategic, and focused planning increase a college's ability to move towards greater abundance and classification as abundant (vitality or wellness). Colleges of choice resemble healthy people who content with the fact that they are not "sick." While the blood pressure may be high, the individual may be carrying a few extra pounds, or the diet is high on meat and low on vegetables, there is no impending health crisis. Colleges of choice, similarly,

have noticeable minor issues, but there are no impending emergencies responsible for creating a sense of urgency. Health, like choice, is the only region occupied by institutions comfortable with maintaining the status quo. Only a series of exceptionally bad choices or uncontrollable situations force these colleges into illness and only exertion of continuous, exceptional energy towards fully leveraging available resources allows an institution to reach and sustain abundance (vitality). Since health is an acceptable organizational goal, few colleges have the inclination or push from executive leadership to exert the time and energy necessary to reach abundance, especially when basic stakeholder needs are met. Only colleges moving towards greater abundance through the consistent and exceptional leveraging of resources that allows for provision of unique value and effective neutralization of environmental challenges can reach wellness.

Only those community colleges able to transcendently leverage available resources and sustain organization-wide efforts towards continuous improvement can reach the classification of organizational wellness, a category identified as abundance with the CCAM. The definition of abundance, as operationalized within the community college abundance model, is:

> Beyond having sustentative financial resources, abundance is an organizational classification marked by exceptional performance and vitality reached only through intentional and transcendent leveraging of tangible (i.e. staff, money, technology, facilities), intangible (i.e. human capabilities, culture, reputation, organizational architecture), and leadership (i.e. inclusive leadership practices) resources. This level of superior organizational health is representative only of community colleges primed to realize their organizational potential through the expansion of available resources as a result of strategic and boundary-spanning behaviors and excelling in delivery of mission regardless of the impact from external pressures such as increasing competition, turbulent industry conditions, and dynamic environmental shifts represented by a shift from a service or postindustrial to a knowledge economy.

Characteristically, the term abundance, in the traditional organizational sense, refers to an organization with substantial financial resources (quantity), however, within the CCAM, there are two substantial differences. First, abundance is an organizational categorization, not a measure of financial health. The term abundance comes from the POS literature and its focus on vitality and is characterized by the organizational ability to realize the college's potential for exceptional performance – the potential that often lies dormant and is available to some degree in almost all organizations. Reaching this classification requires more than *possessing* exceptional resources; rather, it requires effective development and deployment of the resources being *utilized* and to the point were the impact is significantly *amplified.* Generally speaking, colleges with substantial resources are often comfortable with college direction and with no signs of illness; there is little impetus to exert the time and energy necessary to reach abundance. Community colleges, like many professional bureaucracies and value rational organizations, possess substantial numbers of long-tenured staff, conservative cultures, and subculture conflict (especially between the professional and administrative subcultures) – all of which are factors associated with organizational resistance to change. Secondly, abundance, within the CCAM, is premised on a community college's ability to effectively leverage (transcendently leverage) all its institutional resources. While a college may achieve transcendent leveraging in regards to financial resources (a tangible resource), there is no guarantee that realization of organizational potential will occur. Instead of significantly amplifying the effects of bountiful finances, the college may simply be strategically and efficiently utilizing its tangible resources. A college of abundance is one that successfully amplifies the impact of its tangible (i.e. staff, money, technology, facilities), intangible

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(i.e. human capabilities, culture, reputation, organizational architecture), and leadership (i.e. inclusive leadership practices) resources through transcendent leveraging.

While differentiating between colleges of challenge and colleges of choice is simple based upon common understandings of the illness methodology, differentiating between colleges of choice and abundance requires one to apply principles of the wellness methodology as applied to community colleges. For example, having talented, capable, and dedicated organizational members within all subcultures and seeking to develop their potential is important (and a laudable goal), but organizational potential can only be reached if the human capital within an organization is fully leveraged. Unless the college actively encourages individuals to take leadership positions outside of their units, divisions, or workgroups through opportunities for ownership in the college's direction-setting and decision-making processes, abundance remains unattainable.

Leveraging is a well-understood business tactic and is commonly found in both academic and non-academic business literature, however, it is rarely found within high education literature. Despite its widespread use, or perhaps because of it, finding operational definitions within the business literature proved difficult. In a non-academic publication, Checketts (2006) provides an explanation of the term by deconstructing it and looking at its historical roots. The author discusses the functionality of the lever in amplifying the potential to do greater amounts of work and quotes Archimedes to present its theoretical potential:

> Mathematicians and physicists know well enough the principle of the lever and the fulcrum. Take this orb, place it here, and put the small wedge or fulcrum somewhere near it. Then, with this lever, lift it so gently. The closer the fulcrum to the lifter, the shorter his effective lever will be and the less power he will posses. Move the fulcrum farther, then farther beyond him to extend his leverage and his power will be magnified again

and again. Give me a lever long enough and a place to stand, and I could

lift the world. I could lift the world (p. 21).

Pate (2004, p. 5), in another non-academic text, provides a similar viewpoint on leverage

stating it is "a principle whose application allows magnification, without practical limit,

of the output realized from a given amount of input" – a proposition premised upon the

notion that the impact of leveraging is only limited by one's imagination He also posits

that as a tool, it must be used responsibly or the damage *will* outweigh the benefits.

Providing a comparison between leveraging and simply utilizing available resources, Pate

(p. 8) explains, "When you implement leverage, you increase the amount of effective

output you realize with the given resource, with little or no increase in the amount of time

required to do so." In other words, it is a self-perpetuating cycle that builds upon itself

and allows, over time, for the creation of "resource amplification" (p. 9).

While useful at the individual level, these definitions and approaches have been

reconceptualized to apply to community colleges and to transcend its characterization as

just a *tactic*. Effective leveraging is a central assumption under girding the CCAM and

when viewed through an abundance lens, the concept is transformed from a business

principle into an organizational mindset better described as *transcendent leveraging*.

Transcendent leveraging refers to an organization's engagement in leveraging to such a

degree that resources are amplified to a *previously unattainable level* through the

identification of the appropriate levers and the presence of *organizational hope,*

optimism, and resilience (Luthans, 2001). Within the POS literature, Cameron, Bright,

and Caza (2004) indicate that transcendence deals with the personal behaviors that enable

an organization to reach unanticipated and previously unattainable levels of performance.

Bateman and Porath (2003, p. 137) add that transcendent behavior "looks to what could

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be, not just what is, finds opportunities where others see problems, and overrides the perceived constraints to exceptional performance." The also explain that behavior is "transcendent when it overrides environmental contingencies or apparent personal limits and creates extraordinary change in the person or in the environment" (p. 123). Although the term transcendence is specific to the POS literature, Luthans, Youseff, and Avolio (2007) provide a similar perspective on achieving more than what appears to be rational and logical. Psychological capital, or PsyCap, is premised on an individual's "positive psychological state of development" (p.3) and is understood as a combination of efficacy (having the confidence to put the effort necessary to meet challenging tasks), optimism (possessing a positive attitude toward succeeding now and in the future), hope (persevering through difficult times and changing directions as necessary) and resiliency (encompassing the ability to bounce back when encountering obstacles and setbacks). The concept of transcendence is best understood as an ability to see beyond current opportunities and challenges, take control of situations while limiting the power of external pressures, and deploy the energy necessary to *bounce forward* from obstacles and reach towards greater performance. When applied to the concept of leverage, leveraging moves from a balanced, focused, and practical approach to amplifying the impact of resources to an aggressive, pervasive, and hopeful approach to amplifying resources beyond reasonable levels; a concept at the heart of the CCAM. This brand of leveraging focuses on the unreasonable, illogical, and irrational because it reflects internal drive and is not bounded by external pressures, changing conditions, and unattractive markets. At its core, transcendent leveraging is about the continuous amplification of current and discovery of new resources that allow for delivering

exceptionally high standards developed by internal stakeholders – an outcome achievable only when the organization is driven by focused, shared, and continuous individual efforts towards a common and well-understood vision.

With community colleges, there are three types of levers that must be transcendently leveraged in order to achieve greater abundance. Tangible resources, again, refer to the quantifiable resources available to colleges and perhaps the best understood of these are the college's finances. Discerning the exact percentage of funding provided by different sources nationally is impossible, however, indications are that public funding has been decreased across the country as a result of changing economic conditions, competing priorities, and an emerging anti-tax. Community colleges have responded by increasing the number of students served, raising tuition, decreasing services and opportunities for professional development, and have even eliminated sections, programs, staff, administrators, and faculty in an effort to remain financially exigent. Leveraging financial resources involves engaging in tactics such as strategic budgeting, more effectively utilizing existing resources, partnering, and creating cost-sharing consortia. While these are useful tactics, transcendent leveraging of finances is premised on *growing* available resources despite hostile conditions to a level where students are not priced out, the college is able to maintain a reasonable full-time to part-time faculty ratio, and new programs, facilities, and technology enhancements are added as a result of having the available resources.

As noted earlier, human capital (an intangible resource) is the most crucial asset within community colleges and developing the skills, talents, and knowledge of organizational members increases institutional capabilities and provides access to tacit

knowledge – something that individuals must offer and organizations cannot simply demand. Leveraging this asset means fully developing the potential of organizational members through professional development and increased opportunities to use their newfound abilities in compelling and meaningful ways. Transcendent leveraging, for this resource, reflects the ability to create an atmosphere where individuals grow as workers *and* global citizens seeking to improve the lives and plight of others (increased civility, citizenship, and ethics), non-monetary rewards (fulfillment and appreciation) are as compelling as monetary rewards, and people are truly empowered and respond by eagerly providing their best energies and tacit knowledge for the advancement of an organization they hold ownership in.

Finally, community colleges must focus on the lever of leadership and only when leadership is divorced from management can leverage of this resource occur. Research on leadership (Kezar, 2001; Manz, 1992; Ryan, 2006; Spillane, 2006) indicates that simply increasing responsibilities and pushing organizational changes onto others without consensus does not lead to dispersed leadership – the core principle behind the ability to transcendently leverage a college's leadership resources. Leadership, in reality, is as much about those who *choose* to follow as those *chosen* to lead and leadership is not the same as management, although managers arguable should be leaders. Within an organizational context, however, individuals in charge of processes, people with long-tenure, those who show compassion, individuals able to provide sensemaking, and even people who are charismatic can be looked upon as leaders. Individuals meeting these criteria are located throughout the college and may or may not hold managerial titles or responsibilities. Leveraging this resource requires community colleges to create a climate

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where all opinions (even unpopular ones) are valued, direction-setting is a process that is both transparent and open, and individuals perceive that they hold ownership at the organizational level – not simply within their work groups, departments, or subcultures. Transcendent leveraging, in regards to this resource, requires the development of an environment where *all individuals* can be questioned regardless of hierarchical level and titles become largely irrelevant within direction-setting and visioning processes, organizational member located throughout the college take responsibility for the direction of the organization, and the majority of individuals in each subculture view the organization as their primary constituency.

In exploring the appropriateness and applicability of the community college abundance model (Alfred et al., forthcoming 2008), the authors discovered a series of five categories present within colleges located in all three categories of organizational health (illness, health, and wellness). The key to classifying the colleges was not simply to identify whether the variables and attributes were present, but also to identify the degree to which leveraging occurred. For example, the level of distress in colleges of challenge resulted in the removal of power from all individuals outside of the executive teams while colleges embedded within choice had circumstances allowing for empowerment of individuals primarily at the workgroup and subculture levels. While empowerment was present, leadership was not transcendently leveraged (isolated in specific levels) and therefore empowerment occurred only within certain levels while the majority of individuals and groups were prevented from gaining any real sense of power, control, or ownership over institutional operations. In examining colleges classified as abundant, individuals throughout the college were prepared for and expected to take

ownership of organizational direction through involvement in visioning, innovation, and strategic processes (shared direction-setting), not just in basic decision-making meetings (shared governance). Additionally, individuals outside the executive teams were empowered to lead groups, challenge decisions, and work on new initiatives without being stifled by vice-presidents playing the role of gatekeepers. Some caveats of the study include:

- This is an emergent study and there are no definitive measures indicating where a given college would "rate" in regards to organizational health
- No college was found to be completely deficient or exceptional across all five selective codes, however, colleges tended to cluster around limited leveraging, traditional leveraging, or transcendent leveraging
- This was a small purposeful study with colleges believed to fit into one of the categories

Despite these caveats, a great deal was learned that supported the concept of a community college abundance model. First, community colleges located within the abundant region of the continuum were focused on providing exceptional value to stakeholders and were able to deliver on this vision by valuing and developing college staff. Secondly, colleges in the abundant region were dedicated to building up and utilizing leaders, official and recognized, throughout the organization. Examples included the involvement of classified staff in strategic planning meetings, encouraging participation of part-time faculty in college visioning, faculty senate proceedings, and union operations, and ensuring that vice-presidents were not given the authority to act as gatekeepers. Finally, these institutions were able to transcendently leverage existing and find new resources that allowed the college to thrive regardless of difficult external conditions. In fact, one of the colleges was located in a state among the most conservative and loathe to adequately fund higher education and was able to grow its programs,

faculty, and articulation agreements, increase inner city enrollment by 600%, and establish itself as a network hub and incubator in an advanced technology industry. The college was able to accomplish these feats despite only obtaining 25% of its operating revenue from local or state governments (as opposed to nearly 50% less than a decade ago) – accomplishments that are quite illogical, unreasonable, and exceptional. In short, transcendent leveraging of tangible, intangible, and leadership resources, resources available to some degree in all institutions even if lying dormant (Ryff & Singer, 2003), was the catalyst for these community colleges' journey towards greater abundance and organizational vitality.

In the midst of analyzing the data for the study, the researchers noticed that executive leaders in community colleges moving toward greater abundance were engaging in similar actions. In interviewing the presidents of the colleges classified as abundant, all but one had successfully moved their institutions forward, largely in the face of disruptive change and hostile environments. Additionally, they possessed different leadership styles and personalities; however, all were passionate about establishing a shared vision of the future and engaging the entire college in taking ownership of the college and its direction. While the institutions were located in different regions, had different financial struggles and strategies, and different governing structures, all had the common denominator of a president committed to exceeding existing measures of success, raising expectations of organizational potential and impact, and developing an organizational drive that defied external pressures

The purpose of that study was to examine the central premise behind the CCAM; that fully (now identified as transcendent) leveraging tangible, intangible, and leadership

resources would allow for a community college to move towards greater abundance. In short, the study and subsequent publication focused on *the what* of the abundance model, not *the how*. Based upon results from the study and the researcher's knowledge of leadership theory and practice, the assumption that the executive leader, in this case the president, is largely is responsible for the "how" of the move towards abundance is both sound and logical. The purpose of this dissertation is two-fold: to build upon the knowledge gained in that study about the concept of abundance and what it means for community colleges and to examine the behaviors of the presidents within colleges located within different regions of the abundance continuum to better understand why some colleges move towards greater abundance and others do not.

Organizational Abundance and Leadership

"Organizational leaders have three choices in this new environment [the knowledge economy]: (1) give up and give in; (2) struggle to survive; or (3) rise to the occasion" (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 18). Achieving the classification of abundance is the organizational equivalent of Olympic-level wellness (Cameron & Lavine, 2006) and requires optimal functioning (flourishing) throughout the organization; so presidents of abundant colleges have been able to assist their institutions, as the organizational equivalent of a trainer and nutritionist, in rising to the occasion by providing guidance, hope, and a vision of what is possible. Leadership is an amorphous concept based on a "particular type of human functioning" and "complex cognitive and behavioral" tasks occurring within a "dynamic, social context" and "involv[ing] social influence processes to organize, direct, and motivate the actions of others" (McCormick, 2001, pp. 24, 26). The author proposes that the presence of self-efficacy, as well as high level cognitive

functioning within leaders, is a prerequisite to followership and absence of these characteristics leads individuals to after those who do possess these characteristics. Compelling a group, organization, movement, or society towards enhanced and optimal functioning, however, requires a distinctive brand of leadership. Cameron (2003) notes that the great leaders of the 20th century were not typical leaders, but rather individuals who operated in a virtuous manner, exceeded the expectations of ethical behavior, and embraced their role as sensemakers. While the subjective nature of the term greatness leaves this categorization open for debate, it is apparent that leaders able to gain extensive followership, move followers towards enhanced personal performance, and push organizational units towards optimal functioning (thereby creating organizational flourishing or abundance) hold a non-traditional view of leadership. In studying the transformation of a nuclear power facility, Cameron and Lavine (2006) provide a contrasting view of traditional and abundant leadership practices noting that traditional practices have their place and traditional management is essential to effective and efficient operations. However, the authors also explain that the inclusion of abundant principles act as a tipping point towards organizational vitality and opportunities for enhanced performance. Some of the abundant principles identified include a focus on abundance gaps (rather than weaknesses), comfort with paradox, contradiction, revolution, and positive deviance, high levels of integrity, engagement in actions benefiting people, knowledge sharing, and openness/transparency throughout the organization. The authors indicate that without these abundant leadership behaviors, organizations cannot achieve exceptional functioning and the corresponding state of vitality.

Cameron and Lavine (2006) expound on the concept of abundant leadership by asserting that organizations achieving exceptional performance and reaching vitality have not done so through a single, heroic leader. The authors explain that leadership is embodied in multiple sources and only when transformation is coordinated through various can transformative change occur. Eldman and Khademian (2003) echo the sentiment that abundant leadership is inclusive and pervasive and that leaders need to be raised up throughout an organization since executive leaders who share power and actually empower organizational members create substantial energy that often becomes a significant and substantial competitive advantage. Empowering individuals (i.e. distributed or inclusive leadership) is different, however, than creating self-managing teams – the more common form of "empowerment" found in organizations. Manz (1992) found that self-management is largely a façade designed to allow individuals to feel as though they have power and ownership when, in reality, authority has not been distributed. These "self-managed" teams are influenced by external sources and fall somewhere in the middle of a continuum with external control at one extreme and self-control on the other. This approach to "shared-influence and empowerment" is based largely on external rewards, typically designed by executive management, and has the sole emphasis of improving organizational performance. In contrast, *self-leadership* is part of an organizational evolution towards internal motivation that allows for professional and personal development and involves organizational members in institutional efforts to stretch the boundaries and traditional understandings of employee self-influence. Additionally, self-leadership (e.g. pervasive leadership, distributed leadership, shared leadership, etc.) results in decreased delineation between managers and

workers as followers attain greater ownership over institutional processes and direction of

the organization is placed largely in the hands of those responsible for the actual

improvement gains and who deal with the daily struggles of the organization. Also, self-

leadership is the epitome of the transcendent leveraging of leadership resources necessary

for an institutional move towards abundance.

POB, POS, and Leadership Behaviors

Behavior is a term with many meanings and understandings. Princeton's Wordnet

(2006) indicates that behavior is "a) a manner of acting or controlling yourself, b) the

action or reaction of something under specified circumstances, c) the behavior of small

particles that can be studied in experiments, and d) the way a person behaves toward

other people." Wikipedia (n.d.) indicates that behavior consists of "the actions or

reactions of an object or organism, usually in relation to the environment. Behavior can

be conscious or unconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary."

Dictonary.Com (2006) further explains that behavior is "a) an observable activity, b) the

aggregate of response to given internal or external stimuli, c) can refer to a pattern of

behaviors, and d) the action or reaction of any material under a given situation." While

these definitions differ slightly and include assumptions specific to psychology,

chemistry, and sociology, some basic characteristics can be extracted to provide greater

understanding into the nature of presidential behaviors. These include the fact that

behaviors are identifiable actions, understood by the interaction between actions and the

corresponding conditions/situations/stimuli, and can be understood as part of a pattern (as

opposed to a singular event). In short, behaviors are actions contextualized by the

situations in which they occur. Presidents are executive leaders and as such, behaviors will be best understood through the context and interpretations of leader expectations.

Stajkovic and Luthans (1997) determined that traditional understandings of effective leadership and the corresponding behaviors are ineffectual within a knowledge economy and they propose that nontraditional and potentially radical approaches to leadership will be required to achieve high levels of organizational performance. POS and POB approaches to organizational performance enhancement reflect the call for these non-traditional advancements as they represent an evolution from traditional concepts of leadership identified by terms like contingency, transactional, and transformational (which are restricted by traditional understandings of clearly and concretely delineated leadership and followership groups) to more inclusive and person-centered understandings of leadership. In reality, traditional understandings of leadership can take on the personality of an organizational caste system where those labeled as followers are held in check by positions, titles, and occupational workgroups while POB and POS approaches represent expanding leadership roles that transcend organizational charts. Additionally, the leadership behaviors found in the positively applied organizational approaches allow for the provision of ownership and empowerment opportunities at the individual level while still providing an organizational foundation for sensemaking, adaptability, and performance enhancement.

POB is, again, "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (Luthans, 2002b, p.59). This means leadership behaviors, within the POB perspective, are guided by the desired

outcome of developing both human and psychological capital. Avolio and Luthans (2006, p. 144) explain that human capital is crucial to any organization and is, in fact, "vital to the competitive advantage" as it is "unique" and "made up of education, skills, experience, and tacit knowledge that cannot be imitated or easily duplicated or purchased. If developed properly, human capital can contribute to an enduring, sustainable, and competitive advantage for today's organizations." Luthans and Youssef (2004) note that there are numerous sources of capital (resources available to organizations to ensure the achievement of goals) available to organizations and provide a distinction between human and non-human sources of capital. The authors explain that non-human (traditional) sources of capital include the financial, structural/physical, and technological capital while human sources include human (explicit and tacit knowledge), social (networks, norms and values, and trust) and psychological (confidence, hope, optimism, and resiliency) capital. Luthans, Luthans, and Luthans (2004) further differentiate the human and social capital from psychological capital by stating that human capital is about what you know, social capital is about whom you know, and positive psychological capital is about who you are. Avolio and Luthans (2006, p. 147) build on this conceptualization of psychological capital by indicating that it is about "what you intend to become (your possible self)." Of all the forms of capital, psychological capital most reflects the influence of Positive Psychology, not just because of the name, but also because of the principle behind the concept. Seligman (2002) indicates that psychological capital is about vital engagement, absorption, and commitment to tasks, people, and organizations. The concept of psychological capital and its importance to performance enhancement is one of the foundational assumptions within the CCAM and is reflective

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of an approach to leadership that increases ownership, sensemaking, and the volunteering of best energies and tacit knowledge.

Luthans (2001) first introduced the concept of psychological capital by indicating that the psychological functioning of organizational members impact performance within organizations. He found five psychological categories proven to impact performance and presented them under the acronym CHOSE – confidence/self-efficacy, hope, optimism, subjective well-being, and emotional intelligence. Luthans and Jensen (2002) expanded on this work, specifically looking at the role of hope, and explain that the five categories are essential to understanding how psychological capacities can be developed and managed toward greater organizational performance. The concept of psychological capital is addressed in a number of articles (Larson, & Luthans, 2006; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans et al., 2005; Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006) and Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio (2007, p.3) operationally define the concept as having four distinct psychological capacities that form a higher-order construct. The definition of psychological capital, or PsyCap as it is known, is:

> An individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success.

In considering a positive approach to leadership (PAL), Luthans et al. (2001) indicate that leaders must lead with behaviors guided by characteristics that are RICH – which include realistic optimism [R], emotional intelligence [I], confidence [C], and hope [H]. In specifically addressing the development of psychological capital, Luthans et al. (2007)

consider the concepts of PsyCap efficiency, PsyCap hope, PsyCap optimism, and PsyCap

resiliency. There is a great deal of overlap between these two approaches (PAL and

PsyCap) with the exceptions being emotional intelligence and resiliency. Realistic

optimism, the first of the PAL concepts, is described as optimism guided by an

understanding of reality that takes a positive rather than naïve approach to situations and

environments. Luthans et al. (2007, p. 100) add that leaders with high levels of optimism

focus specifically on the development of followers and take pride in their success.

Specific leader behaviors associated with realistic optimism include:

- Acting with "leniency for the past" under the "benefit of the doubt" principles designed to limit condemnation and second-guessing of the past (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 9)
- Approaching potential challenges as opportunities for success rather than as obstacles or barriers that need to be traversed (p. 9)
- Assessing situations, environments, and human development from a "glass half-full" rather than "half-empty perspective", also known as an optimistic explanatory style (p. 8)
- Reflecting upon and systematically evaluating the accuracy of beliefs (p. 10)
- Replacing self-defeating and irrelevant beliefs with "realistic, constructive, and accurate ones" (p. 10)
- Sharing success and attributing it to others within the organization (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 96)
- Showing appreciation for the "positive aspects" of the present situation (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 9)
- Taking a balanced approach to both success and failure; neither internalizing all success nor externalizing all failures (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 96)
- "Tak[ing] an appreciative perspective regarding their people's capabilities and resiliency" (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 8)
- Viewing challenges as opportunities to develop and test skills (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 96)

Emotional intelligence, heavily influenced by Daniel Goldman (1995), is comprised of a

leader's self awareness, self management, social awareness, and social skill and is based

on the ability to understand one's own and other's emotions and knowing how to adjust

leadership based on the needs of followers. Specific leadership behaviors associated with

emotional intelligence include:

- Actively regulating emotion in self and in others (Luthans et al., 2001, p.12)
- Assimilating emotions and thoughts into behaviors (p.12)
- Perceiving situational needs and expressing appropriate emotion for the situation (p.12)
- Understanding the emotions of a situation and reasoning with them (p.12)

Confidence, or self-efficacy as it is more commonly known, "refers to an individual's

conviction about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognition resources, and

courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given situation"

(Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997, p. 66). At the core of this definition is the belief that one has

the power to affect change and that internal determination (at the individual or

organizational level) trumps external barriers to positive change. Specific leadership

behaviors associated with confidence include:

- Actively evaluating and integrating information about the fit between capabilities and situations before engaging in any action (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 14)
- Engaging in actions based on internal, intrinsic motivation (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 38)
- Establishing "stretch goals" for themselves, individuals, and the organization (p. 14)
- Providing opportunities for others to develop confidence through practice or mastery exercises (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 36)
- "Welcom[ing] and thriv[ing] on challenges" (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 38)
- Working to "persevere and be resilient when encountering difficulties and barriers in progressing toward their goals" (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 14)
- Working to "put forth considerable effort to reach the selected goals" (p. 14)

Hope, as understood within POB, goes well beyond a positive outlook and sunny

disposition. Rather, it is "a multidimensional construct comprised of agency (a sense of

willpower, or motivated determination to begin and maintain the effort needed to achieve

goals) and pathways (a sense of waypower, or belief in one's ability to generate and

implement alternative successful plans and actions to meet desired goals)" (Luthans et al.,

2001, p. 16). It is also an important characteristic when considering the development of psychological capital as the constant interaction between the agency and pathways "ignites one's energy and sense of control, which when taken together [the interaction of agency and pathways] result in an upward spiral of hope" (Snyder, 1993, 2000, 2002, as cited in Luthans et al., 2007, p. 66). Some specific leadership behaviors associated with hope include:

- Aligning organizational members talents and strengths with a focus on leveraging strengths (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 71)
- Breaking down stretch goals in smaller, more manageable milestones (p. 69)
- Continually assessing and growing training and development opportunities (p. 71)
- Determining alternative pathways for success instead of continuing to push for pathways that have proven unsuccessful (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 16)
- Involving individuals throughout the organization in decision-making and communication through bottom-up strategies (Luthans et al., 2007p. 69)
- Leaders taking ownership of their goals (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 17)
- Leaders working to actively develop and increase hope within organizational members (p. 17)
- Seeking to develop well-formulated plans and goals for self and the organization (p. 16)
- Sustaining motivated effort to obtain goals (p. 16)

Resiliency, as understood within POB, is influenced by Masten's (2001) assertion that resilience is a normal human ability made available by intentional development. Luthans et al. (2007, p. 116) use Masten and Reed's (2002, p. 75) definition of resilience in describing PsyCap resilience and explain that it is "a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk." In keeping with the Positive Psychology influence, however, the authors note that PsyCap resilience is about more than reaching health or equilibrium, but rather is based upon reaching levels of performance unattainable prior to the crisis. Specific leadership behaviors associated with PsyCap resiliency include

- Approaching negative situations and circumstances as a springboard for increased functioning and performance (Luthans et al., 2007, pp. 121, 123)
- Behaving with integrity and in accordance with the values that drive one's perceptions of the world (p. 119)
- Engaging in non-conventional strategies typified by increased risk and creativity (p. 125)
- Intentionally developing assets (i.e. human, social, and psychological capital) that counterbalance negative situations (p. 124)
- Refusing to be at the mercy of external situations and barriers, instead opting to challenge the power of situations (p. 120)

Again, POS is defined as "a new movement in organizational science focusing on the dynamics leading to exceptional individual and organizational performance such as developing human strength, producing resilience and restoration, and fostering vitality" (Cameron & Caza, 2004, p. 731). Roberts (2006, p. 294) notes that POS has the "particular opportunity to enrich and complicate the Positive Psychology agenda by more deeply contextualizing psychologists' accounts of positive subjective experience and states" and "is a complementary effort that draws on Positive Psychology, but also carves a much broader agenda for how a focus on the positive (though not necessarily an exclusive focus) opens up new and important ways of seeing and understanding organizations." These statements reiterate that substantial increases in organizational performance benefits can occur by reconceptualizing leadership behaviors from a positive approach and realizing the inseparable connection that exists between the health of individuals and organizations. Despite this potential, there is still a question about how an organization can encompass the traits and states that typically reside at the individual level. The answer lies in a process of upward spiraling known as the heliotropic effect and the themes of virtuousness and positive deviance

Upward spiraling is intimately linked with positive organizations as it links the behaviors of organizational members to the organization and vice-versa. Frederickson

(2003, pp. 165-166) explains in her broaden and build theory of positive emotions that

"positive emotions appear to *broaden* people's momentary thought-action repertoires and

build their enduring personal resources." She also posits that positive emotions are tied to

optimal organizational functioning since individuals able to broaden their momentary

thought-action repertoires and build their personal resources are located throughout and

can work to transform the organization through upward spirals. She explains that the

increasing individual and organizational health will be felt throughout the organization as

fundamental shifts in the culture and climate occur (Frederickson, 2002). Similar to the

concept of a social contagion (Gladwell, 2000), the actions [behaviors] of organizational

members are important due to the networks created and the mutual influence of behaviors

on other members. Shapiro (2003) indicates that there is a contagiousness that exists and

infiltrates organizational culture, thereby creating opportunities for more powerful and

positive relationships in the workplace. This concept is crucial to community colleges as

executive leaders are given the responsibility of managing the organization toward

enhanced performance (Birnbaum, 1992; Twombly & Amey, 1991), but due to the nature

of professional bureaucracies (Mintzberg, 1989; Raelin, 1994; Satow, 1975), they are not

provided with the opportunity to manage people in the traditional corporate sense. With

competing subcultures and power held by the professional subculture (Adams, 1988; Dill,

1982), leaders depend upon influence rather than just hierarchical power and positive

spirals instead of orders and mandates. One of the underlying assumptions within the

CCAM is that within a knowledge economy, it is up to the leaders at all levels to model

positivity and work at developing positive behaviors within organizational members in an

effort to meet the needs of the members and push the organization toward increased performance.

In exploring the impact of positivity and virtuousness on performance, Quinn, Cameron, Spreitzer, and Baker (2006) initiated a positive practices survey. Based on the questions asked within the survey, and with the assumption that community college leaders are responsible for modeling positive behaviors to create positive spirals [institutional epidemics], the categories and questions provide guidance into the specific leadership behaviors crucial to enhanced organizational performance. These behaviors include:

- Actively seeking to develop external relationships that span traditional boundaries
- Approaching challenges as opportunities
- Engaging in fact-based and disciplined management decision-making practices
- Focusing on possibilities and opportunities and help others develop talents and strengths instead of honing in on weaknesses and obstacles
- Intentionally seeking to establish a climate based on continuous learning
- Leading with consistency and transparency in order to establish trust, commitment, and dedication
- Modeling self-sacrificing and selfless behavior
- Providing clear and consistent messages and direction to organizational members
- Providing support and empowerment opportunities for organizational members
- Treating organizational members with virtuousness (i.e. gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, respect, etc.)
- Using language and tactics that uplift and are positive instead of negative and demeaning
- Working to develop highly collaborative and subculture spanning relationships

Although identified as an aspect of the POB movement, the concept of authentic leadership development, through the lens of positive upward spirals, is consistent with the principles of POS. Luthans and Avolio (2003) note that the concept of authentic leadership has been around for more than two millennia, but is even more relevant in today's dynamic and hyper competitive environments as it "best depicts the type of leadership needed in contemporary times, where the environment is dramatically

changing, where the rules that have guided how we operate no longer work, and where

the best leaders will be transparent with their intentions, having a seamless link between

their espoused values, actions, and behaviors" (p. 242). In fact, the authors indicate the

"confluence and synergy of all three approaches [positive, transformational, and

moral/ethical leadership] through authentic leadership may best meet what most informed

observers agree is a turning point, a paradigm shift, in the way societies and organizations

must be led in order to survive, let alone thrive and gain competitive advantage" (p. 243).

While this definition of authenticity includes transformational leadership, the

authors assert that authentic leadership goes well beyond the somewhat limited scope of

transformational leadership based upon its focus on reliability, trustworthiness, integrity,

and consistency as opposed to transformational leadership's outdated focus on

monumental organizational change and charismatic personalities. There are many

leadership behaviors associated with authentic leadership including:

- Actively seeking to develop leadership skills in organizational members (p. 244)
- Actively seeking to model behaviors to members spread throughout the organization (p. 244)
- Adjusting behaviors, without having their integrity questioned, to ensure that the organization can deal with shifting conditions (p. 249)
- Being internally driven by a set of core values that transcend self-interest (p. 247) and are focused on "doing what's right for their constituency" (p. 248)
- Displaying that task completion and development of associates have "equal importance" (p. 249)
- Ensuring that actual actions and espoused values are congruent (p. 242)
- Remaining aware of "vulnerabilities and openly discuss[ing] them with associates, so the leader can be questioned to ensure that the direction he or she is heading is in the 'right' direction" as they are able to "turn transparency regarding their vulnerabilities into a strength" (p. 248)
- Seeking to "lead from the front, going in advance of others when there is a risk in doing so" (p. 248)

A fundamental lesson from this exploration into leadership behaviors is that they

are understood in relationship to the assumptions inherent within the model studied as

well as the impact on followers. The same is true for determining effective presidential

behaviors specific to the community college abundance framework. Not only will ideal

behaviors, those associated with a move toward greater abundance, be guided by

adherence to the principles of the strengths-based approach proposed by Positive

Psychology, POS, and POB, but they will also be understood through the unique

organizational structure of the community college.

Transitioning from Leadership to Presidential Behaviors

Presidential behaviors, like leadership behaviors, can only be understood in

relationship to how they impact organizational members – and the relationship between

presidents and other organizational members (administrators, faculty, staff, etc.) differs

greatly from the traditional manager subordinate relationship in the non-professional and

corporate world. In contrast to the for-profit world and non-profit corporations,

community colleges cannot be run effectively by edict and mandate. Rather, community

colleges as loosely coupled organizations (Weick, 1976), by their very nature, incorporate

power (expert, referent, etc.) and influence throughout the different subcultures,

especially within the professional (full-time faculty within community colleges)

subculture. Additionally, community colleges contain two subcultures that share the

majority of power and are responsible for delivery of college mission – the administration

and full-time faculty subculture (Shults, 2006). While the administrative subculture is

vital to the management of the organization (Etzioni, 1991; Satow, 1975), values within

this subculture often contradict faculty values in the areas of finance, accountability,

effectiveness, and efficiency. This subculture also focuses on control, strategy, and

bottom line concerns since they are responsible for organizational operations. In contrast,

the full-time faculty subculture (also known as the academic and professional culture) is primarily driven by shared values and is responsible for ensuring the effective delivery of the institutional mission (Berquist, 1992). Several authors (Austin, 1990; Becher, 1981; Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Dill, 1982; Hayes, 2003; Lodahl & Gordon, 1972) suggest that faculty, as professionals, are dedicated to their disciplines and departments and are guided by the values specific to each. Additionally, full-time faculty members within community colleges, almost exclusively, are unionized and hold allegiance to the decisions of the union. There is an interesting and complex relationship between these two subcultures that must be considered by a community college president or CEO when attempting to initiate or lead organizational change efforts.

The community college abundance model accounts for this complex relationship and approaches the concept of presidential behaviors through the leadership lenses of Positive Psychology, POS, and POB. Executive leadership, within these different perspectives, is not viewed as one individual leading an organization, but rather as a position imbued with great power over and responsibility for the development of other leaders positioned throughout the organization. As the CCAM is heavily influenced by these organizational performance models, it follows that effective presidential behaviors would also be premised on effectively developing organizational members as well as leading based on strengths rather than weaknesses. By compiling the leadership behaviors found within the POB's positive approach to leadership (PAL) and psychological capabilities (PsyCap) as well as POS' positive practices surveys and tailoring them to the position of community college president under the assumptions inherent within the CCAM, the author has compiled twenty-nine different effective behaviors that fall under

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four distinct categories. The four major categories and corresponding presidential

behaviors include:

- ❑ Consciously and constantly engaging in positivity and optimism
    - Approaching new situations without the burden of past failures
    - Intentionally seeking to develop a climate of hope
    - Pursuing goals with energy and vigor
    - Rejecting and dismantling self-defeating attitudes
- ❑ Treating the development of human potential as an organizational priority
    - Focusing on developing leadership skills
    - Focusing on increasing member ownership and empowerment
    - Focusing on sharing success and providing non-tangible rewards
    - Integrating organizational members into decision-making and direction-setting processes
    - Intentionally developing highly collaborative and diverse teams
    - Managing with equal focus on human development and task completion
    - Seeking to grow the strengths of organizational members
    - Treating organizational members virtuously
- ❑ Consciously working to ensure congruence between the organization and the environment
    - Approaching external pressure as largely irrelevant in the development of organization direction (internal motivation)
    - Continually assessing the organizational mindset
    - Continually questioning institutional beliefs (butchering the sacred cows)
    - Evaluating the fit between situations and human capabilities
    - Focusing on risk-taking and creativity above comfort and tradition
    - Intentionally seeking to develop a climate of continuous learning
    - Seeking to find, develop, and grow external relationships that shift traditional boundaries
- ❑ Relishing the opportunity to act as organizational anchor and sensemaker
    - Approaching challenges as opportunities to be taken advantage of instead of obstacles or barriers that impede operations
    - Approaching success and failure with balance (not too high when successful or too low when failing)
    - Consciously stretching themselves, members, and the college
    - Focusing on maintaining congruence between espoused values and actions
    - Leading organizational members into risky endeavors as an innovator (taking the initial risk and allowing others to follow)
    - Leading through the provision of positive examples
    - Leading with transparency and consistency
    - Managing with flexibility and an eye towards outcomes, not pathways
    - Managing with reason and logic
    - Modeling self-sacrificing and selfless acts

In an effort to develop the aforementioned behavioral categories, some of which were similar to those found in the original abundance study, the researcher engaged in a three-stage coding process based upon information provided from each PsyCap designation, the PAL, and the Positive Practices survey. While the original abundance study provided context for the researcher, *every single* open code used in the presidential behavior analysis came from one of three sources listed previously. In conducting this analysis, the researcher was able to classify the fifty-five open codes into twenty-nine axial and four selective codes. The first selective category, consciously and consistently engaging in positivity and optimism, included behaviors deemed to create an organizational climate characterized by hope and optimism and a culture driven by resiliency. These behaviors are found throughout the leadership dimensions in POB and POS and reflect CCAM assumptions as colleges possessing organizational hope are better equipped to effectively deal with difficult and dynamic environments. This focus on optimism and developing resiliency are seen in each of the behaviors as moving forward without the burden of past failures, rejecting and dismantling self-defeating attitudes, pursuing goals with energy and vigor, and continually seeking to develop hopeful attitudes are all associated with creating an environment in which organizational members believe the college will successfully meet its goals regardless of external constraints.

The second category, treating the development of human potential as an organizational priority, is driven by the assumption that human capital is the most important resource available to organizations. This assumption is not only supported by traditional studies analyzing the impact of employee development on organizational

performance (Becker, 1993; Belanger, 2002; Schultz, 1972), but even more by recent studies examining the impact of changing economic conditions on organizational performance (Belanger, 2002; Courchene, 2002; Larocne, 1999). Bolman and Deal (2003), in their studies on the variety of available managerial frames, indicate that the human resource frame is based on the assumption that creating an energizing and fulfilling environment increases access to the tacit knowledge and best efforts of organizational members – something even more crucial in an environment where knowledge is evolving into a commodity and not a competitive advantage. Accordingly, each behavior in this second category deals explicitly with the personal and/or professional development of workers located throughout the college. Within this category, the behaviors can be understood as a reflection of two different paths: one in which the presidents are working to develop the skills and talents of members and the other in which the executive leaders are taking a humane and ethical approach to the treatment of all members. Behaviors focused on developing skills include focusing on developing leadership skills, seeking to grow the strengths of individuals, developing highly collaborative and diverse teams, and managing with an equal focus on human development and task completion. The identified behaviors guided by ethical treatment include increasing ownership and empowerment, sharing success and providing rewards, integrating members into decision-making and direction-setting, and treating members virtuously. Each of these behaviors was found, to varying degrees, within the earlier CCAM study and all came from the POS and POB literature on leadership.

Another foundational assumption within the CCAM is that community college presidents must focus on developing their college's ability to proactively meet changing

environmental and stakeholder needs – an assumption derived from a publication

dedicated to assisting colleges in movement from tactics to strategy in major

organizational decisions, planning, and operations (Alfred & Associates, 2005). The third

selective code, ensuring congruence between the organization and the environment,

details the type of presidential behaviors associated with ensuring that colleges remain

adaptable, flexible, and proactive in dealing with dynamic environments. Each of these

behaviors rejects statusquoism as an effective approach to college management and they

include continually questioning beliefs, developing a climate of continuous learning,

continually assessing the organizational mindset, evaluating the fit between situations and

human capabilities, focusing on risk-taking and creativity above comfort and tradition,

and seeking to find, develop, and grow external relationships.

As discussed previously, there are two important concepts to consider when

talking about executive leadership in community colleges. First, leaders are expected to

navigate change in an increasingly complex and dynamic higher education industry, but

in a manner that includes and empowers the college staff. Secondly, authentic executive

leadership is crucial since individuals depend on sensemaking and will gravitate

exclusively to subculture norms and values if the organizational values remain elusive,

amorphous, or disconnected from workgroup values. Additionally, results from the

original study indicated that numerous presidents, especially those in colleges identified

as abundant or approaching the classification of abundance, were focused on acting as the

organizational sensemaker. Based on these results and information from the POS and

POB literature bases, the fourth behavioral category includes behaviors that go beyond

simply understanding and accepting the presidential role of anchor and sensemaker.

Instead, they reflect behaviors indicating that the presidents embrace and relish the opportunity to serve as institutional sensemakers. While each behavior approaches the issue of increasing sensemaking differently, each demonstrates an intentional effort to model behaviors that organizational members will follow, thereby allowing for virtuous spiraling and greater performance at the individual, unit, and organizational levels. These behaviors include approaching successes and failures with balance, managing with reason and logic, leading with transparency and consistency, modeling self-sacrificing and selfless acts, managing with a focus on the what (outcomes) rather than the how (pathways), consciously stretching themselves, leading the college into innovative and risky endeavors, developing intrinsic motivation, and approaching challenges as opportunities for growth.

The four overarching categories, and individual behaviors therein, of abundant presidential behaviors are influenced by leadership literature within business and higher education disciplines, but with an appreciation for the unique nature of executive leadership within community colleges. It was hypothesized that based upon their reputations, these behaviors, in general, would be seen within all four of the cases, but that behaviors would be more prevalent in presidents leading colleges classified as abundant.

Intent of the CCAM

As discussed throughout the dissertation, evolving economic conditions and the changing state of the higher education industry are circumstances that must be effectively navigated if community colleges are to provide exceptional value to students and other stakeholders. With the increasingly important role of knowledge creation and deployment

in colleges, the importance of human capital development has risen to perhaps its greatest level ever. With more globalized economies, increased access to technology, and a greater demand for higher and continuing education, workers are better prepared, more skilled, and have greater opportunities for utilizing their unique talents through entrepreneurial activities than ever before – and without an environment that supports the use of these skills and knowledge bases, individuals will utilize their tacit knowledge and best energies outside of the workplace. This tacit knowledge, believed to constitute more than 80% of the knowledge available to companies (Horibe, 2001), is a vital asset that community colleges must work to not only uncover, but to fully develop by providing individuals with opportunities to use their skills and supplying rewards that encourage organizational members to grant access to their knowledge and best energies.

Bolman and Deal (2003) present numerous managerial frames designed to allow business leaders to view operations, workflow, and outcomes from different lenses. These include a structural frame (built on hierarchy and structures), a human resource frame (built on relationships and personal development), a political frame (built on power and influence), and a symbolic frame (built on inspiration and legacy). The authors are quick to point out that none of the frames are designed to be a silver bullet, but rather, are designed to allow leaders to examine operations from multiple perspectives and chose an approach that meets the situation (similar to contingency leadership models). In a similar vein, the CCAM is but one approach presented to readers, researchers, and college personnel as a potential approach to reexamining operations, goals, and situations within community colleges. Its assumptions resemble those of Bolman and Deal's human resource frame as the CCAM is guided by the assertions that community colleges depend

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upon staff throughout the organization, meeting the needs of organizational members increases the college's productivity, and a good fit between the college and the workers will push the organization forward. Additionally, this model is guided by the belief that encouraging the colleges to engage in continuous performance enhancement will assist the organization in developing into a true learning college. Evolving into a learning college requires that presidents engage leaders throughout the college in direction-setting and decision-making, expand ownership over direction to increase involvement, and develop a culture where all decisions and directions are openly questioned and critiqued – all of which are catalysts for moving a community college toward greater abundance. Rather than presenting the model as a solution for increasing organizational performance, the researcher is presenting the model as a new approach to priming community colleges for continuous performance enhancement through transcendent leveraging of its resources.

As shown earlier, the illness methodology has long dominated research and practice in psychology, business, medicine, and sociology. While not fully explored by the researcher, this is likely the case in the higher education literature based upon the fact that the higher education literature base has greatly depended upon these other disciplines. As noted by Seligman (2002), the illness methodology, in psychology, was designed to eliminate negative statuses in an effort to get individuals back to normal functioning. While important and necessary, it neglects the highest levels of human performance, which is more than the absence of illness. Rather, this highest level of performance reflects the exceptional wellness that is attainable by most humans and attaining this level of health requires a positive and strengths-based approach to human

wellness. The CCAM borrows from this concept and applies this principle to community colleges. Traditional management practices are based on an illness methodology where college leaders are focused on avoiding crises, putting out fires, and honing in on and spending institutional efforts to correct weaknesses. While these tactics are, again, useful and necessary, management practices fixated on correcting problems neglects the development of strengths and prevents the organization from reaching the highest levels of organizational performance. The CCAM argues that colleges must be guided by a strengths-based approach to operations where member and college energies are used primarily to develop and enhance strengths, leverage the college's intangible resources, and engage in continuous learning processes. In short, the CCAM, like Positive Psychology, is focused on enabling community colleges to discover, develop, and enhance the strengths lying dormant with the goal of realizing superior health.

As stated by Cameron and Caza (2004), the goal of POS is identifying and developing the dynamics that increase the functioning of organizational members and the organization as a whole. While the CCAM has been heavily influenced by POS research, including the use of the term abundance, the three concepts most directly connected with the assumptions underling this model are transcendence, positive spiraling, and flow. Used by Bateman and Porath (2003), transcendence represents a focus on possibility and potential outside of what could logically be expected under existing conditions. Cameron, Bright, and Caza (2004) add that it deals with the personal behaviors allowing organizations to achieve the unimaginable or previously unattainable. This concept is the foundation behind transcendent leveraging and reflects an organizational mindset that resources can be attained in non-traditional places, deployed in new and unique ways,

and amplified to unexpected levels. This form of leveraging also delivers upon Bateman and Porath's charge (p.137) that transcendent activities create "extraordinary change." Positive spiraling is a predominant theme within the POS literature and is most notably found as the basis of Frederickson's (2003) build and broaden theory. The foundation of her theory is that the emotional health and well-being of employees is built up over time and as workers become healthier, the organization operates more efficiently and effectively. In other words, the health of organizational members and the organization are bound together and working to improve the health and well-being of people positively impacts the health and well-being of the organization – a positive upward spiral. The CCAM reflects this upward spiraling as the model assumes that as college employees at all levels are appreciated, developed, and empowered, the college gains access to new forms of knowledge and skills, is able to enter into a state of continuous learning, and becomes more nimble in dealing with environmental changes. While not stating that all organizational gains are associated with this positive spiraling, the assumption is that engaging in these practices will enhance current levels of performance. Finally, Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi (2002, 2003) discussed the concept of flow – a state characterized by full absorption into situations. Flow allows for intense focusing on goals, high levels of engagement, and development of an internal drive that overcomes the negative psychological impacts of difficult circumstances. This concept is central to CCAM as the model is, at its core, designed to assist community colleges with developing an organizational mindset that future direction and success is primarily in the hands of its members. A corollary to this premise is that regardless of external conditions, the college has opportunities to continually improve, provide unique value to students,

and develop a unique niche. While none of these premises have been proven to impact organizational performance within community colleges, they act as primers for greater performance through the intentional development of human capital based upon the use of non-traditional and boundary-spanning tactics.

The POB literature base has also been vitally important in the development of the CCAM. While similar in many ways to POS, there is a greater emphasis on increasing organizational performance through four major assumptions. These assumptions, as noted by Luthans et al, (2005) include a strengths-based approach that is unique, based upon theory and research, is understood using valid measures, and includes state-like concepts open to development. The two most influential assumptions within POB that have influenced the development of the CCAM are the unique, strengths-based approach and the inclusion of state-like concepts open to development. First, the CCAM marks the first entrée of a positive approach to management within higher education – an indication that it meets the uniqueness criteria. Also, the model has been crafted with an understanding of the limitations of the illness methodology and is geared to assist community colleges in moving from health to wellness. This approach is seen through the development of the three regions of the health continuum – challenge, choice, and abundance. An illness methodology would focus simply on colleges of challenge (resembling illness) and choice (resembling health), but the CCAM's primary goal is to assist colleges in realizing greater abundance through transcendent leveraging and to potentially reach classification as a college of abundance. In other words, the delineation of regions within the continuum is an indicator that it reflects a strengths-based approach to college performance enhancement. As noted in the POS section, internal motivation is also a key

feature of the CCAM. This internal motivation is only attainable through the development of state-like concepts identified within the POB literature. More specifically, the model has been heavily influenced by a focus on developing the psychological capabilities identified in Luthans et al.'s 2007 publication on psychological capital. The four capabilities identified by the authors include confidence, optimism, hope, and resilience. While these can be understood at the individual level, the concept of positive spiraling indicates that these capabilities can become foundations of the organizational psyche. Within the CCAM, each of these capabilities are reflective of individuals who believe that reaching organizational goals is a given, the college is in control of its destiny, and the institution can traverse any obstacle. While similar to the concept of transcendence (which influenced the development of the form or leveraging leading to greater abundance), these PsyCaps represent the foundational elements of the organizational mindset that the CCAM has been designed to help develop within community colleges. As was the case with the POS influence on the model, the POB influence has been crucial in the development of a model designed to prime community colleges for a move towards greater abundance through an intentional and continuous strengths-based approach to operations.

In summary, the CCAM has been designed as a new approach to priming colleges for enhanced organizational performance. At the core of the CCAM is the assertion that development of the human element, both as an intangible and leadership resource, is crucial as transcendent leveraging relies not only on skills and shared direction, but also on hope and optimism. This approach was heavily influenced by Positive Psychology, POS, and POB and the dedication to a strengths-based rather than illness approach to

performance enhancement. Focused on developing an institutional mindset guided by the desire to continuously improve and move towards greater abundance, the CCAM represents an alternative approach to management and organizational performance enhancement designed to deal with the changing expectations of stakeholders, shifts in the higher education industry, and emerging knowledge economy.

Intent of this Study

The purpose of this study was to begin identifying executive leadership behaviors associated with a college's move toward greater abundance. In starting this process, the researcher utilized information from the previous abundance study to develop a list of t behaviors that could be expected from colleges achieving the classification of abundance. After looking at the results, however, the researcher decided to rely exclusively on information from the POS and POB literature since the CCAM was crafted largely as an extension of the Positive Psychology principles. It was the decision of the researcher to then explore the actual presidential behaviors within the four colleges, as interpreted by organizational members, based on the assumption that perception of these behaviors would be crucial in identifying and examining the various behaviors. The results of this exploration are presented in separate chapters to preserve the institutional context of the behaviors an in a cross case chapter to allow for extrapolation of the results towards greater understanding of the appropriateness and usefulness of the CCAM. In short, however, the researcher attempted to identify a series of positive behaviors from presidents within different colleges that could be classified into different categories.

The POS literature base contained myriad information on the types of behaviors that could be expected from organizations realizing their organizational potential (vitality

or superior wellness). Especially useful in the development of expected abundant presidential behaviors was the underlying premise of positive spiraling and its impact on greater organizational performance. The expectation is that greater development and more ethical treatment of individuals throughout the organization will have the anticipated consequence of greater organizational performance. While the CCAM is not touted as definitively impacting organizational performance at this time, it could, theoretically, act as a catalyst that primes colleges for greater performance through its focus on transcendent leveraging and development of human potential and capital. As indicated by Quinn (2003), the impact of positive and upwards spiraling creates traits of abundance and impacts abundance through both quantifiable and non-quantifiable measures based upon increasing flow and engagement. The impact of positive spiraling, with the focus on treatment of individuals, is especially relevant to the development of executive leadership behaviors within the CCAM. As noted earlier, community college presidents are expected to be sensemakers and catalysts for change, but are also expected to engage in management styles appropriate to a professional bureaucracy. A community college president cannot expect to simply create wholesale changes and push them through the organization. Rather, based upon the nature of colleges and the assumptions within the CCAM, he/she must work with individuals throughout the college to determine what changes are warranted, increase buy-in, engagement, and ownership, and ensure the development of a continuous learning culture. By working with individuals and showing authentic commitment to the health of organizational members, people are developed and are more likely to commit themselves, their tacit knowledge, and best energies to the development of others and the college as a whole. This continual

development is hypothesized to create an abundance loop where people continue to improve the health of the college and the corresponding positive changes in the culture create an environment that returns the favor. Based on years of research at the individual and organizational level, Cameron et al. (2006) crafted a study of positive practices that resulted in a number of behaviors expected from abundant leaders. While provided in detail earlier, these behaviors generally reflect a focus on consistency and transparency, modeling positive behaviors to followers, prioritizing the development of human capital, and working to develop an institutional drive that supersedes external pressures and conditions. These executive behaviors identified as creating healthy organizations largely reflect the assumptions within the CCAM – namely the focus on appreciating and developing human capital and working to develop organizational optimism and resilience. Since community college presidents are charged with leading their colleges forward, largely through communication and modeling behaviors, these behaviors are in line with presidential expectations and were used as open codes to develop a series of behavioral categories surrounding a college's movement towards greater abundance.

POB literature was also useful in the development of the CCAM and, like POS, provides a great deal of insight into the behaviors expected from community colleges moving toward greater abundance. Luthans et al. (2001, 2007), in building upon the assumption that behaviors need to reflect the ability to develop organizational states, developed the Positive Approach to Leadership (PAL) and psychological capabilities (PsyCap) to delineate the types of behaviors expected from effective executive leaders. There is a great deal of overlap between the two, however, the behavioral categories emerging from these studies are that executive leader behaviors must be classified as

optimistic, emotionally intelligent, confident, and hopeful and that they must reflect a focus on developing efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency. The PsyCap characteristics of efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency have been empirically proven to impact an organization's bottom line. While impacting the bottom line is not necessarily the most appropriate measure of increased organizational performance for community colleges, the principles underlying these assumptions are sound and relevant to community colleges. Efficacy reflects conviction and continual effort towards reaching a goal, hope represents willpower and waypower in achieving goals, optimism reflects a mindset of internal control over situations, and resiliency represents the ability to persevere regardless of external pressures and impacts. Each of these characteristics is seen within the concepts of transcendent leveraging and internal drive and places the responsibility of developing these organizational mindsets in the hands of the executive leader (community college presidents). Based on the POB literature, community college presidential behaviors associated with a move toward abundance must reflect the ability to develop these positive states within organizational members with the expectation that they will mirror changes to the organizational culture over time.

In addition to exploring presidential behaviors to determine which behaviors were associated with college movement towards greater abundance, the researcher also sought to examine behaviors that would decrease the likelihood a college could move toward greater abundance and classification as a college of abundance. Before the study was conducted, the researcher assumed that presidents would likely engage both in behaviors that would push their colleges towards and prevent them from reaching greater abundance, however, the focus of the study was on the behaviors pushing the college

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towards abundance. With four highly respected presidents, the researcher assumed that many of the model's positive behaviors would be seen by the researcher and interpreted as such by organizational members. In addition to going through various leadership institutes, gaining valuable experience during their presidential tenures, and keeping up to date with management literature, these are highly qualified and capable individuals who all appreciate the importance of their jobs, the position of their colleges within their service area, and the people working at the college. With this vast amount of knowledge, intellect, and experience, the researcher believed the vast majority of behaviors exhibited by the presidents would be perceived positively by organizational members – a conclusion also supported by the reputations of the colleges. However, the CCAM has been developed as a paradigm shifting approach designed to prime community colleges for performance enhancement and the assumptions underlining the model are boundary spanning, future oriented, and transcendent. The model is based on continuous improvement around heightened expectations of leveraging, an institutional locus of control, and gaining access to the tacit knowledge and best efforts of employees. Naturally, the catalyst for these elevated expectations would come from the president; however, it is unlikely that a president unfamiliar with or not operating from the underlying assumptions would engage exclusively in behaviors designed to move a college towards abundance. For these reasons, the study was designed with the expectation that behaviors associated with a move towards abundance as well as a move away from greater abundance would be identified.

Finally, the study was designed to provide greater insight into the usefulness and applicability of the CCAM model in general. While the original study provided

information allowing the authors to develop a continuum of colleges based upon the degree of leveraging, the interviews were conducted with presidents and did not allow for interpretation of behaviors by organizational members. By gathering information throughout the college in this study, the researcher was focused on building upon findings from the original study. In addition to conducting a broader range of interviews, the researcher also sought to place the model under more scrutiny by employing a survey of concrete abundance measures for each college. The questions in the survey were developed through experience with colleges in the original study, from POS and POB literature (especially about boundary spanning and authentic behaviors), and from conversations with community college presidents familiar with abundance principles. In this dissertation, the researcher will present the results of the indicator survey within the context of the information gathered through college interviews and feels that by doing so; the behaviors can be understood based upon the outcomes of abundance assessed within the survey.

Perhaps even more important than what the study was designed to discover is what it was not designed to uncover. The reason for this is that the college presidents, executive staff, and non-executive staff and faculty provided a great deal of useful and personal information during the data collection phase of the study. Three of the colleges agreed to participate because they are, by their own admission, in different stages of incorporating a positive approach to operations and wanted to assist in further developing the model put forth by the researcher. The other college participated largely as a favor to the researcher and while not familiar with the model, the president indicated that he believes in many of the principles behind the model. The researcher asked numerous

personal and difficult questions about presidential behaviors, perceived strengths, areas of

improvement (within the parameters of the model), and personal opinions on the

president's leadership. While provided with, and reminded of, opportunities to forgo

answering questions, every one of the fifty-five interviewees answered all questions and

many provided personal and potentially embarrassing information (to themselves, their

superiors, the president, and the college). The researcher made a commitment to the

presidents and colleges that information presented would paint an honest picture of their

colleges from an abundance perspective, but would also respect the anonymity of the

interviewees and the college. While results were not withheld, certain quotes have been

excluded in an effort to ensure the presidents were not unfairly judged based upon the

study's findings. The four presidents showed remarkable courage in allowing the

researcher to interview people throughout the college, some of whom were critics, and

should be commended for allowing such open and unfettered access. The researcher is

incredibly appreciative and wanted to take this opportunity to again thank them and their

staff for such honest and open conversations designed to provide insight into the impact

of presidential behaviors on movement towards abundance.

The most important consideration for the reader to take forward before reading

any of the results sections is that this study *is not* designed to provide a critique on the

effectiveness of the community college presidents examined. While one of the underlying

assumptions of the model is that the CCAM can assist colleges in developing an

organizational mindset designed to prime the college for movement towards greater

abundance, there *is no* assumption that the model provides proof of enhanced

organizational performance. In fact, there is no instrument or tested measures of

effectiveness provided in either of the abundance publications. With no way to measure

the validity of the model in assessing effectiveness, readers must avoid the assumption

that presidents with behaviors more in line with the abundance principles are somehow

more effective presidents. That is a faulty assumption and outside the scope of this study.

Additionally, even if the model was designed to assess increasing performance, the

CCAM marks a new approach to understanding how performance can be enhanced and is

not presented as a solution. A more appropriate analogy may be that of a toolbox where

the CCAM represents one of many potential "tools" designed to engage colleges in the

process of shifting organizational mindsets. Another reason that this study was not

designed to assess the effectiveness of the college presidents is that it represents a post

hoc measure of presidential behaviors. Three of the presidents in this study have been at

their current institution for more than a decade and the Positive Psychology movement

started at the beginning of the 21st century. While some of the information delineated in

the Positive Psychology movement has been around for a number of years, the movement

represented a fundamental shift in how human development is studied and understood.

These evolutionary shifts were then carried into organizations through POS and POB,

both of which heavily influenced the development of the CCAM. With a new and

transcendent model developed within the last ten years, there is no way that presidents,

even those consciously engaged in positive practices, can be expected to have fully

integrated these principles into their leadership styles. Finally, the CCAM is a unique

model that places an exceptionally higher standard and set of expectations on presidents

when compared to traditional approaches to organizational performance enhancement.

Honestly, not all presidents or colleges will find themselves in a position to utilize the

CCAM. This could be due to a college's recent move from challenge, existence of a culture focused on maintaining the status quo, or leadership that is inauthentic, ineffectual, or isolated within specific segments of the college. Additionally, even if a college is in a position to begin movement towards greater abundance, the president may not have a leadership style conducive to the CCAM. The reverse can also be true where the president is equipped and ready to move forward, but the college is ill prepared. Instead of using the information provided to assess the effectiveness of the presidents (a clear violation of the study's purpose and principles), readers should look at this as an exploratory study designed to better understand behaviors associated with a movement towards abundance.

In addition to ***not being designed to assess presidential effectiveness,*** this study was not designed to assess the quality of the president's impact on their colleges. Impact of the presidency is crucial since the leader-follower relationship requires an accurate understanding of not only leader behaviors, but also of follower perceptions. The issue of leader stereotypicality and prototypicality (expected leader behaviors) will be examined later in this study, but suffced to say, follower perceptions of presidential behavior are crucial and provide the level of detail necessary to truly study presidential impact. This is the main reason the researcher decided to interview individuals throughout the college during the study instead of just the president and/or his/her executive team. While these perceptions were crucial in contextualizing the behaviors, especially considering the unique histories and evolutions of the colleges, they ***were not*** designed to gauge the quality of the president's impact. The focus of the study was exploration into the impact of behaviors on a college's move to abundance, not on the quality of the impact. While

college insiders provided a great deal of information on how effective they feel the president has or has not been, this information was gathered and is presented within the context of how the behaviors have impacted the college's movement along the abundance continuum. Also, as was the case with assessing leader effectiveness, the behaviors are being assessed on a post hoc basis. It would be inappropriate to assess the impact of the presidency using measures and instruments not designed to gather that information. In short, it is apparent from reactions by college staff that in almost every case, the presidents are very well respected, admired, and liked within their institutions and that the presidents have greatly shifted the cultures and climates of the college toward the positive (based on insider perceptions). Despite this fact, the study was not intended and is ill equipped to measure the quality of the presidential impacts.

In conclusion, readers must be careful when reading and analyzing the five results sections within this dissertation. While the information is presented in case form and represents an academic narrative that is, hopefully, enjoyable to read, caution must be taken in making any conclusions about the presidents or the colleges. The CCAM has been built from new and groundbreaking assumptions that are difficult to maintain. This is the underlying reason why the model has not been designed as a lockstep guide to achieving a state of organizational vitality (wellness). The model is fluid and only by maintaining transcendent leveraging over the long term can a college maintain classification as an abundant college. With this in mind, the focus of college presidents should be on continual improvement and movement towards greater abundance rather than achieving classification as an abundant college. The model is but one possible tool available to help prime a college for a move towards greater effectiveness and was not

designed to assess the effectiveness of community college presidents. The researcher

urges caution in interpreting the results as anything more than an in-depth and

contextually rooted examination of community college president behaviors that impact

the organization's movement towards greater or lesser abundance.

Chapter III

The Study's Methodology and Rationale

Introduction

This chapter has been structured to not only provide information on how the data

was collected, but to provide insight into the theories behind the propositions. The

chapter begins with a brief synopsis of why the researcher believes that presidential

behaviors impact a college's move toward greater abundance as well as a restatement of

the overarching question and propositions. Afterwards, great emphasis has been placed

on bringing the reader through the researcher's reasons for not only choosing to use

qualitative methods, but why a multi site case study approach was chosen. Afterwards,

the researcher provides substantial detail on the role of the researcher, settings,

population sample, and the process of data collection and analysis. The chapter then ends

with a personal reflection providing insight into the limitations of the study.

Study Propositions

While the CCAM marks a shift in the higher education literature thorough its

promotion of a positive approach to realizing organizational potential, the original study

did not explore how community colleges were transformed to allow for such a radical

departure from the traditional, conservative nature of community colleges (Bensimon,

1989). In further exploring the concept of leverage (Checketts, 2006, Pate, 2004), it

becomes apparent that the executive manager of an organization is responsible for

creating change within companies, but with the complex nature of professional

bureaucracies, the executive leader is not likely to manage and direct change without the

input, guidance, and participation of other leaders throughout the organization. While

community college presidents are not likely to manage change alone, they can act as the

impetus for change and this study proposed that current presidents have been largely

responsible for ensuring that available resources were leveraged to a level allowing for

the move towards greater abundance and are one of many factors responsible for the

transcendent leveraging required to obtain abundant outputs (figure 3). Based upon

guidance from the literature and the researcher's experiential knowledge that

Figure 3: An IPO Approach to Understanding Transcendent Leveraging
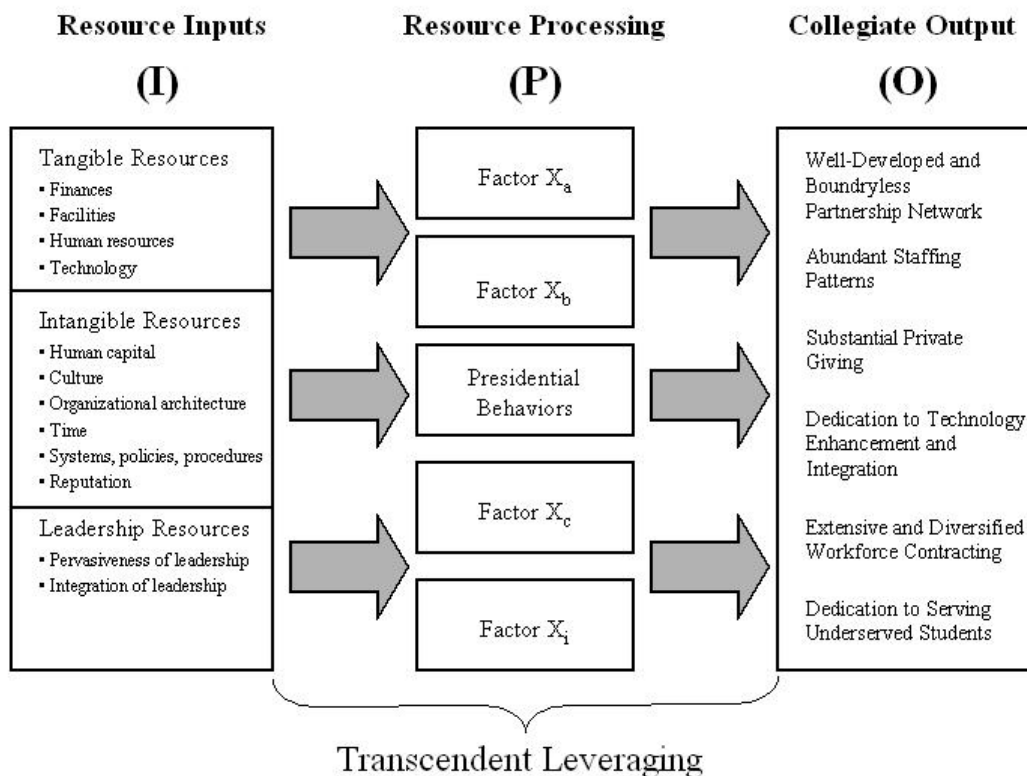
presidential behaviors influence college movement, this study sought to address *What*

actions undertaken by the community college presidents were associated with their

institution's move towards greater abundance? In an effort to address this question, a

series of propositions guided the development of interview protocols and the

determination of which documents to analyze. These propositions were:

1. Presidents within community colleges moving towards greater abundance consciously and consistently engage in positivity and optimism

2. Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance treat the development of human potential as an organizational priority

3. Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance consciously work to ensure congruence between the organization and the environment

4. Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance relish the opportunity to act as organizational anchor and sensemaker

Methodology

Justification of the Methods

Creswell (2003) explains that the approach (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed)

must match the nature of the research problem and indicates that a qualitative approach is

ideal when little research has been done on the topic or if the study is exploratory while a

quantitative approach is preferred if the goal of the study is to identify factors influencing

an outcome (cause and effect). In exploring the appropriateness of quantitative vs.

qualitative approaches in studies of organizational culture, Peterson and Spencer (1993)

indicated that a qualitative/systemic case approach (interpretive) is more appropriate

when a study is exploratory (often within a predetermined framework), where both the

participants and researcher have legitimate points of view, and data analysis is based on a

systemic approach (integrating multiple sources of data). In contrast, they note

quantitative approaches are better suited for studies where cause and effect is sought, an

etic (researcher-based) view is warranted, and data does not require systemic analysis.

Merriam (1998) adds that qualitative research is more appropriate when the goal of the

investigation is understanding, description, discovery, or meaning; the sample is small

and/or nonrandom; and the desired findings will be comprehensive, holistic, expansive,

and richly descriptive. In short, qualitative research methods are appropriate when

seeking to "understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little

disruption of the natural setting as possible" (p. 5).

Based on the guidelines provided, this study employed qualitative methodology to

explore the basic research question. While literature on leadership and organizational

change as well as the experience and knowledge of the researcher indicated that

leadership behaviors should be one of the primary catalysts for the transcendent

leveraging explored within the cases, there is no indication it is the sole influence behind

this phenomenon. For this reason, and the fact it was largely an exploratory study, there

was no attempt to confirm a cause and effect relationship between leadership behaviors

and transcendent leveraging or movement towards greater abundance. Additionally, the

nature of the study presented numerous obstacles to using a quantitative approach

including:

- Use of purposeful sampling
- A systemic and holistic approach to data collection and analysis
- The need for insider information in exploring leadership behaviors
- The desire for comprehensive and richly descriptive data

This study also took advantage of the emergent and flexible nature of the qualitative

methodology as the propositions guiding data collection were rooted in the literature

(Positive Psychology, POS, POB, and the original abundance study), much of which is

non-empirical and exploratory in nature. Finally, the researcher expected to find both confirmatory and disconfirming evidence in regards to the propositions.

While not a true mixed-methods study, quantitative methodology was used to gauge differences along six quantifiable categories of abundance so that context could be provided for the researcher and readers in understanding the measurable differences regarding differential degrees of leveraging. This decision is congruent with Merriam's (1998) explanation that quantitative methodology fits situations where precision, prediction, and numerical proof are necessary. Presidents from the four colleges were responsible for providing data in six areas hypothesized to indicate abundance. In general, community colleges classified as abundant, in opposition to colleges classified as choice, are believed to have a well-developed and boundryless network of partners establishing the college as a powerbroker and connector within the community; abundant staffing patterns that include little to no trouble filling high and mid-level openings with highly educated and qualified individuals, retention of qualified faculty and staff, and dedication to development of human capital; private gifts and grants as a substantial revenue stream with growth of these resources as one of the college's major strategic priorities; investments in technology that continue to surpass the national average and are geared toward enhancement of student success and mission delivery; service to a substantially growing number of companies and industries through workforce education that positions the college as an economic incubator and engine within its service area; and enrollment and retention of underserved populations as a measure of the college's ability to effectively deliver upon its mission. Specific information was gathered within these six

categories to provide tangible evidence of whether colleges within the study could, indeed, be classified as colleges of abundance and choice.

As noted earlier, qualitative approaches, specifically case study methodology, was the primary vehicle for exploring the impact of leadership behaviors on the movement of a community college towards greater abundance. Soy (1997) states "case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research." This study fit the criteria for employing a case study approach as it dealt with a very complex issue – organizational change and the impact of leadership within a community college. Implementing major organizational change efforts within colleges is a tremendously difficult endeavor and requires in depth analysis of the situation to decipher if change efforts succeeded and if so, how. In addition, this study explored the impact of executive leader behaviors on organizational change through the understanding of the CCAM – a model still in development. Lessons learned from this in-depth analysis not only assisted in greater understanding of how executive leaders guide major organizational change efforts, but also provided insight into the appropriateness of the CCAM itself.

Role of the Researcher

As this study utilized qualitative methods to gather data, delineating the role of the researcher is crucial as it not only "provide[d] background data through which the audience can better understand the topic, the setting, or the participants" (Creswell, 2003, p. 184), but because the researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). It should be noted this study built upon the work of Alfred et al. (forthcoming, 2008) in which researchers developed a health continuum for

community colleges and explored the importance of exceptional leveraging. The primary goal of this study, however, was the exploration of community college presidential behaviors believed to assist institutions in moving toward greater abundance. This exploration into the nuances of presidential behaviors provided a bevy of new information and potential for additional studies and did not rehash information provided in the original community college abundance publication.

In regards to previous relationships with the presidents, the researcher was aware of their work and reputations, but had never worked directly with them. However, Dr. Richard Alfred has worked with all four presidents, is respected by them, and acted as the access point for the researcher. The researcher made contact with each of the presidents prior to the study and presented a summary of the CCAM and the purpose of the dissertation. After doing so, each of the presidents agreed to allow entry into their institution for observations and shared with college staff what the researcher would be doing at the college. Two of the college presidents interviewed during this study provided guidance and insight to the research team during the first abundance study and were very familiar with the principles behind the CCAM. The familiarity of the presidents with the framework, as well as the participation of two of them in the previous study, is one of the reasons they were purposefully chosen for this study. The researcher is aware of the institutional conditions, perceptions of leveraging, and leadership histories within the colleges – all of which allowed him to choose them as cases for the study. Additionally, the trust established during previous conversations about abundance as well as their interactions with Dr. Alfred ensured that the researcher had open access to organizational members, documents, and campus activities. While the other two colleges had no

previous experience with the CCAM, the presidents of the institutions have worked with and respect Dr. Alfred, so entry into these institutions was little more than a formality.

Settings

In an effort to better understand the presidential behaviors associated with moving a community college toward greater abundance, four community colleges were chosen as case sites for this multi-site case study. All four institutions classified themselves as comprehensive community colleges seeking to deliver on multiple missions including credit and non-credit education, conference of terminal, transfer, and technical degrees, diplomas, certificates and certifications, workforce education, remedial/developmental /ABE programs, and community outreach. Additionally, all institutions are suburban institutions located in metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) based on information from the 2000 Census (Census, 2007) and are responsible for serving communities with similar population bases, workforce concerns, and community expectations. Outside of these similarities, two of the colleges have two campuses, the student populations range from fifteen thousand to more than forty-five thousand (yearly including credit and non-credit), they represent states with different public funding formulas, and have better than average (but less than abundant) local tax bases ranging from above average to plentiful (as is typical within the suburban community college).

Sample

Aside from the fact that colleges can be viewed as organized anarchies and professional bureaucracies (Mintzberg, 1989; Raelin, 1994; Satow, 1975; Weick, 1976), community colleges have the added characteristics of unionization and a meta-mission. Attempting to explore the impact and potential for major organizational changes within

community colleges requires that researchers collect and analyze data within each organizational subculture (Shults, 2006). This is especially true in regards to the CCAM as two of the premises underlying the model are that developing human capabilities and empowering members throughout the organization are paramount. As a result, examining the presidential behaviors associated with a shift towards increased organizational health required the collection of data beyond the executive level. In order to both gather data from an appropriate number of individuals within the various college subcultures and maintain a manageable project, the researcher engaged in semi-structured interviews based upon subculture representation, however, the first interaction with each colleges involved the president as the researcher needed to gather data on the concrete indicators of abundance. After distributing and collecting the surveys, the researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews. Interviews with the executive team members (ranging from five to eight per colleges) were conducted via phone while interviews with non-executive college staff were conducted in person. The goal was to interview ten non-executive staff at each college from within each of the following groups:

➢ faculty (one general education and one career education)
➢ classified staff (one union and one non-union)
➢ non-academic middle administrators (two total)
➢ academic division deans (one liberal arts and one career program)
➢ academic department chairs (two total)

Data Collection

In an effort to obtain the greatest amount of contextualized and insider-specific information, the researcher engaged in semi-structured interviewing to gather data from the president, executive team, and non-executive college staff. Specifically, the questions were designed to gather information about the level, intensity, and intentionality of

optimistic and positive presidential behaviors, the degree to which the president values

and works to develop human potential, the degree to which the president works to ensure

congruence between the organization and external environment, and institutional

perceptions of the president as organizational sensemaker. To ensure that data was

collected from the representative groups and anonymity was maintained, the researcher

worked in collaboration with the college liaison (an individual selected by the president

to work with the researcher) to ensure a purposeful selection of non-executive staff. Since

the study was bounded by the tenure of the current president, the researcher requested

interviews with staff serving during the entire tenure of the president..

In addition to interviewing, however, the researcher relied upon observations and

document analysis to triangulate the data in an effort to increase both the trustworthiness

and dependability of the information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The only document the

researcher was certain of collecting beforehand was the mission/vision/purpose

statements as these allowed for a comparison between espoused statements and

perceptions of actions. Other than these declaration statements, the researcher listened for

clues from the interviewees as to what documents should be collected. For example,

respondents at Gamma Community College continually spoke of a list of expectations

and interviewees at Theta Community College talked frequently about both an award for

mistakes and a forgiveness card, so the researcher analyzed these documents in an

attempt to triangulate information provided during the interviews. The researcher had no

preconceived ideas about which observations would be conducted during the visits and

relied upon cues from interviewees as well as opportunities available during his visit. In

the case of Alpha Community College, the visit was scheduled around an executive team

meeting based upon comments from executive team members about the degree of cohesion between them and the president and in the case of Iota Community College, a snowstorm occurred during the visit and the researcher observed a community event on rather than the college-specific meeting. In hindsight, however, it was a serendipitous occurrence as the researcher was able to observe how intricately the college and community are connected.

Analysis of the interviews was conducted through use of Atlas TI, a qualitative software program, using a three-stage process of coding, "a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments" (Schwandt, 1997, p. 26). This three stage coding process was conducted separately for each of the four cases to preserve the context of the information and to fully examine non-executive perceptions of presidential behaviors. The first stage, open coding, included line-by-line analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the process was initiated before all of interviews were completed so that the researcher could identify emerging themes. The second stage, axial coding, involved reconstituting categories based on connecting discrete concepts identified through the open coding process. Since this level of coding was the lynchpin for the entire process, the researcher took great care in ensuring a logical categorization of concepts and identifying disconfirming evidence that proved useful in assessing the appropriateness of the coding scheme. Selective coding, the final stage, was used to categorize the axial codes into the overarching categories used for interpreting the data. A unique approach used within this study was to separate the selective codes into two groups – behaviors associated with institutional movement towards greater abundance and behaviors associated with institutional

movement towards lesser abundance. This decision was made based upon suggestions

from the committee on how to deal with the disconfirming evidence discovered during

the analysis phase of the study. After the selective codes were identified within the

individual cases, they were then used as axial codes in a cross-case analysis section

where the four selective codes used were the four overarching propositions that guided

the study. The cross-case analysis chapter followed the same procedure of separating the

results into behaviors associated with institutional movement towards abundance and

behaviors associated with movement towards lesser abundance. Presenting the results in

this manner ensures that not only are behaviors associated with institutional movement

towards or away form greater abundance provided, but that readers understand the

context of the behaviors based upon the individual college narratives.

Trustworthiness and dependability of data are crucial elements within a

qualitative study and were dealt with explicitly within this dissertation. Construct or

design trustworthiness (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Yin, 1984) was enhanced

through verbatim accounts, low-inference descriptors, and mechanically recorded data.

Verbatim accounts ensured that participant voice was preserved and the data's meaning

was preserved and maintained through the use of literal statements (where appropriate[2]).

Low inference descriptors refer to precise and context-intensive descriptions of people

and situations and were ensured through meticulous note taking during the observation

phases of the data collection. Mechanically recorded data, collected through the use of a

digital recorder, ensured accurate data collection with the additional benefit of allowing

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[2] The information collected in this dissertation was very sensitive in nature and some participants provided explicit details that would either threaten the college's anonymity or embarrass organizational members. The researcher used his judgment to eliminate certain words, change certain phrases, and remove most of the institutional vernacular in an effort to limit the chances for individual identification or retribution.

the researcher to take field notes that provided useful probes throughout the interviewing process. Descriptive trustworthiness (Johnson & Christiensen, 2000) was enhanced through thick description, a term credited to Clifford Geertz (1973). Thick description was obtained by exploring and providing detail pertaining to specific elements of the culture (organizational values, specific events, descriptors of the climate, etc.), interpreting contextualized meanings through interviews, document analyses, and observations, and determining which leadership behaviors were associated with the college's movement towards or away from greater abundance. Interpretive trustworthiness (Hoepfl, 1997) was increased by the use of verbatim accounts and low-inference descriptors (described above) and internal trustworthiness (Johnson & Christiensen, 2000) was strengthened in this study through the use of data triangulation. The three methods of data collection utilized within this study included interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews data was compared to observation notes and documents analysis helped strengthen trustworthiness by confirming findings and producing disconfirming evidence. Disconfirming evidence was used to question and reevaluate emerging themes, establish alternative codes, and provide guidance for future studies. Although discussed in detail later, one of the presidents in the study engages in a form of hierarchical leadership antithetical to CCAM assumptions, yet indications are that organizational members feel he is an effective leader. This and other issues of disconfirming evidence are provided in greater detail in the discussion chapter. External trustworthiness was ensured through the use of or data triangulation and thick description (Stake, 2000) and illustrated analytic generalization, which is the expansion and

generalization of theories, instead of statistical generalization, which is the enumeration of frequencies (Yin, 1984, p. 21).

Dependability in qualitative studies is related to the collection of data, so methods of strengthening dependability within this study included full disclosure of the selection process (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) and accurate documentation of research procedures (Yin, 1984). Selection of participants in this study was conducted through a blend of purposeful (maximum sampling) and modified snowballing techniques. Maximum sampling, in this study, was ensured by gathering data from multiple subcultures and was crucial since major organizational changes impact people throughout the college and the various interpretations of behaviors were important in interpreting the perceived impact of presidential behaviors. While not technically snowballing, the researcher depended upon the college liaison to determine that non-executive staff fit the prescribed categories and were willing to participate in face-to-face interviews.

Reflection

In response to the litany of research indicating that economic conditions have changed and organizations need to pursue new approaches to enhancing effectiveness, the CCAM is presented as an alternative approach to management designed to assist community colleges in moderating the effects of their more dynamic and turbulent environments. However, this study was not conducted to discover an exhaustive list of every presidential behavior associated with moving a college towards greater abundance. Rather, the presidential categories presented within this study were developed in accordance with the assumptions underlying the CCAM and the strengths-based theories that guided its development. Based upon the information on effective leadership

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behaviors in POS and POB, the researcher was able to develop a comprehensive and contextually appropriate categorization of behaviors that, theoretically, are associated with continuous improvement based upon transcendent leveraging of institutional resources. By conducting an in-depth analysis within four different colleges, the researcher was able to identify a number of specific and contextualized behaviors that provided support for the CCAM and the classification of behaviors. Additionally, the information provided disconfirming evidence that forced the researcher to explore behaviors associated with movement away from greater abundance. While not exhaustive, the researcher believes that the exploration into the presidential behaviors uncovered in this study will prove useful for future community college leaders, practitioners, and researchers.

There is a possibility that results from this study, if viewed as a critique of the executive leaders, could lead to unfair and unfounded criticism of their presidencies. This was not the purpose of the study nor should readers interpret that any presidents in this study are more effective than others as the study was not designed to assess the effectiveness of community college presidents. Leadership is a complex concept based on the fact that examining and understanding followership is an essential, but often overlooked, aspect of leadership. This dissertation provided separate chapters for each case in an effort to increase the trustworthiness of the findings by protecting participant voice and institutional context. Providing this context will, hopefully, assist readers in understanding that perceptions of behaviors are deeply rooted in the histories of the colleges and, therefore, presidents need to be understood in the context of their unique experiences. As discovered in this study, behaviors perceived by organizational members

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as positive in one setting may be viewed negatively in another. In Gamma Community College, for example, some of the presidential behaviors deeply rooted in the organization are in opposition to behaviors expected from colleges moving toward greater abundance and while some of these behaviors are identified as preventing a move toward greater abundance, the college faired fairly well on the concrete indicators of abundance. This fact further supports the notion that this is an exploratory study designed to gain greater information on and insight into the behaviors associated with a move toward abundance, not one designed to determine increased organizational performance or presidential effectiveness.

There are assumptions inherent within this study and the presidential behaviors researched are presented based on those assumptions. Again, presidents whose behaviors best reflect the assumptions within the CCAM may *appear* to be more effective, however, effectiveness goes beyond the scope of this study. Each of the presidents in this study is highly regarded, inside and outside of their colleges. In fact, more than one has received national awards from advocacy agencies based upon national perceptions of effectiveness. Additionally, each president has been responsible for tremendous positive changes within their organizations and should be applauded for their efforts and long tenures – not judged by how well their behaviors fit into a model they may or may not be familiar with. Results should be interpreted through the overarching propositions and behavioral categories and as an attempt to better understand the impact of behaviors on a college's ability to reach towards abundance.

Chapter IV

Alpha Community College – A Healthy and Vibrant College Struggling to Meet Changing External Needs

Introduction

This chapter provided useful information on leadership behaviors associated with movement towards and away from greater abundance. The president of Alpha Community College (ACC), Dr. Davis, has been at the institution for sometime and is familiar with the leadership and management research, including the Positivity Psychology and POS work. He agrees with the underlying premises of positivity and improving the plights of organizational members and feels there is congruence between the POS approach and his leadership style.

Presidential behaviors associated with moving ACC towards abundance include the creation of proactive and strategic change, working to find and develop good people, working to establish shared organizational direction, and exerting a great deal of energy on internal issues. Additionally, interviews also uncovered presidential behaviors associated with a move towards lesser abundance, which included not focusing enough on finding and developing the right people, not establishing an organization focused enough on shared direction, and focusing too much time on internal issues. In this chapter, these behaviors are explored in depth and within the context of the college through both examples and quotes.

Indicators of Abundance Results

Results from the survey on indicators of abundance were inconsistent across the colleges surveyed. The questions, while developed to provide information on the position of the institution in the abundance continuum, proved difficult to answer for each of the colleges with the degree of difficulty varying by case site. Despite the difficulties, this information, in conjunction with the interview data, provides insight into whether the institution had reached abundance or not.

The first group of questions revolved around partner networks and proved very difficult for Dr. Davis to answer. Instead of providing a specific number of partners, he indicated the college has partnered with all local school districts, two four-year colleges, the statewide on-line higher education consortium, and local agencies. When asked about how often the college is asked to partner, he indicated that partnering only occurs through the grants held by the college – a number which he placed at between twenty and thirty per year. President Davis stated the college, outside of the partnerships listed, is not involved in any partnership networks[3].

The second group of questions focused on human capital development and staffing patterns. When asked about the amount of time high-level positions remain open, President Davis explained that jobs are filled almost immediately. He explained this phenomenon is a result of being listed as a "high-level employer" by a national search group, and noted the search firm filters its highest quality candidates toward jobs that open up at ACC based upon its reputation as a people-centered institution. Dr. Davis also noted the college has little trouble filling faculty positions and that in the last year, only

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[3] The core indicator questions were difficult for some of the presidents and their staff to answer, so some of the information represents best guesses rather than definitive numbers. Despite the varying degrees of specificity, the results are useful in contextualizing the interview data.

once did the college fail to secure its first choice. In estimating the participation rate for professional development, he indicated that 100% of administrators participate. He could not provide numbers or estimates for faculty and staff, but indicated that the faculty and staff professional development office provides funding for travel and conference attendance as well as numerous on-campus events that are well attended.

When asked about the prevalence of private gifts and grants, he indicated that the college has always depended upon two to three million dollars a year in state and federal grants, but that in the past few years, monies have been better targeted at delivering on the institutional mission. According to their 2006-2007 budget, 8% of the budget came from private grants, 14% came from federal grants, 7% came from state grants, and 2% came from other sources. By focusing on non-federal sources and working to develop private funding, the college has been able to contain its tuition and fee increases in comparison to other colleges in the state. President Davis also discussed the exponential growth of the Alpha foundation in recent years. When he arrived at the college in the mid 1990s, the foundation was worth less than $100,000. In the year 2008, however, it is worth millions.

A statement from a college member best contextualizes President Davis' responses to the technology questions: "President Davis is our technology president." When Dr. Davis arrived at the college, technology was not listed as a strategic priority and some of his initial cabinet members felt the focus on technology was a passing fad. Since 2000, the budget for technology has increased from less than $500,000 to $2,500,000 per year - accounting for roughly 5% of the college's budget. Through various government earmarks and grants, the college maintains a three-year cycle on

updating its servers and has developed a center for instructional technology to enhance the use of technology in the classroom.

Information on workforce development, like partnering, presented difficulties for Dr. Davis. He explained that for fiscal year 2007, the college held fifteen workforce contracts. The small percentage, according to the president, is based upon the fact there are numerous corporate trainers throughout the state and workforce development is less of a priority in his state than in others. In an effort to work with the providers, however, the college has hired two full-time staff in the Workforce Development Division to develop partnerships with corporate trainers. Additionally, major industries have largely left the area and the largest single occupational sector is the banking industry.

Dr. Davis provided information about the low-income students served by Alpha Community College and started by explaining that the college is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and serves a primarily poor and rural population. He spoke of a $170,000 grant recently received for the establishment of a zero interest emergency loan program for students (providing up to $1,000, per student, per year). The president also indicated that around thirty-five hundred high need students (around 25% of the student population) receive some form of scholarship or grants each year with approximately 10% of the funds coming from the foundation. Additionally, 40% of students are at the Pell-level, although he did not state that 40% of students were receiving Pell grants.

While information provided on the survey indicates the college has been able to develop significant resources from non-governmental sources, has greatly increased the use and funding of technology, and has worked to improve funding opportunities for students, there are external struggles. For example, obtaining workforce development

contracts have proven to be difficult, but the college does not appear to be working

aggressively to develop partner networks. Based upon the questions asked and the

assumptions underlying the abundance framework (transcendent leveraging of resources),

the college appears to be strong internally and less so externally. Based upon the inability

to fully leverage external partnerships, a key factor in the CCAM, these results indicate

that ACC is a college approaching the classification of abundance, but unable to reach

that classification at this point.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Greater Abundance

Engages the College in Strategic Change

Worked to "fix" the "broken" culture

A comparison I use to differentiate climate from culture is to present the

differential characteristics of weather and topography. Weather, like organizational

climate, changes quickly and small environmental shifts (i.e. cloud cover, movement of a

cold front) can have major impacts. With weather, changes are temporary and flux is the

norm. Topography, like organizational culture, also changes, but natural changes are

subtle and often observable only when comparing the lay of the land over a number of

years. Truly transforming topography requires extreme, often tedious, and consistent (i.e.

blasting a tunnel through a mountain) effort over an extended period of time. Comments

from Dr. Davis and college staff indicate that he has been working to shift the

topography, not just affect the weather.

Based upon the comments of an administrator at the college during the previous

presidency, indications are that President Davis was brought in to right the ship and

ensure the college was more capable of serving students and meeting the needs of the

college's stakeholders. He indicated that the college was "obviously open for business",

but "operating at less than maximum efficiency" based on the fact the culture was

fractured with multiple competing subcultures and intergroup conflict. When asked if the

old culture would require a new president to be brought in, he responded, "Oh God

yes…there were a lot of things broken with the college and I think a lot of us could see it,

but weren't in a position to do anything about it and two, I think a lot of it just reflects his

management style and organizational philosophy."

Shortly after the president arrived, he was presented with an opportunity to hire

new administrators due to retirements and resignations (to be discussed later) as well as a

need to correct the hyper-negative atmosphere described by one of the respondents.

> I think it was the meanest place I have ever seen in my entire life. People
> were hateful and mean to one another, they didn't really give much of a
> damn about the college, the students, they may have said they did, but
> their behaviors said anything but that. Nobody worked together on
> anything…I mean it was so dysfunctional; it was the worst kind of
> dysfunctional family. I have never seen anything quite like it and I have
> been in higher ed for thirty years.

President Davis had a similar impression of just how much work needed to be done in

changing the culture. He stated that finger pointing, blame shifting, and angry

confrontations were standard within the culture, a fact he lays squarely upon the previous

administration. "The culture when I arrived was based upon the president's style, which I

would call a command and control leader. He didn't like people to do anything unless he

told them to do it and they had to do it in a way that satisfied him or he would literally

yell at them." He believed the previous president's dictatorial style, angry demeanor, and

narrow focus were largely responsible for the college's poor performance and lack of

innovation. "People lived in their own silos, kept their head down, tried to do their daily

work and show as little initiative as possible because it was when you showed initiative that you got in trouble." One of the first issues addressed by the president was working to remediate the culture of fear and climate of anger, tension, and distrust.

President Davis is a man who believes that, ultimately, people are good and talented and when provided with a supportive environment will behave and engage in ethical and positive behaviors. It was his opinion that the atmosphere of anger had created a climate unreflective of the majority of college staff.

> If plans didn't get scheduled right by the registrar, then the academic administrators were angry or if the academic administrators didn't do something right, then the bursar was angry and… well everyone was angry at someone because people were doing sub par jobs. I think it was all institutionally caused because the people here were all very good and that was an interesting thing because there were always good people here.

He understood the influence and impact of a president on ACC and it was his belief that if he began to model behaviors contrary to existing norms, the college would naturally move towards greater effectiveness. "[It was] my belief [that] my actions could be read by people. [So, it was important they saw] that we [the executive team] cared about the college, we cared about students, and we were trying to do things right." He felt that showing genuine concern and care would begin the process of "fixing" a culture described by a long-time organizational member as "broken".

Indications are that the styles of the previous president and President Davis couldn't be more different and that the dramatic shift impacted the climate of the institution almost immediately. A long-tenured interviewee provided a quick synopsis of how morale was impacted the moment President Davis stepped on the campus as the chief executive.

The previous president was much more of an autocrat and he really liked

to hold power. In fact, the [All-staff advisory group] formed almost as a reaction to him, because the feeling was that he wasn't sharing power even with his own administration - he was a very controlling individual. I don't want to paint him too darkly because he wasn't a bad fellow, but that was his style…That's my impression and I think that the faculty developed a lot of resentment toward him because we felt very shutout of the decision-making of the college and when [President Davis] came in, it was like a breath of fresh air and you know, he's much more process oriented and my impression about [him] is that he doesn't really even want to make the decisions he doesn't have to and he is very happy to let other people make the decisions as long as he can trust them to be competent and to make the right decisions.

Individuals throughout the hierarchy and across subcultures shared this sentiment with an administrator explaining that "[President Davis] tr[ied] [to] make sure we are all on the same plane, he will maybe change what he originally thought and he's done that. Our previous president would not do that. He was more dictatorial." She also added, "[The previous president] was not quick to implement change, [he] did not like change too much. [President Davis] is very open-minded, [he] is a change person." The leadership approach taken by President Davis was in such stark contrast to the previous president that there were immediate changes to the climate based upon his openness to decision-making, willingness to change, and dedication to treating individuals with respect and care. While the changes to the climate were seen almost immediately, changes to the culture, as is usually the case, took longer.

In one of the first cabinet meetings during his tenure at ACC, President Davis was asked to describe his management style and when he replied "team oriented" the individual quipped, "'well that'll be different.' I didn't have any idea at the time just how serious his response was. I said that we need to learn to work together and to support each other and work on common goals and it took years for people to even understand that let alone act upon it." Based upon comments from college staff, ACC is the type of

institution that takes on the persona of its president and the reality is that adjusting an organization's personality takes time, energy, and patience.

The president became aware of the pervasiveness of selfishness, distrust, and subculture conflict later in his tenure when, again, an organizational member asked a question that put him on the spot. This time it was a faculty member challenging the notion that students are the most important stakeholders on the campus – a value the president was trying to instill deep within the college.

> The third value, and the most important one that I initiated, was that students were the most important stakeholders here at the institution and they were the whole reason why we were here…and that everything needed to be directed, in terms of energy and goals, toward student success. That actually was challenged, if you can believe that, early on in a faculty meeting. Somebody asked me a question that led me to say that students are the most important part of our college and that we really need to do everything we can to help them be successful, period. And a person just stood up, it was a faculty member, and said, you're wrong, the faculty are the most important people here and we had a real honest debate in front of the whole faculty.

This is exactly the type of confrontational style prevalent and encouraged under the previous administration and the type of behavior President Davis was working to eliminate. As indicated by the president, it took years before individuals within the college, administration, faculty, and staff, came to grips with the type of change promoted by President Davis, and years more before they implemented it. His patience has paid off, however, as there are indications the college has moved to a place where deep change (i.e. culture change) is a possibility.

Deep change can only occur when people are open to the notions and a long-tenured respondent indicates that people appear to be more open to change now than in the past. "I think there is a readiness now that maybe there wasn't so much in the past. It seemed like the efforts in the past could get derailed more easily than they can now

because there's more people invested in moving forward." An administrator adds, "we are

at the beginning point of some very positive changes and I think there have been some

catalysts that have occurred over the last year… and its been about getting us into a

period of change…[and] I think most of the college community is hopeful." The

respondent notes that a noticeable shift has occurred, but that true change is just starting

to emerge – and this is after more than a decade of effort by the president. An interviewee

explains the college has gone through numerous iterations and is at a point now where

substantial leaps forward can begin.

> I think it [the college] is trying to transform itself from sort of a bitter past
> to a much more positive…and is trying to go towards a more appreciative
> place than it has been in the past. I think part of it is it's hard to tell you
> that because it was so awful when we first came here…it has gone through
> several iterations and now we're at an iteration where everybody is sort of
> willing to leap far forward.

The president adds that while the college is not where he ultimately would like it to be,

there are numerous indications that old culture values and behaviors are no longer a part

of the college.

> We've certainly made inroads there [in changing the college culture] and
> it has moved in a positive direction to the point where there really isn't the
> kinds of you know, when I first got here, there were some of the state of
> the college addresses and Lord knows what somebody would stand up and
> try to…or [to] throw somebody under the bus and that really doesn't
> happen anymore. So we're beyond that.

The culture appears to still be a work in progress, but it is, at least, a culture that appears

to no longer be "broken."

A respondent at the college during every presidency had only one word to

describe the current culture at the college: "dynamic." He exclaims that he has never seen

the amount of projects, initiatives, and energy at ACC that he sees right now. He also

indicates that positivity is flowing through the college, a description that seems highly

unlikely when compared to the state of the culture when President Davis entered. A

shorter-tenured respondent reiterates that positivity is flowing through the college and

feels the most tangible example is the focus on building strengths rather than fixing

weaknesses (a tenant of the CCAM as well as POS and POB) – a focus brought forward

through the use of appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry, or AI as it is commonly

known, is a planning tool designed to gather input and direction-setting from multiple

parties toward a shared goal. Through the use of AI, this college staff member notes,

> He [President Davis] made the connections people needed to see and
> feel…[and that] we have some strengths and we can grow them…let's get
> together and talk about the strengths and talk and plan specifically about
> how they can lead us toward improved success, improved community
> relations, and other areas.

He adds that the president often refers to a need to focus on strengths, even when

considering externally based initiatives.

> We've been involved in the [diversity] initiative…and there are
> community colleges involved with student success, especially those from
> low-income backgrounds, and we ran some student focus groups and have
> been collecting data and had a large meeting with a number of people
> looking at the gaps, the problems. Doing, not formally, a SWOT analysis
> and [President Davis] was the first person to say, wait a minute, we have
> to remember that besides doing all of this, we have to remember that we
> also have to identify the strengths and grow from them. You see him
> pushing that in subtle and not so subtle ways.

In addition to building strengths, President Davis wants organizational members to base

decisions and directions on hard data. An administrator indicates this has been a primary

focus for the president as he has worked to create a culture where data and evidence are

valued and used to guide directions and decisions. The data-driven culture, however, is

contextualized within the atmosphere of strengths and positivity flowing through the

college.

> [President Davis], consistently for several years, has been working to help create a culture where evidence is important for decision-making in an instructive, but non-threatening way. That I think is important in any environment where you are trying to craft the ability for people to see abundance, to understand that evidence is important, that it must be used, but that it is non-punitive and safe to use.

So while the current culture is seen as dynamic, energetic, and full of change, individuals understand they need to focus on building strengths and gathering data and evidence – concepts President Davis has been pushing since his arrival.

Strategically employs tactics to create organizational change and growth

Under the previous president, innovation, creativity, and free-will were all stifled, but President Davis believed that if he could get individuals throughout the college to trust him, the college could gain access to the knowledge and creativity lying dormant within organizational members. He realized that his leadership style and words were important, but insufficient for unlocking and unleashing the potential within college staff. One of the first tactics used by the president to begin building trust and momentum towards increasing trust was initiating an exercise involving college members in shaping the direction of ACC. The goal was helping people understand their input was not only desired, but valuable and essential to the college's effectiveness. He notes "[the first strategic planning process] was a catalyst and a vehicle…it consisted of eight different goals which were highly operational, nothing strategic…[but] it allowed me to work with the right administrators and…get the college business into some acceptable way." Additionally, "[it was] a culture change effort…not a strategic plan, and that's where it started…and it worked. Not that it got us to where we are today, but it moved us well beyond where we were…[and] to people believing that the president was honest."

President Davis understood that only when the basic needs of organizational members were met, could the college expect them to work toward higher-order concepts.

> Dr. Davis: I believe in sort of the food chain thing where if someone doesn't have oxygen or they're not being fed, then they are not going to be thinking about higher level areas like let's be positive. We just had to get the place running well, we needed to get some respect for administration and administration leadership before we could say why don't we start thinking about appreciative inquiry. Nobody was ready to hear that.

> Interviewer: Right. It's like an organizational Maslow's hierarchy…

> Dr. Davis: Yes

The president, according to one of the college administrators, understood that meeting the basic needs of members meant ensuring that their sensemaking needs were met. "He is working on the day-to-day awareness that people have…and how that can be applied to improvement and banking that over time, they will help to affect the cultural shift. I would say that the cultural shift has already begun." A seasoned organizational member indicates not only has the president made changes relevant to the daily lives of college staff, but he has also provided tangible, yet aspirational goals people can work towards. "[The president] is striving to make sure that we are on top [and instilling] pride [in] ourselves by saying we are the best community college in [state]. We're not there yet. We're trying to get there and we have a goal of being number one."

In addition to meeting basic needs, the president has invested considerable time and organizational energy into initiatives that push input, visioning, and decision-making into areas of the college previously unaccustomed to such responsibilities. According to a newer college member, President Davis understands the college can only be as developed and strong as its staff and he has been working on developing staff since attaining the presidency.

> I think that he recognizes that the organization develops itself
> when people step forward and take responsibility for decisions and
> have some control over the decision-making processes. He knows
> that by delegating some of those decisions, or at least by
> canvassing opinions for some of those decisions, he is going to
> mature the organization.

This college member also adds that rather than solely focusing on providing opportunities

for control, the president recognizes the college benefits by having "non-traditional"

leaders step up into leadership positions. "He recognizes the institution is better off in the

long run if he continues to push other people into those roles [public leadership]…I think

he understands the value of putting others into those positions as often as possible."

Based upon the comments of a long-tenured respondent, efforts to involve the whole

college in advisory roles have been very broad and pervasive. He points to the use of

team-based management, an exercise that creates diverse teams around small institutional

concerns, as the most inclusive and useful process in gaining input and participation from

throughout the college.

> You know, the [team-based management] initiative here at the college has
> been very big and it's been a way for people, employees at the college,
> who in the past were part of the more traditional decision-making process
> and may have been excluded from the process of finding solutions now
> [are] actually feeling like they have played an important role and now
> there have been numerous [teams]. I'm not even going to guess how many
> we have had to date, but you know, even out of my area of the college,
> you know, well over half of my staff has been involved in the [team-based
> management] initiative in some capacity or another.

Dr. Davis has also worked to ensure his behaviors are consistent, open,

and lacking any appearance of impropriety that might derail the change process.

One tactic the president uses to ensure congruence involves federal, state, and

private grants, money the college has depended upon for years. He places great

emphasis on never accepting money just because it is available, but only when it

enables the institution to deliver upon its mission.

> I think there was a time around here when…people, we are pretty
> aggressive about grants, we get about three to four million a year, which
> for our size college is pretty good, and we have had the discussions, and I
> leave it to the vice presidents; it isn't like we have a central control
> committee, but we talk about that we are not going after grants that are not
> consistent with our strategic plans, and that will divert resources away
> from it, and so we have become very conscious about it and very
> purposeful…

Additionally, one of the long-tenured staff members indicates that the president is seen as

a man of high integrity and honesty and cites her conversations with trustees about how

pervasive this view is inside and outside of the college.

> I had an opportunity to interview the trustees and to interview the
> Chairman of the Board and he just had incredible respect, and I think he
> could see his honesty and integrity in his actions. There were no pretenses
> and there was transparency and openness and saying this is what the
> college community does and I think as administrators, we feel this. He
> shares his agenda. It is always open.

While saying that decision-making should be shared is popular and pushed by theorists,

academicians, and consultants, there are also indications that instituting initiatives that

gather input and fail to institute the suggestions actually *decreases* engagement (Pfau &

Kay, 2002). An administrator indicates the president's actions are consistent with his

words and that in certain instances; President Davis has adjusted his thinking and

decisions based on input. "I think he's very open, I mean I think [President Davis] has his

own ideas and his own opinions, but I think he is a very good listener and you can change

his mind." Another administrator provides a specific example where she was able to

make the president aware of his impact on the college and how his actions are viewed and

he quickly made adjustments so that his actions matched the values he espouses.

> We have a [college social event] at the theater whenever a play is running
> and one night the faculty and members of the community can come for
> free and it's sponsored by the president… but he shows up less and less

and last time, he was out of town…I went to him and said you couldn't have known about this, but do you understand how important it is for you to personally be seen as supporting the theater? And yeah, absolutely he heard it and on the spot made some ideas about how to change this and make things better. So he is willing to have people say, you dropped the ball and… I have had to say, maybe you don't understand the impact of you not following through on that or not being there and here is the ripple effect and he just said alright, okay, and has tried to change it.

The president has worked, since arriving at the college, to ensure that his actions and the initiatives he champions increase trust in his leadership, provide common understandings for college staff, and allow individuals to step forward and take ownership of Alpha Community College.

Embraces the role of institutional sensemaker

As noted earlier, ACC is an institution heavily dependent upon the leadership of the president and this has been especially true over the past decade, as the higher education system within the state has seen numerous cuts and industry after industry has left the state. An interviewee feels that what the college has needed most and has received from the president is a focus on positivity and optimism.

Well, what we need most is his positive attitude because of the budget cuts and the constant bad news that we receive and one day he is sending an e-mail with somewhat good news and the next day its down, but we need a president who is always going to look at something optimistically and he tends to do that and that is what this college needs. If you don't have an optimistic president, then you are always in a gloom and doom state of mind.

Interestingly, when asked what the college needs most from the president, respondents were quick to use various metaphors to describe what the president has provided for the institution. The most common metaphor used was that of sensemaker; not surprising based upon the reverence held for presidents at Alpha Community College. A long-tenured respondent explains that the most important role he serves is that of stabilizer.

> Well, I think he has seen us through just an enormous amount of change in a pretty grounded fashion. If I were him, I would be doing many more changes, but the place wouldn't feel as stable (laughs). That's how I am, but he gives it a sense of, like its grounded, like its going to be okay, you know he just, maybe other people would call it centered, but he leaves you felling that the college has come a long way, it has changed enormously, it will have more changes that it needs to go through, but it will have the tools that it can use to do that.

Some of the other metaphors used by respondents reflect the concept of sensemaker and include best advocate, primary researcher, and pathfinder. These metaphors relate to the fact that the president has effectively lobbied for the college, keeps organizational members abreast of changes and their impacts on the college, and helps people find pathways towards professional and personal development. Another interesting metaphor used was mature leader. This metaphor, provided by a college administrator, refers to the president's ability to provide the mature leadership needed for sustainable growth.

> I often refer to his leadership as mature and by that I don't mean old, I mean wise, well-informed, practiced, stable, calm, you know, those kinds of adjectives to describe not just who he is, but how he leads. The impression I have been given by stories about the years before [President Davis] was here is that the institution was not always this calm or this well respected around the state and [President Davis'] influence here has been a stabilizing one.

President Davis has worked on implementing changes to the college's culture from the first day he stepped on the campus, but has also worked to ensure the college is able to navigate changes within the external environments. Among the primary mechanisms used to ensure congruence between the college and changing external conditions is effective communication. An organizational member explains that one way he communicates effectively with the college is by bringing relevant parties onto campus. "He will always keep people informed through e-mail, whether it be legislative, I mean he does have legislative day where he invites legislators to meetings, these open

meetings." In addition to simply providing information, however, the president depends

upon people throughout the college to provide suggestions on needed changes and to

implement the changes when identified. A long-time respondent believes it is

involvement by others in addition to increased communication that has positioned the

college to successfully navigate changing conditions.

> I think through changing the climate and culture and delegating authority
> and having more people in control of many things and through having
> communication about what's going on, there is more of a sense that we're
> all in this together. And so when we need to change [based on] what issues
> come up, he would sort of remind people here's what's happening and it's
> either going to be, here's what I'm going to do about it because of
> circumstances as a president and I need to act or it's okay, I need to
> consult with people and ask what we should do to deal with this or if it's
> something that's slower and not so critical.

Information that the president has successfully assumed the role of organizational

sensemaker was evident from data gathered during the college observation. The

researcher sat in on an executive team meeting during which one of the values pushed by

Dr. Davis was that meeting the needs of the students and community are crucial. Among

the first issues discussed was how to respond to a tragedy in a local community, one in

which another one of the campuses was located. There was a fire in the community and

individuals associated with the college lost property, including a current student who lost

a home. Part of the conversation revolved around how the college could respond

financially (with the president suggesting the creation of a fund) and the other part was

about developing a policy so that college staff could respond in a coordinated manner

instead of simply sending out mass e-mails (which happened in this instance). An

executive team member from institutional advancement indicated that the college has

some emergency situation policies and the president asked her to forward the policies to

him so that he could draft an initial policy to deal with tragedies like this in the future. He also expressed a great deal of concern over the student and suggested that the impact on a student's life will be the focus of the college's response.

In summation, the president has engaged the college in proactive and strategic change from his first day on the job. While the difference in presidential style and his general approach to management injected positivity into the climate almost immediately, it has been his modeling of consistency, openness, and integrity; several strategic initiatives designed to increase trust and participation; and his ability to assess and meet basic needs that have allowed the college to move toward a cultural transition point. While change occurs naturally, the president, as an institutional sensemaker, has ensured the college pursues focused change rather than drift.

Prioritizes Finding and Developing Good People

Works to ensure exceptional organization-person fit

An oft quoted and perhaps overused adage is that timing is everything. In the case of ACC, this appears to be a truism, however, as college staff described the climate before Dr. Davis' arrival as ineffectual, broken, and "among the meanest places" one college staff member had ever seen. A long-tenured college member indicates "He has actually been doing that [working to change the campus culture] since the first day he arrived and he is the right president and came at the right time when the college needed him…" While timing may be everything, fit is crucial as well. One of the primary tasks for President Davis was adjusting the culture of the college and doing so required individuals willing to engage in change and to buy into a new organizational vision. Beyond just individual skills and abilities, fit is an issue of philosophy and mindset as

well.

> As a president, I think the most important thing I do is to hire really, really
> good people. People who believe in the mission of the college, who are
> hard working, experienced, you know, and the second thing is I believe in
> strategic plans and operational plans so that we all know what were doing,
> and third, I give my people lots of space. Once I believe they are good,
> and two, we agree on some sort of plan and I know what direction they are
> going to go in, I really give them space and I insist that they work as a
> team.

Particularly important is that the president trust individuals who are not only talented, but

also committed to organizational goals and to each other. With a management style that is

person-centered, he places a great deal of trust in his direct reports to both care for the

mission and the people of ACC. One respondent observed that the president started

delegating authority only after ensuring that individuals entrusted in positions of power

were trustworthy and ethical.

> I think [what] he's been able to do, most recently, to do that [push
> organizational members] through delegation and when he started [here],
> there was a certain amount of dysfunctionality in his administrative team,
> and that was one of the things that he had to deal with and that he needed
> to build a functional cabinet.

A seasoned respondent shares this perspective, as he believes that with the right people,

the president's desire to share power works well. "You know, I think with the right

people, it works and I've said over the years, we've gotten more and more of the right

people onboard here." Finding the right people has been a focus of President Davis'

tenure, a focus that has resulted in the removal of some individuals from within the

college. One of the first areas President Davis focused on was his cabinet. Engaging in a

thorough examination and analysis of fit within the cabinet was essential because it sent a

message to the entire staff he was serious about rehabilitating the college and its culture.

> …The most important thing I had to do was to get my cabinet, my central
> administration performing or functioning, if not at a high level, at least at

an acceptable to an above average level, where they were good people,
they were doing their best job and they were working well with the people
that needed them and in order to achieve that after being here eighteen
months, and having workshops and lots of discussions, I ended up having
to replace every one of them with new people, and I never expected to
have to do, but I think that was key.

While replacing the senior administration with more qualified and ethical leaders was an

important step for the president, changes need to be addressed in another area of the

college – the faculty. As indicated in the literature section, community colleges operate

largely based upon the work of two powerful and often opposing subcultures:

administration and full-time faculty. Obviously tenure makes it difficult for presidents to

simply remove faculty, but ACC benefited from having large groups of faculty retire –

faculty who grew into their roles under authoritarian and often divisive former presidents.

A college administrator believes that getting new faculty into the fold has been a major

reason why the college has changed during President Davis' tenure.

You know, we have a new crop of faculty coming on, some of the old
faculty are leaving, and things are changing because, well some of…those
individuals who have been here for a while are somewhat resistant to a lot
of things going on at one time and the newer people…being frank, they're
willing to jump on [to new changes or initiatives].

Another long tenured respondent, this time from workforce development, believes

changes to staff and mid-level administrators have also been a catalyst for changes to the

culture. "There's a lot of new blood at the college and I think a lot of the old views and

old ways of doing things have gone and the ones who are still here are no longer in the

majority and life has changed… Everybody is just interested in making things work

here." In short, the positive changes experienced at Alpha are largely the result of the

committed college staff, some of whom are new and replaced less dedicated individuals.

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Established professional development as an institutional priority

Professional development is something President Davis believes strongly in and is fiercely committed to. When asked about how the college funds professional development in spite of difficult financial constraints, he indicated that cutting opportunities for travel has never been an option. "I don't choose to cut back on travel and development because I think that's critical even when you are having hard times…we may take one trip instead of two…but we don't stop it. I think that's the wrong place to cut." Interestingly, the president has not worked to create specific institution-wide policies establishing professional development as a priority, nor has he asked his direct reports to do so within their units and departments. Instead, he has sought, from the very beginning, to develop a climate that supports and pushes for continual improvement of the person and the college by modeling commitment and hiring good people.

> When you interview them [other college staff], I think you will find that we don't have this discussion where I say I want you to be professionally developed. They are just good people who are active and they know people nationally, they are involved nationally, and they see me doing the same thing and they know its okay. It's more of a climate than a policy.

An administrator indicates that this "climate of development" represents a dramatic change over the climate she saw when arriving at the college.

> When I first came here…nobody got to travel anyplace and most people hadn't been three miles away from the college in thirty years. When he came, he just changed that because he wanted them to belong to professional organizations to see how the rest of the world does business.

After arriving at the college, the president immediately instituted two major efforts designed to increase professional development opportunities for administrators, faculty, and staff. The first was a strategic leadership forum made up of members from differing

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job classifications at ACC and the purpose was two-fold; to establish that he wanted

involvement from people throughout the college and that continuous learning, seeking

evidence, and valuing knowledge must become cultural values. A long-tenured

interviewee recalls how powerful the experience was for him.

> We worked for three years and met with different colleges that were
> involved in different places and we went to [large U.S. city] and we
> visited certain places and did different things. There was a team of us who
> went with him and it was a mixed team of administrators and faculty and
> that was a very powerful experience for me. It shifted my perspective and
> that's when I learned to be more of a strategic thinker.

Another effort initiated early in President Davis' tenure was the expansion of professional

development opportunities on campus. This occurred through the creation of a stand-

alone professional development office with two full-time staff and a separate operating

budget. The office's focus was, and has remained, working with faculty and staff through

workshops, provision of travel monies, and opportunities to work with other

organizations. President Davis recalls,

> For faculty, the key is the [professional development office]. This is one of
> the smartest things I ever did. When I came here, we had a part-time
> person who was called the faculty and staff developer - something like
> that, I don't remember the title, and very shortly after I arrived here, I
> moved her directly under my supervision, made her full-time, gave her a
> full-time assistant, and administrative assistant, and gave her a big office
> to accommodate chairs and couches and people coming together for
> meetings, and she was a huge dynamo and it was like releasing, I mean
> you can't believe that this energy was ever contained, so she has started all
> kinds of programs like learning communities and teaching communities.

The President has continued to develop new learning and development opportunities for

staff and the college recently began a leadership initiative on the campus of ACC. The

initiative was heavily influenced by a statewide effort to develop leaders within colleges

and universities, an effort championed and led by President Davis. This initiative has

largely been met with energy and excitement through the college and an administrator

finds it especially exciting, as "it will be an opportunity for people who work across the

college from different areas to enhance their leadership skills." Another respondent

emphasized that this effort is an example of how his speeches about developing leaders

and pushing leadership is not just talk. "We [the college] invited the entire community

because he is so committed to not just saying that leadership exists at every level, but to

developing it as well and I think that we have great opportunities [here at Alpha]."

Pushes people to reach their potential

One of the questions asked of all interviewees is their impression of whether the

president consciously pushes people to the limits of their abilities. The point of the

question was to allow individuals to determine what push meant to them and if the

president, in any noticeable way, attempts to ensure individuals are stretched beyond their

perceived capabilities. One interviewee, after considering the question, does believe the

president pushes people and stated "I think we all experience that there is a sense of being

stretched and there's a lot being asked of us…and I think it is part of the style and I have

to think it's a conscious thing." An administrator also believes the president consciously

pushes people indicating "they complain and say we can't take on one more project, but

once [President Davis] presents it again, they will come around and be part of whatever

project is going on for the college to move forward." A long-tenured interviewee believes

the president consciously pushes people because he is trying to help them reach their

potential. "I think he sees the potential in people that maybe other people don't see and

he's good at bringing that out. That certainly has been in my case."

Other individuals asked this question hesitated somewhat because they don't

believe the term push fits his approach to leadership. This includes President Davis who does not see a need to push people because he and other college staff have spent the time and energy to hire highly qualified people who fit the culture. "I really don't think that I do, except by example. I really meant what I said before, I hire really good people and they're incredibly self-motivated, I don't have to push them. That's just unnecessary, they're just hard driving." This philosophy appears to resonate with the college members as other staff feel the president does not, technically, push people to the limits of their abilities, but rather encourages them to take advantage of opportunities for professional development. One respondent stated, "I would say encourage as it's hard for me to imagine him pushing anybody towards a specific direction. So I wouldn't say push, but I would definitely say encourage - absolutely." An administrator concurs and notes, "I don't believe he pushes them. I think he sets a direction and encourages them - he's not a pusher. So does he push them to the limit of their abilities, I don't think so…I guess I am viewing pushing as more aggressive." The idea of putting up high expectations and then encouraging individuals to reach towards the expectations appears to be a common theme as multiple organizational members reiterated this point. Another interviewee noted, "I think that he is not a micromanager, but he does want things to work smoothly and work well and for the students to be well served and it's not just because it's in his job description and I think that he places the onus of that on others." An administrator backed up this statement when he expressed,

> I think he gives them the opportunity…You want to try something because
> it's an opportunity for the college and perhaps you have seen it work
> somewhere else and you know, failure, well if you were to meet all of
> your goals he might say that you didn't set your goals high enough and I
> think that's his philosophy, its not necessarily to push. It's more of an
> expectation and I wouldn't say he pushes me to do that, but I know there is

an expectation for me to be reaching.

A respondent provided even more context to how the president works to ensure that the college moves forward, but that people are cared for and allowed to make choices about their own development.

> I don't think he drives people like that. You know, I think he sees a lot of room for people to decide for themselves how hard they want to push and how far they want to go. And if something isn't getting done, he'll step in to make sure that it does get done. So no, I wouldn't say that he's making a conscious effort to push everybody to the limit of their abilities, it's not a matter of that. I would say that he makes a conscious effort to expose people to their opportunities. He's very deliberate and makes a conscious effort to do that. He shows them the way but doesn't push them down the path.

In summary, the president has worked, from his first days in office, to ensure that individuals at the college buy into and support the direction and mission of the college. Additionally, he has established programs, initiatives, and offices to support professional development at the college and allows people to develop based upon their own volition and at their own pace. This has included ensuring proper person organizational fit through retirements and making difficult decisions about removing staff when necessary. Additionally, he has modeled behaviors that both encourage people to take advantage of professional development and reach towards higher expectations of themselves. These behaviors indicate that President Davis is serious about finding and developing individuals dedicated to the college's mission and vision.

Works at Ensuring Shared Organizational Direction

Ensuring congruence between workgroup and organizational values

While subcultures within colleges and universities always have some values specific to their area, achieving an environment with congruence between the two

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increases the likelihood that organizational change efforts will gain traction and

organizational direction will be shared. A college staff member adds that achieving

congruence is difficult, but that if accomplished, increases the college's productivity. "It's

hard for organizations to get them [organizational members] to get a collective message

and the ones that do, those are your Microsofts and Southwest Airlines companies that

can do that…You see a difference in their productivity." Obviously, reaching a point

where workgroup values are congruent with organizational values is difficult, a comment

echoed by an organizational member. When asked whether he believes organizational

members are generally guided by organization level or workgroup values, an

administrator explained,

> There's no one answer to that question, there really isn't. In an
> organization this large, I would question anyone who would immediately
> say, oh we are driven by our organizational values. I know we want to be,
> [the president], myself, the cabinet members, the deans, many faculty
> members, certainly strive to get us there, but the reality is…you don't
> arrive there by trumpeting the organizational values and hoping they are
> inspirational enough for everybody to follow along. Yes, you need to do
> that, it's an important part of it, but you need to operationalize those
> values so they're ***absorbed into the DNA of the institution***. You know,
> it's not because it's printed on a banner that people follow it as an
> organizational value, that's part of it, but it's because its worked into the
> budget, its worked into the hiring process, it's because it's part of
> classroom technique, it's because it's part of the annual evaluation
> process, its all of those things and, you know, like any organization our
> size, sometimes we're good at that and sometimes we're not…I will say
> the one value that I think people here hold in common here, more than any
> place that I have worked, is student success…Here that has really become
> a call to arms for faculty and staff alike and you hear lots of conversations
> about it, you see evidence of people working towards it, you find
> compromises over areas you would think to be very independent values or
> departmental values, you see compromises to achieve that institutional
> value, so on that front, I think we're pretty well positioned. On other areas
> we are all over the place. [emphasis added]

This quote illustrates both the difficulty in reaching a point of congruence between

organizational and workgroup values, but also the success ACC has had in doing that for

at least one area – students. Another respondent agrees that student success has become a

rallying cry permeating all levels of the college and is no longer rhetoric. "I think first

and foremost, we try to be a student-centered institution and I think people use that

phrase a lot, but I think that the staff that work here are encouraged to keep that in mind."

The president notes that he has been working to ensure workgroup values are more

reflective of organizational level values and explains that the opposite was true when he

first arrived.

> Clearly when I arrived, it was all within their workgroups…Today, you
> know, it's almost like a chicken or the egg thing, you know it's both, and
> I'd like to think the appreciative inquiry workshops we're running and [all
> of the other workshops and initiatives] all have serious effects and impacts
> on the way people think about values in terms of teamwork and thinking
> about students, and trying to make student success primary…I don't want
> to stick my head in the sand and say that what goes on in the workgroups
> doesn't matter, so I'm going to say [it's] fifty-fifty.

While the president understands that workgroup specific values matter, he also

acknowledges the college is making a concerted effort to increase value congruence

between the workgroup and the college. Other college members share this opinion and

point to various avenues for input as a primary reason subculture values greatly align

with organizational values. Pointing toward new hiring practices as an example of how

all members of the college are involved in organizational decision-making, a respondent

provides an example of how organizational values are now pushed through the

organization and are making differences in the values guiding people at all levels of the

college.

> What I have noticed is that we have instituted a new hiring process and it's
> a very open and inclusive process. So now we have committees and
> academic affairs, if we want to hire a new full-time faculty member, the

development process includes diversity training of the team and the team is made up of people inside the department and outside the department and students and also administrators in that it needs to be a very good diverse group of people…It's clear that the team, I think what it does is it creates an environment where people are very value based and the way we developed the process, I think the candidates feel it so even when they haven't been selected, I just recently called somebody and said that they had not been selected and the person said that I really feel like I belong there and I think what she really said is that she her values meshed with ours and what it also does is say who we are as a college, that people are not making backroom deals, so it's a very open process that the right person is selected based on what is fair and open and transparent.

While indications from these administrators is that the college has reached a state of relative alignment between organizational and workgroup values, others feel that achieving congruence between the values is still a work-in-progress. An administrator with a greater understanding of faculty concerns indicates the college has been pushing for greater congruence, but alignment is occurring slowly. "I think that's unfortunate [misalignment]… that's one of the goals we have for the strategic plan since it has encompassed all of the stakeholders…That people will see how their workgroup values align or if they don't…and will be able to make adjustments." Another respondent agrees that the values are not yet as aligned as they should be and provides an explanation.

It's probably as much about just not having a clear understanding or the same exact understanding that other areas might have or know. Then there's other things that go into that equation like union employees and nonunion employees with different feelings about how committed to an agenda they really are or how shared the agenda is. It may not be looking at how they can help [deliver on the organizational agenda], but rather what they do every day and that may be what drives people depending on where you sit

While noting that values are still in a transitory state, these interviewees have seen progress and their statements express the hope that complete alignment of values will occur.

Pushing for a proactive approach to establishing organizational direction

Moving the organization to a place where shared organizational direction is possible requires the college to set its own direction, obviously with the input of board members and external stakeholders, since direction-setting is a proactive rather than reactive process. The president indicates that since his arrival, he has been working to create a proactive environment where the college takes ownership of its direction and anticipate needs rather than simply responding and attempting to play catch. "We need to be ahead of the curve. I'm not saying avant-garde or way out there, but I think we need to be anticipating what the changes are and being ahead of them, not that we can always do that, but that's where we want to be." A college administrator has seen the college move towards a more internally focused and proactive approach to determining college direction under President Davis.

> I think it's a little bit of both from my experience, but that we're moving closer to being internally driven…My sense is that there's a lot of proactive and a lot of predicting what changes are going to be. My sense is that most of the changes more proactive in planning for what's coming through, of course there are always times where you have to react to the changes that are happening as well, but I think we do a good job of being more aware of what's coming down the road and I've heard [President Davis] speak about long-term but also what is happening this year, but also ten years down in the [geographical region].

Another administrator agrees the focus is primarily internal, but also realizes the impact of budget constraints and stakeholder demands. Despite these concerns, he still believes the college is pushing to control its destiny as much as possible.

> Primarily internal, but again, like I said, being clued into budget issues that are coming down the road and you need to have an awareness of what it might take to have a building built with a litany of local issues. I think that primarily come from that logic, where the focus is on let's make our foundation, let's make the courses we deliver and the services we offer for the students the best they can be and not to the exclusion of all the things

that could be important externally, but I don't think it starts there. I think that the focus is internal and let's make ourselves aware of key things externally rather than looking externally and figuring out how to react to them.

While stating that she believes internal and external pressures equally impact the college's direction-setting, a college staff member also feels that the college's internal drive pushes decisions more than external constituents. "I think it's both. I think you internally [President Davis] does a wonderful job, keeping his eyes and ears open about what's going on, and I think on campus we do that because his character and the leadership under him, but I also think that it's outside sources too." One respondent believes that while the college is moving in the right direction – towards a proactive approach to direction-setting, such a change is difficult and is still in the process of being truly internalized due to the need for additional cultural changes.

I think it's in a shifting mode, it was reactive and it's starting to look a little proactive, but still, it's more reactive, but I think the shift has come a little bit and the opportunities are there, but whether we take advantage of it or not may be affected because there's a lot of internal political reasons why those things might not work. I think realistically, we do respond to internal and external and internal [concerns], [but] there is a very political climate at this college and here we have an enrollment management versus academic affairs dynamic and I have never understood that. So all of that stuff has a concrete impact on what we end up doing.

Employing tactics to develop shared organizational direction

As a result of his leadership style, President Davis has been able to successfully utilize tactics to increase organizational members' willingness to work towards and follow a shared organizational direction. The previous president had very poor relationships with nearly all groups and the climate was characterized as one of distrust and myopia. From the start of his presidency, Dr. Davis has worked to increase trust as well as repair and grow relationships with organizational groups who felt disenfranchised

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by the previous administration. An administrator indicates that the relationship between

the president and faculty has become one of mutual trust and respect, a prerequisite for

moving the college forward toward shared initiatives.

> I think he has established a real respect for the faculty so I think the
> faculty [members] feel that as a president…he doesn't see faculty as
> ancillary to the college and I know that faculty in some colleges feel that
> way, but I think the faculty would feel like he at least values them and
> cares about what's going on. I think staff in general feel that he respects
> them.

Respect is crucial to developing trust and a willingness to expend energy and engage in

efforts that, initially, appear to diverge greatly from daily activities and responsibilities.

Building more positive relationships and trust is also a prerequisite for increased

organizational buy-in. While groups who are disenfranchised or treated poorly by the

executive leadership may pay lip service to organizational efforts, they will withhold

their tacit knowledge, best energies, and enthusiasm if efforts are disconnected from their

workgroup and unit level realities. A long-tenured respondent believes the college has

reached a tipping point where the majority of college staff have bought into the

organizational values and integrated them into daily efforts.

> Interviewer: Do believe that people, in general, agree with the
> organizational values?
>
> Respondent: I would say that they do for the most part and I think that's
> because everybody at the college has such an opportunity to give input
> into what we do and in developing the strategic plan. And in particular, we
> developed the last strategic plan last time with appreciative inquiry and [I]
> think it was just really a positive time for the entire college as it was this
> gathering, this great gathering of positive energy, and I think because
> everybody has realized an opportunity to get involved, it's easier to buy
> into the values and I think people really do buy into them.

It would be naïve, however, to believe that everyone in the organization buys into

organization efforts. Obviously, the goal is to obtain a critical mass of individuals and

influencers (Gladwell, 2000), but an organizational member notes that those with hierarchical power must nurture and protect individuals not interested in larger scale efforts from being marginalized or treated unfairly.

> I think there needs to be some sort of way to accommodate people who do not believe or buy in and I get around to hear about it from many staff people on campus, who are sometimes lower than my position, who say they're here to do a job and just want to do their job and don't see what is in this for us…[but] I think he is doing what he can. I really do and I think that some people at the lower level are just never going to buy in.

This is a fair criticism and request since some individuals simply want to collect a paycheck and will never be interested in larger goals or efforts. While individuals who don't buy in may be treated differently, there was no indication from any of the data collected nor would the president's leadership style indicate that differential treatment would filter down from the executive level.

Perhaps the most impactful tactic associated with building energy and effort toward creating a shared direction is empowering individuals and creating an environment designed to unleash the creativity and innovation of organizational members. A well-respected respondent states that her understanding of what is expected, in the realm of risk-taking and creativity, comes from the actions she has observed from the president himself. "I think he is actually more of a risk-taker than most of the people here and that if anything, he gets reined in sometimes." In addition to the risk-taking behaviors seen by college staff, organizational members have heard him, from the very beginning; explain that he wanted individuals to engage in thinking not bound by traditional hierarchical or divisional boundaries. An administrator harkened back to one of the first college-wide discussions held by President Davis:

> Well I think he made it very clear when he came onboard that, you know,

there were no boundaries, you know, he wanted people to be entrepreneurial, to look at new ideas, so you know, it's kind of a small thing, but it reflects that he hated the old organizational chart with lots of lines and boxes and you're in this box so this is what you do kind of thing. It was like, think of something; think of something new, beyond the old rut, beyond what you are doing today.

A college manager notes that this philosophy has played out in the college and is very different from the corporate environment she left.

I've only worked in the corporate environment until this position…and it's basically been dictated what you're going to do, what you're here to accomplish…get out there and make it happen. And I found in my interactions with [Dr. Davis] [they] have been more welcoming, and you're not going to be persecuted for having an idea and I think in the corporate world…you wonder am I going to have a job tomorrow if I do this?

Information gathered during the on-campus observation (executive team meeting) provided support that Dr. Davis is indeed working to ensure shared organizational directions through increasing shared decision-making. One of the agenda items revolved around the hiring of a new executive team member. Apparently, the last person was a poor fit and this search, while leading to what they believe will be a great addition to the college, resulted in a homogenous group of interviewees. The president believes the college must work harder and find better ways of pulling in more diverse applicant pools. There was a great deal of discussion and disagreement (non-hostile) over potential strategies and approaches to take and after people had expressed their opinions and suggestions, the president suggested that the conversation should be tabled until a meeting could be scheduled to involve individuals outside of the cabinet in the discussion. The next topic dealt with establishing a non-smoking policy for the entire campus and again, the president suggested the topic must be discussed outside of the cabinet so that all groups can be represented.

Obviously, working to establish shared institutional vision and direction depends upon having an understanding of expectations, values, and organizational mores. Rather than simply listening to the words of managers and leaders, organizational members will observe and identify true understandings and institutional values based upon the actions of those with authority or positional power. Based on these realities, perhaps the most effective tactic used by the president to establish shared direction has been to model the behaviors he felt would lead to greater commitment and care for the college. President Davis has worked hard to model his expectations by providing consistent evidence of what he values and what values he feels should guide ACC. "I'm not a preachy person so the only way they are aware of them is by watching me and seeing what kind of actions I pursue or maybe policies I propose. I tend to be a quiet person, I don't give speeches, I don't talk about values." While he is willing to speak about the values when necessary, he truly is an individual working to ensure that his actions speak louder than words. An administrator believes he has successfully modeled expectations for organizational members based upon his behaviors and actions. She feels he's provided an example of dedication to students and to his job and that others are following his example and working hard. "I think that he does challenge us and I think we challenge ourselves because when you feel the president is really doing his job, then you want to work for him and you want him to succeed." Another respondent believes his example has been powerful to individuals in the college and has even transformed the skepticism of hardened cynics to support for a shared organizational direction.

> I do believe that people understand that that is where [President Davis] is coming from and I don't think you spend all that time changing direction without being clear, not being wishy-washy about what he would like to see. You know, he practices what he preaches in that regard and I think

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over time, some hard-core cynics who may have thought it was just a new president with a new plan, I think they understand this is where he's coming from.

Among the values President Davis has worked most diligently to model is that people should be treated with respect and care, supported in their endeavors, and take personal accountability for their areas and duties. A college administrator proclaimed, "he's pretty tolerant of human error as a part of life and I don't think he has unrealistic expectations of himself or of those who work for him, but he does have expectations of a certain level of commitment to our jobs and we're responsible for being accountable." An interviewee builds on the issue of treating people humanly when they make mistakes by explaining that he looks at them as part of an organizational learning process.

> I believe he really looks at mistakes as part of the learning process. I do believe that we have latitude here to make mistakes…I think it's kind of a given that people are given the time to get used to the new practices or to completely understand how their network has changed. That is really seen as part of the learning experience, that mistakes, per se, are not always a bad thing and may be indicative that there's a need for more training or that there's more communication needed for policies and practices because they were not clear.

An administrator also believes that mistakes are seen as part of the learning process and has even integrated this perspective into her units and divisions. "…My experience with him is that if you make a mistake, it's not a big deal. I believe he wants you to be informed so that you don't make unnecessary mistakes, but you can't move forward without making some mistakes…"

Although mistakes and failures can be viewed as two different situations, the president has modeled the same expectations for both. People are to be treated humanely, individuals are ultimately accountable for delivering on goals, and he is willing to support staff in working towards successfully remedying the situation. Two situations described

during the interview process provided tangible examples of how the president strives to move past failures in an effort to create success. The first example, provided by a campus administrator, deals with missing an organizational defined goal for increasing diversity.

> We have a series of key performance indicators, probably a phrase you are very familiar with, ten barometers we look at on a regular basis to gauge the progress of the college…and some of the non-academic [indicators] are improving the diversity of the faculty and the staff at the college…and when we look at a [performance indicator] about diversifying the faculty and staff ranks as we did five or six months ago and see that no progress was made, heads don't roll. It's not a matter of clear the room because the yelling is going to begin; this is an environment where evidence is gathered in a healthy way. So you know, when we examined that and saw that no progress was made, the simple question is asked, well what can we do to make some progress? What can we do differently? In this case, academic affairs, for our part, stepped forward with a set of recommendations to recruit, to actively go out and recruit minority faculty candidates, to change our job postings, to change our interview techniques to essentially reengineer our hiring process, and when I presented that proposal to [President Davis], he backed it with a budget that would allow us to do that. It would allow us to go to conferences and recruit and develop marketing materials, to fly candidates in for interviews, those kind of things. Where there was no budget line, suddenly, there was a budget line and that may sound like a kind of mundane thing, but when you are talking about planning and changing the direction of an organization, the old adage is true, show me your budget and I'll show you your priorities.

This example shows that rather than focusing on the initial failure and raking people over the coals, the president wants people to look for avenues to improve the situation and work towards meeting goals. Another example provided by an interviewee dealt with difficulties in obtaining the right to purchase a building for one of the other campuses.

> Well, what he did was to work with those of us who knew people in the community and we took a very grassroots approach…into parking lots and community organizations to explain what we had been planning, how we had been planning, how long this had been happening, what the benefits to the community would be. We got students and people from the community to go to the local city council and he was there and made presentations there, he made presentations at other organizations throughout the city just really trying to explain and on the other hand, point out the positive implications for the community of the college being here in the first

place… We now do have the property, I think the hard feelings between the person who did bid for the property and didn't get it have been assuaged and we are still doing more and more now, proactively, so that that never happens again.

Not only did the president work to get the building, but also to remedy negative feelings between the college and the community. Additionally, efforts were made to try and learn so that similar situations would not occur again.

Another area in which the president has attempted to model behavior is in regards to questioning and criticism of decisions and direction. Instead of seeking to quash questioning and retaliating against those who criticize, all indications are the president handles questions and criticisms with dignity and professionalism. In addressing his approach to questions and criticism, the president explained,

> My approach is pretty consistent that when somebody criticizes me, I am very willing to talk about it and explain why I did what I did. I have a rule with my cabinet, that we never make a decision that we would not be able to with a clear conscious and a bright shining face be able to stand in front of our board and explain. In other words, we're not going to do something we would be embarrassed about and that's a personal rule for me, so if I've made a decision, it will have been a very thoughtful decision made with a lot of debate and discussion, perhaps with others, but certainly within my own head and if someone wants to criticize that, I accept that, but I also like the opportunity to say, by the way, here were the considerations I had before me and here's how I made my decision. ***So that it seems to me that a mistake a lot of leaders make is that they say, I've made the decision, you go away***. [It's] very, very important to explain what you were thinking and how you came to the decision so that even if people disagree with you, they can understand your thought process and at least appreciate that. [emphasis added]

The president is cognizant of creating an environment that is evidence driven, where decisions are thought out, and all decisions can be questioning. An administrator indicates that not only is this a statement made by the president, but it actually plays out in his actions.

I think he has been around long enough where he has heard all the reasons people use to criticize organizational decisions and he knows that faculty can be loose cannons and driven largely by departmental or self-interests and I've seen him simply reply to criticism of decisions by saying, we analyzed it, we decided that would be the best decision for the college, thank you for your input, but we're moving on. It can be as simple as that or if he deems that the person challenging the decision has a reasonable point, perspective, or deserves more of an answer, I've seen him go to great lengths to try and explain a decision as well.

An organizational member explains he has instituted a similar policy to the president in regards to dealing with questions and believes that questioning of decisions, so long as people ultimately follow the final decision, is healthy and desirable.

I can go in and talk with [President Davis] and disagree on something and voice my disagreement on a decision, but I also recognize the fact that it is his place to make those decisions. So it's my job to support them and I think that is a very good environment to have. A lot of people who work for me come in and say, I don't think this is the way we should be doing something and perhaps, sometimes they can modify my decision, but even when they don't it doesn't mean they're wrong…and I expect that from my people. You know, everybody gets paid too much just to do what they're told. People get paid to think too.

Increasing participation in major organizational processes

While the other themes (i.e. working towards congruence between organizational and workgroup values, modeling behaviors, etc.) are connected with the development of shared organizational direction, developing structures and processes designed to increase diverse representation is perhaps the most direct method for assuring the development of shared organizational direction. A respondent notes that diverse representation is built into the major decision-making and direction-setting groups on campus.

I believe they're [decision-making groups] very diverse in general - they are structured so that you have different representation, you know there are administrators and professional staff and staff people. So the slots are set up so that you have representation from people in different groups, and I think that's done very well and I think when a new committee is

developed, a lot of attention is paid to make sure that there's representation from every area and I see that very, very consistently.

In addition to simply building the structures, an interviewee believes the president is largely responsible for actively encouraging people to participate and to make their voice heard. "Within any of these processes or these opportunities, everyone has been invited…so I think what that says is that we're inviting them and are inviting you to participate and to get your ideas. And so your voice can be heard." By working to increase the opportunity to voice opinions, and actually have decisions and direction impacted by the diverse and representative input, a college manager believes that people feel ownership in the direction of the college.

> I think one of the things I appreciate the most about working here, and this comes from [the president], is that I do feel like all staff here get a lot of say in what the institution is doing. It doesn't mean that everybody gets what they want all the time, but I think there's a lot of opportunities for people who work here at the college to give input and feedback, like when we're doing strategic planning and other staff in my area, and I have a couple of new staff in the last year they've made that comment the they've been struck by how often they were asked their opinions about matters that are important to the college.

An interviewee believes that diverse input is about more than just providing a say in the direction, but rather, is tangible proof the president has worked to decentralize control. She states:

> He has promoted the whole idea of decentralization, which was a whole new ballgame when he came in, because the previous president had such a hierarchy that you could not even go talk to him and I used to refer to his people as his Halderman and Ehrlichman… I mean you couldn't talk to the president directly and these were his guys. And so it was a very, very rigid system that was going on and a lot of territorial wars and it was really awful. And when [Dr. Davis] came in and started talking about decentralization, I know I sensed a general sort of excitement in the air and that's when he started to work very hard [at decentralizing].

The decentralization of control opened up opportunities for individuals to directly

influence the direction of the college through representative decision-making and direction-setting and visioning processes. An administrator believes the president has pushed decision-making to all levels of the college based upon a desire to increase engagement, which is another prerequisite for shared direction.

> One of his values that you can certainly feel at the institution is engagement and just getting the appropriate people involved. I mean it's not just that he will throw any decision open to the entire college community, you can't run a college that way, but he pushes many decisions to be made outside by groups, committees or standing groups at the college, leadership groups, so he's very much the advocate for engagement.

Additionally, when President Davis serves on decision-making or visioning committees, indications are that his "presidential aura" disappears and that he is just one of the team members, a finding consistent with his assertion that "I [am] just one person there. I [have] no bigger vote than anyone else." A respondent, who has worked alongside the president, supports this assertion and explains that all individuals on a planning team during a recent summit were equals and without a title.

> During the final summit, it was a two-day summit; I was at a table with [President Davis] and a student that had had a very long and rocky progression to graduation. We had staff associates, faculty, I mean we were working together as a team and he wasn't acting on the teams as the president, he was acting as a team member.

Two processes have emerged on campus as tangible representations of structures designed to increase the level of engagement and participation from diverse groups of college staff in shaping the decisions and directions that guide the college. The first is the appreciative inquiry framework used during the latest iteration of the strategic planning process. A college staff member explains that the purpose of appreciative inquiry (AI) is to engage diverse groups in major organizational efforts and to eliminate differential

influence by working outside of titles and the organizational hierarchy. "You don't see the levels and a dean actually mentioned that we really need to keep in mind that we're not looking at people's titles, we're here to work together, we're here to collaborate and everybody's voice should be heard." These groups included both internal and external members, over two hundred people in all, and suggestions from these groups were used to craft the strategic priorities for the college. The project was massive and took over a year to complete, but internal and external stakeholders believe the new priorities accurately reflect the recommendations of the groups. An administrator believes that AI produced another important outcome, the reduction of cynicism and the conversion of some cynics.

> You know, we had a few people stand up and state their dissatisfaction about the process, but in a room with a couple of hundred people, most of them pretty much got what we were trying to do and why it made sense and why it was smart for a leader of an incredibly diverse organization to try and push an agenda like this and I think we've reached critical mass. You know, they [faculty] see the benefits of sacrificing at a small scale at an individual level and that it is good for the community and that's tough to do, that's very tough to do.

Another initiative at the college designed to increase the involvement of individuals throughout the college is team-based management. Team-based management is an initiative providing individuals with the opportunity to identify problems within the college and gather appropriate data in an effort to find solutions. Among the requirements are that groups are diverse and involve individuals from administration, faculty, and staff, individuals from areas not directly related to the issue (i.e. maintenance involved with an enrollment issue), and that individuals within the group have equal voice regardless of title. An interviewee indicates these groups have been essential in getting individuals to work together and understand parts of the college they would not normally have

interactions with.

> It's just been good to see those combinations coming together. We also had students, former students and current students as well teaming up with somebody from maintenance, who was a former student, with a woman who is a current student and they went out and did focus groups. So I've really seen groups of people who would not normally have the opportunity to work together and it's been a delight although there has been a little bit of tension, but we have really come together and worked well and enjoyed it and have had a good time and I think that's changed a lot.

An administrator, in an effort to fully explain the scope and reach of team-based management, indicated that more than half of the college's full-time employees have served on at least one team-based management committee. The team-based management exercises are completely voluntary, so engaging more than half of full-time staff demonstrates and organization wide commitment to the initiative.

Interviewee comments explaining that diverse representation is a reality on the campus was supported by one of the documents analyzed by the researcher. This document detailed a recent summit convened for the purpose of increasing outreach and teamwork throughout the college and community. The title of the brochure suggested an attempt by the college to reach out to the community and develop more effective regional partnerships. The summit was designed to introduce college staff to appreciate inquiry, described within the college document as a philosophy seeking to build teams, take the lessons learned and apply them throughout the organization, and involve the entire college in major decision-making. The document was tailored to the college and emphasized the desire for a positive, collaborative, and team-oriented approach to organizational change. The brochure also addressed why AI was being used – expressing the desire to create inclusive planning teams involving internal and external stakeholders responsible for shaping the college's future direction. Specifically, the goals of the

meeting were to identify the college's positive features, improve upon the features, and create a strategic plan reflective of many viewpoints. Indications from staff were that some people were slow to participate, but by the end of the summit, nearly 100% of the attendees were actively engaged in the conversations.

In conclusion, the president has made extraordinary and consistent efforts to move the organization to a place where shared direction-setting can occur. He has attempted to model healthy and positive behaviors, establish diverse and decentralized processes and structures, establish a proactive approach to change, and empower individuals to take charge and ownership over the college's direction. Evidence indicates that, generally speaking, he has provided an adequate foundation for establishing shared organizational direction and that the AI approach in the last strategic process has resulted in shared organizational direction.

Exerts a Great Deal of Energy on Internal Matters

Empowers staff by allowing others to take leadership

While there have been indications from the initiatives and processes encouraged and supported by President Davis that he is focused on delegating power, in-depth descriptions of his style came through when respondents were asked, specifically, to describe his leadership style. One of the most telling quotes about the way the president approaches leading the college was given by a long-tenured respondent. She notes he has spent the majority of his energy inside the college as indicated by organizational change efforts, empowerment of college staff, and by involving himself in the various institutional initiatives. "He loves the college and he loves it internally. He's out there in the community but I think he would rather be, I think he relishes more the internal

components more than the external." Building on this notion, a respondent explains that he truly enjoys empowering others and delegating authority throughout the college. "Clearly he has his democratic management style as a person in a job that's not democratic and where there are clear lines of authority…but he likes to share authority, responsibility, power and control and he likes to delegate it." An administrator expands on the concept of democratic leadership through her classification of his leadership style as "hands-off" but not disconnected. She believes he desires to have others in control and will only step in when it is beneficial to the process.

> He pretty much allows his team to manage their own area without a lot of interference. If he has to get hands on, he can, but for the most part, he's not. I think in that respect, he's probably acting like the president instead of the manager of each of the areas. He doesn't interfere. He encourages change. I think he likes to be participative to an extent, you know, that he thinks it would be beneficial. I don't think he's just into participation.

An administrator shares the perspective that the president is focused on dispersing authority throughout the college. He has been at the college for just over a year, but has already experienced the hands off, but non "laissez-faire" approach that President Davis takes in guiding the college as well as his ability to remain connected even though he does not hover.

> He assumed on the day that I arrived, more than a year ago, that I would step in and do what needs to be done to manage academic affairs, which is not to say that he is a laissez-faire leader and isn't there if I need him, he's absolutely there if I need him, very, very accessible, but also one who, on a day-to-day basis is not looking in on everything I am doing, double checking everything I am doing, peering over my shoulder…He's sort of a background coach to those of us responsible for the larger operations at the college: student services, academic affairs, human resources, and so forth - all of his direct reports… For someone who does invest his authority and delegation into his reports to go and do their jobs, he has a stunning recall for details and knows even though he's not peering over my shoulder…he knows an awful lot about what's going on.

In addition to providing input when necessary, an interviewee indicates the president's

vision and beliefs always play into decisions – as though his hand is in all decisions made

throughout the college. Rather than reflecting a dictatorial regime, interviewees see it

more as a balance between autonomy and focusing on the shared organizational vision

consistently communicated by the president.

> I think he gives a lot of autonomy to staff here and is definitely not
> someone who will stand over your shoulder and is really more of the big
> picture person who sets the tone of the values of the college and lets
> everybody know what the general expectations are and leaves it up to us to
> do the work.

A college member sums up his leadership as a conscious attempt to ensure collaboration

and teamwork throughout the college. "What he most relishes are the opportunities to get

people working together in a constructive manner; to make improvements and changes to

the college and the learning environment…It's like he wants to be a facilitator of

cooperative effort."

Leads in an ethical and moral manner

While the president's leadership style has been described as democratic, the

values he professes and those seen by organizational members have impacted staff and

transformed the college as a whole. Words used to describe the president were integrity,

genuine, authentic, and honest. In nearly every interview, these words were used to

describe both the president and his values. A long-tenured manager states:

> I've known him a long, long, long time. Before here and I can probably
> say the one thing I would use to describe him is that he has an
> extraordinary amount of integrity. He's one of the few people that I would
> have chosen to work for, but because I believed I could trust him both
> intrinsically and extrinsically.

Many other members share this perception and one respondent, in describing her dealings

with President Davis, indicates "he's very honest and I think he is genuine and values people as I think he can see things in people and in working with him. He is who he is and has no pretentiousness or anything and I think he's very genuine." This same individual has seen this genuineness and authenticity play out when President Davis has made unpopular decisions and taken unpopular stances. "I would just say, that kind of leadership…I've learned so much from that, overall there are going to be times where he is asked to take the less popular route and he always does it with the same integrity and the same commitment as when it is something popular." She also provided a specific example of when one of the communities served by the college, a community the college has had strained relationships with at one time, wanted ACC to accept students' courses that were not equivalent to coursework offered by the college. The president refused knowing that the college is held to high standards and that the previous coursework had not prepared the students to succeed at Alpha.

> What the community really wanted was for us to let people come in with courses they've taken in Spanish even though they had not met the proficiency in English and [President Davis] knew it was unpopular, but he held his ground and said we won't do that. We will help you through the program, but we won't take those credits without meeting the standards of all of our students and that was very unpopular and what has come about through the years is that the community has come to realize that that's the best thing for them. And it wasn't a decision based out of oppression. It was that we understand our community, we understand our world, and the students that come to [Alpha Community College] need to be top quality…We have a student now who has come back to teach for us, who is one of the originals, which is just amazing.

This same respondent explains the president's authenticity and integrity play out in the support of his staff and their decisions, even when unpopular with powerful groups. She describes a situation where she had to issue a non-renewal to a faculty member who had ties to powerful local politicians and the president backed the dean's decision even

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though it meant telling local politicians no.

> There was a situation where a faculty member who was going to be in
> non-renewal employment…and she had incredible political pull and she
> had lots of people calling [President Davis] to reverse the action that I felt
> that I needed to take. And so he set up a meeting with me and we sat down
> with other people there…and he completely listened and completely
> agreed. I did not feel like I was selling him on anything. I think what he
> wanted to be able to do was to respond to his constituents in a well-
> informed way, but at no time was he trying to sway me or ask me not to do
> something because I think it was based on the integrity of the institution
> and his own personal values. And I'm sure there are leaders who would
> say, well we can't do that, I have a lot of pressure from the senators, which
> he did. But I think he very honestly went back set on making the best
> decision for the college and he stood by and he stood by me and you
> know, those decisions are never easy to make anyway, but they're even
> harder when you feel the pressure from the external world.

The president's style has been described as democratic and he has been described

as a facilitator of collaboration and background coach. These descriptions are influenced

by the fact that the president delegates authority to his VPs and expects them to do the

same within their units and divisions. A respondent spoke of how she felt the president's

empowering touch even though she does not report directly to him.

> It's providing the various opportunities for everyone at the college to have
> a voice either in various decision-making processes of the college or
> talking about future directions of the college and I think [the president has]
> just really done a great job of making people feel like their voices are
> important and I really do get that sense, the people feel they have a say in
> the future direction the college is taking and in some of the current
> operations as well and I think that's just something that permeates the
> college culture - that starts with him and works its way down.

A respondent also experienced a sense of empowerment when she recently served on the

committee charged with finding a new college administrator. She explains that although

the president likely wanted the other candidate, she and others felt strongly about their

decision and were willing to push it forward because they believed it was in the best

interest of the college.

> I was on the search committee for the new [administrative position]…and he was the only one in the meeting that was quiet. Then we held a closed ballot and everyone except one person voted for the person who is the current academic vice president and he was the youngest and least experienced, so he was someone who was the bigger gamble, but I think we all saw some great potential there…And you could tell he turned a little purple out of fear, but that was the decision we made and so after we had the vote and it was clear who we picked, he said okay.

An administrator adds that individuals have not only been empowered to affect change inside the college, but have branched out to impact regional, state, and national efforts as well.

> …despite our size, we're known as being at the leading edge of some innovative initiatives, you know, distance learning in the state, leading that effort, a leader in diversifying the faculty and staff ranks to promote a culture of diversity, understanding, acceptance, and tolerance. We have a core group of people who go around the state working to help other colleges with those efforts, so you know, there are opportunities for people to get involved internally and external to the college.

In summary, the president has spent the majority of his time and energy in not only fixing, but enhancing the internal environment at the college. His leadership style has helped to heal wounds, create a sense of community and teamwork, and empower people to step outside of the hierarchy and take ownership of the college. Additionally, the sensemaking needs of staff have been met based upon his ethical and consistent behaviors and has allowed them to take ownership over college processes. Interestingly, staff were quick to point out that Dr. Davis is an internal president and feel that by engaging the college in positive growth, he is being fulfilled as well.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Lesser Abundance

Neglects to Fully Develop or Utilize Good People

Fails to push professional development as an institutional priority

Despite tangible evidence that the president has put time and money into ensuring that development opportunities are available to the college, there are also indicators that the development of college staff needs to be a greater priority or perhaps the president should consider different avenues of ensuring that development occurs. A respondent believes the president has advocated for and engaged in setting and meeting high expectations at ACC; however, he also believes there are too many times when people are simply bypassed instead of developed.

> I do think that he sets expectations that are high and wants folks to try and achieve. I guess that what I see sometimes is that when those goals aren't met, occasionally depending on what it is and who it is and really how critical it is toward ultimate success; those things are kind of overlooked sometimes and I guess it gets back to what I was saying about sometimes you just have people who you work around because some people aren't necessarily where they should be… but I do think there is a bit of letting it slide and working around somebody since we've got other issues to worry about right now. We can't focus on making the person the best they can be right now...

Another respondent concurs with the perspective that professional development sometimes takes a backseat to college operations. She believes that professional development, within the college, needs to include helping people realize their potential instead of just helping the college meet its goals.

> When the [national initiative] coaches came by, one of the questions they asked was, what do we think the cultural message of the college is and my assistant dean said, we know you work really hard, but here's a cool idea, why don't work harder. So there is an ethic across the college of working hard, but…I've never heard anybody here say, and what I say to my staff is, that it is my job to make sure that you grow, to be the best at what you want to be, and that counts for clerks or administrators as much as for assistants and faculty…[the climate here is that] you work really hard and get a lot accomplished, but it's not so much focused on [reaching your potential].

In addition to questions about professional development, there are concerns about the

degree to which people are pushed to reach their full potential. In speaking directly to the

fact the president doesn't push people to develop their abilities, a college member feels

that Dr. Davis' vision for full development of staff is not being realized.

> Philosophically, yes. I would say that his ideas and concepts trickle down
> and push people and departments to really think about how best they can
> contribute to the college. Whether or not they are actually contributing all
> of their capabilities, I have doubts. But I don't necessarily think that's his
> job as leader of the college. I think that has to happen at the lower level of
> middle management. You know, I see a lot of waste here, and I don't mean
> that in a bad way, it is in that there are a lot of people here that are not up
> to their skill level.

One respondent believes that not pushing for development is simply part of the Alpha

culture. When expressing the opinion that individuals within the college are not

encouraged to discover their full potential, the individuals also stated "I don't think

anybody pushes anybody to the limit of their abilities and I think that's part of the

culture." Another interviewee, while indicating he sees the same flaw within himself,

does believe the president could do a better job of pushing people to the reach higher

levels of development and performance. "To be totally frank about it, and I could say this

about myself as well, but I don't necessarily think that he is pushing everybody to be the

best that they can be where they would be accountable or to get everybody productive."

As noted earlier, individuals throughout the college believe that some people take on

more responsibilities since some individuals aren't meeting the high institutional

standards and relying on these "less effective employees" would jeopardize the

institution's ability to ensure that stakeholder needs are met. A respondent expands on the

notion of needing more accountability and production from certain units and would like

to see the president step in to specifically push certain units that are, in the individual's

opinion, underpreforming.

> I do think that in terms of business development, workforce development, I do think he has tried to support, perhaps without pushing as much as he should, people who run our workforce development area that I think is pretty weak. So if that's one area where I think he should be more aggressive, it is there.

In short, there are college staff who feel that development of people is more of an espoused value than an actualized value. With people being worked around, a focus on working harder instead of necessarily developing skills and abilities, and the appearance that some units are underpreforming, there is some disconfirming evidence regarding the statement that President Davis has pushed for the full development of college staff.

Established a climate with limited opportunities for deep involvement

A respondent feels that community colleges have different units with very different structures and functions and explains that these variations impact opportunities for input and influence. "Other parts of the college are managed differently [than academic affairs], so student services [for example] is a little more hierarchical, a little less open, as is often the case in colleges, it just functions that way." In addition to the function and structure of units impacting the ability to participate in influencing direction and decisions, there is evidence that some individuals within leadership positions at the college have not bought into the behaviors modeled by the president and act as barriers and obstacles to individuals in non-traditional leadership positions. In responding to a question about development opportunities, one interviewee indicated that some managers within the college act as gatekeepers and prevent people from taking advantage of opportunities deemed important by the president.

> Interviewer: Do you believe there's a differentiation of support by employee group when it comes to development opportunities?

> Respondent: I do, but I believe that sometimes that has more to do with

the leader of those areas [as opposed to the president].

This opinion is shared and expanded upon by another organizational member, one with a great understanding of issues in all college subcultures. "Now, I think there [are] some administrators here who are preventing people from getting involved and I've had staff members come to me and say I really wanted to do that, but my manager said I wouldn't get anything out of it." She also adds that for some staff, the concern is retribution, not just being discouraged from taking advantages of opportunities.

> I know that other staff may not feel comfortable believing or buying into the fact that they're really at the same level as the deans or the administration because they don't have the protection of not getting in trouble if they say something that's not appreciated. I don't believe they would be, but I know there is a fear out there on support staff to where they wouldn't want to get involved if they don't buy into it.

In addition to issues with equality of opportunities, there are indications opportunities are not as pervasive as they could be. In other words, individuals who should be included in decision-making and direction-setting processes are absent – either by choice or by the decision from higher level managers. One respondent believes that groups could be more diverse, but believes that it is largely the former reason why some groups are less diverse than they could be.

> I think a bit of that depends on your perspective and I will say that my perspective is that they could be more diverse than they are, but I don't necessarily blame anyone in particular for the and I certainly would not say that [President Davis] is exclusionary. What I would say is that some constituencies maybe don't take enough initiative to take advantage of opportunities to be included.

Another organizational member shares this opinion and in fact, believes that people choosing to remain absent from the diverse decision-making committees are often people who would rather complain than work to fix issues.

Interviewer: Do you believe that individuals throughout the college have ample opportunities to help shape the organizational values?

Respondent: Absolutely. If they are wanting to get involved, they certainly have the opportunities.

Interviewer: Are they actively encouraged to do so?

Respondent: They are and if they choose not to do so, and you've always got those who won't, are some of the biggest complainers, they are the disgruntled ones. They don't want to work toward the organizational goals, but you'll always have that.

While one of the interviewees feels the lack of representation is often the result of self-exclusion, he is somewhat resigned to the fact that the organization operates in a top-down fashion at times. "What I'm trying to get at [is] that we could do more of that [increasing diversity of decision-making groups]. Sometimes we're a little too top-down when major decisions are made, but generally outside of those, I do think we are encouraged to collaborate." Another interviewee leaves no doubt that he/she feels that non-executive staff have limited opportunities for diverse involvement based on the fact that some forums are treated as mere advisory groups. "[I] think he sees the cabinet as his planning team and everybody else is important, but not in making seminal contributions to that process. More advisory." To make the point, the individual provided an example of when the major decision-makers did not involve a diverse group of college staff and ACC found itself in an untenable position.

There was a time when we were reviled in [city] for this process, not just oh those college people, it was oh those evil terrible rotten couldn't care less about [city] college people. There was no need for that to me, that was really bad organizational planning on him and his team's part, because the opposition came from places that they should've anticipated it coming from and the people should've been in the conversation early on and they didn't do, this is that stakeholder net, how broadly he casts his net and this is an example of where he didn't cast it nearly far enough because we can sit here and say, isn't [city] lucky there we're going to have this fantastic

huge building and we'll be able to provide education for all these people who clearly need it. It's a perfectly wonderful thing, except it's happening in the middle of a real community with real issues and real political tensions and group dynamics and from where I sit, now there could have been more conversation than I know about, but it sounds to me like they didn't do nearly enough of that…I lay that at his doorstep, but I'm willing to concede that I don't know if this is strictly a perception …but whatever he did not do, came back and kicked us really hard and I think we are still paying the price for that and we will be paying the price for that for some time.

Focuses too Much Time and Energy Inside the College

Opens himself to questions of vision and authenticity by empowering others

A number of quotes indicate the president's leadership style and focus on empowering others and delegating authority have positively impacted the college. However, there is also evidence that people are not perceiving organizational efforts and changes as influenced by him. One interviewee notes that the absence of direct connections from the president to college staff impacts the understanding of his philosophies and leads this person to question his direct impact on what happens in the college.

> Interviewer: So, in general, do you believe that the college is getting from [President Davis] what it needs?
>
> Respondent: From a macro level yes, from a micro level, no. On a macro level yes I would say he's in the trenches, making sure that we stay viable and we remain a player in the changing game and that we have a collective vision about where we are going. Those are important things, but I don't feel his presence in the college.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean by that? Is it that he's not walking around and interacting enough with people?
>
> Respondent: Well that's a physical manifestation of it.
>
> Interviewer: Are you saying that you don't see his hand on enough things?
>
> Respondent: It's not that I don't see his hand directing things, but I don't

see his hand *in* enough things. I don't see him influencing things enough. It may be that the organization is doing everything he wants it to, but it doesn't feel like if that's happening, it's because of his connection or intervention or participation. [emphasis added]

Another respondent, someone who believes the president is directly influencing changes through delegated leadership, still feels the college is not getting the focused leadership needed from Dr. Davis.

Well, I think the college needs the direction. It's the leadership that allows for, the leadership that provides a strategic vision, you know, maybe that is the word, to provide us with a vision to provide us with the ability to accomplish that. Not to expect the impossible, but to establish a realistic vision and a realistic way of getting to it and then allowing people to deliver on that and not to get too far off from that…but I've just seen us sometimes as an institution try to do too many things.

Earlier indications were that the president displayed authenticity and integrity, however, one organizational member believes that questions exist within the organization as to whether his values and actions mesh. This concern, the individual feels, is the result of the president's desire to avoid confrontation. "I think I would just have to say that if there is any personal flaw, it's that he doesn't like to personally confront that kind of personal bad behavior on the part of others. He does get to it, but it sometimes takes him years." The individual explains that while he does not like to confront others, he accepts confrontation from others. "I confront him all the time and I don't check myself much about that. But when it comes to someone else, him confronting someone else, somebody about their bad behavior, he doesn't want to do that." The interviewee believes that this failure to act when people "behave badly" opens the president up to questions about whether he is truly living up to his values or not. When asked specifically if there are gaps between his values and actions, the person indicated that while his intention is to be congruent, he is incongruent when the situation requires confrontational action.

> Do I think that the values fit with his actions? I think he tries for them to, but I think in some cases he ways more heavily the opinions of others than he should instead of trusting his own gut and moving forward. Consequently, people will wonder if his values are aligned, but I think he's pretty good about receiving that as criticism or commentary from others. So I think there has been some stuff going on here with regard to people who needed to leave and [President Davis] kind of drug his feet on it and the behaviors of some people that he supervised were very negative and people wondered why, how could you say you are into appreciative inquiry, how can you say you are into respect for others when in fact you don't do anything about these things?

This could potentially be an issue as the president has worked to integrate processes like appreciative inquiry and values like respecting and valuing others. Failure to act when confrontational situations occur has likely provided fuel for critics and cynics within the organization.

Models tacit acceptance of difficult external conditions

Nurturing and developing partnerships and growing networks is a difficult endeavor for community colleges, however, with cuts to state budgets and the mass exodus of millions of jobs nationwide, this is perhaps the single most important presidential skill. Effectively developing partnerships and networks allows the college to share costs, increase revenues, and most importantly, meet the workforce needs of its service area. Alpha Community College, like many other colleges, has seen numerous companies and jobs leave their community over the past two decades and this has created an environment where partner and network development is difficult. A respondent paints a picture of the difficulty in developing partnerships now that the largest industries have left the area. "It's not like we are a community college outside the city of Detroit where you have the auto industry… there's no dominating industry…There are a lot of things here to focus on in our service area. It's a very tricky place for someone to maneuver." In addition to lacking a central industry, the individual also explains that the parochial

nature of the region makes it difficult to develop partnerships and networks.

> Here the chambers just don't like to work with each other and the
> municipalities don't like to work with each other, so it's a real challenge.
> So it's a real balancing act and you try to make a lot of friends without
> alienating them because you're friends with someone they care not to be
> friends with. So it sounds like a soft answer and perhaps it is, but its such a
> fractured region politically and chamber wise, so there are numerous small
> partnerships that mean something.

The president concurs with the notion it is a difficult area to work in based on the fact

that groups known for working with each other elsewhere simply don't in this area. In

detailing the level of parochialism and hatred for other communities, the president states:

> I live in the city of [main campus city] and the next city over is
> [neighboring city], and the people in [main campus city] don't particularly
> like the people in [neighboring city] and vice versa, and I can do that with
> every city and town in our district. They can tell you the score of the game
> against [neighboring city] when they were in high school and if they lost,
> they don't like it, they say things like what's wrong with those people. It's
> just an incredibly parochial area.

It's not that the president is disengaged from the community, however, as college staff

were quick to explain that the president is out in the local communities, discussing

partnering opportunities, and sitting on boards across the region. While unable to give an

example of a new or innovative partnership, a respondent knows he is out in the

community and serving on numerous boards important to the region.

> I would not know much about the day-to-day workings of the president
> that is based on, but things are reported out in the cities that he spends a
> fair amount of time working on nurturing partnerships in different areas
> and I just know that based on different opportunities that come in and
> items published in various newspapers and I think he really sees the
> college is an integral part of the [localized name for the region]. So my
> sense is that he puts a fair amount into the town and into the political piece
> about the college's position in the [localized name for the region].

An organizational member, while stating the college is not doing enough in regards to

partnering (discussed later), explains the president is serving on multiple boards and is

who people in the region want to partner with.

> I would say that he is who people want to partner with. So while they may call him out at times, they genuinely like him and they want him to partner, they want him to bring the college out, many times a lot of us will end up having to go out with a team to really work out the details, but I think he is really seen as the person who leads all of the real partnership activity. Well, he is approached by a lot of people to be on a lot of stuff, so regionally, within our service are, is asked by businesses and public entities to sit on this board and that board, this committee and that committee.

Working to develop partnerships and an extensive partner network is quite an endeavor and one requiring a proactive approach and internal drive typified by hope, resiliency, and optimism; however, a comment by one interviewee indicates the college is somewhat passive and conventional when seeking out partners. When asked about how potential partners are developed, the staff member answered, "I think it really depends on the area of the college. In my area of the college, you know, partners are really driven by workforce development initiatives of the commonwealth and those [are] the things we want to focus on." The workforce development division is crucial in driving partner building for the college and the passive approach taken by the unit will limit the college's ability to draw in new partners.

While evidence exists the president has made tremendous progress in remedying a dysfunctional culture, creating a climate of positivity, and creating initiatives, changing processes and structures, and providing sensemaking leading to a healthier organization (all important and difficult changes requiring dedication to the internal environment), there are indications from interviewees that external efforts such as developing partnerships and networks are not among his strengths nor areas he wants to spend his time. A respondent indicates that while the president understands his symbolic duty to

represent the college in public settings, it is something he does begrudgingly.

> I think he recognizes that both his symbolic and practical day to day functions, so you know he is available and on hand to those events where you need the presidential aura, they're not his favorite things, they're absolutely not his favorite things, but he recognizes the importance of them and is there to be the symbolic face of the college when he needs to be.

This individual also believes the president is out of his element when presenting to large groups of individuals. "He is a quiet and personal and [a] private man and he can be very charming in front of a large group for a few moments at a time, I've never seen him speak in front of a large group for more than five or ten minutes, but I think he gets uncomfortable after that." Another interviewee indicates the president does not like large groups and that the part of the job he dislikes most is when he has to interact in a transactional manner. "I remember [President Davis] saying, you think I like to schmooze people? That's the least part of my job that I enjoy. I feel like I have to schmooze. I feel more comfortable when it's just myself and someone else having discussions." An organizational member feels that partner development is a weak area for the president and points to a local college able to effectively develop extensive partnerships despite similar economic conditions. The individual also indicates that if it has to be one or the other, having a president able to transform the internal environment of the college, an area President Davis has excelled in, is what the person would choose.

> I guess in my opinion, there is a bit of a weakness with business and industry, and you know, if I was to compare his involvement and externally compared to say [Neighboring Community College] and other presidents, they are very connected to the community and are very visible in the community with business and I just don't think that's who he is. I think he's more of a here is the college, I'm going to run it the best I can and I'm going to get information on trends and issues and how to be a better institution. But I don't think the schmoozing part, the salesman part of being out rubbing elbows and connecting with community leaders as some others, I just don't think that's something that he likes to do and we

are who we are and I don't think it's critical in running the institution. I think it would be nice because we might have a few more opportunities and a few more partners and more visibility, but it's the only college I've ever worked at so, I don't have a long list of things to compare it to and I would take somebody doing what [President Davis] is doing, which is taking care of what I consider the foundation over somebody who neglected that just to rub elbows and schmooze about. That's a recipe for disaster.

Another interviewee believes the college is underpreforming in regards to workforce development and partner development and feels the college would be better served if Dr. Davis pushed the unit to outperform its external constraints. The member considers blaming environmental conditions for poor performance an excuse and uses enrollment management as an example of needing to meet needs regardless of conditions.

Interviewer: Now why would you say that the college is weak in the workforce development area? I mean it's my understanding that many of the large industries are no longer there.

Respondent: I mean they're not, but there hasn't been on the part of that unit, the sort of inventive and creative activity that you have to engage in when you can't always rely on what's always been there. You know, when I don't have students, I have to look for ways to keep them and to help finance students that we might get in another way. I can't just sit back and say, gee, what was there before isn't just walking through the door. I would say that that is the area that has been held least accountable and has more excuses for not meeting their goals than any other. It may seem critical, but it is something I am critical of because it's a shared burden and when one part of the college isn't accountable for what they need to do, all of the rest of us end up sharing that because we lose budget opportunities for the future that way.

In summary, it appears as though the participatory and internal approach to management utilized by Dr. Davis has been somewhat of a double-edged sword. While the internal environment (climate and culture) has been greatly improved as evidenced by increased opportunities for shared direction-setting, participation in major organizational process, and the use of dispersed leadership initiatives, there appear to be some questions about

his authenticity. Specifically, questions were raised about how much direction is being given by the president in regards to college vision, whether there is focused leadership at the top, and concerns about whether his values and actions are congruent. It appears as though the president's hands-off approach and desire to avoid confrontation has led to questions about why some staff have been retained even though they don't support the shared organizational direction. In regards to partnership development, shortcomings identified in this chapter are explicitly related to CCAM assumptions. One of the key assumptions is that executive leaders are responsible for developing a culture and environment where the college is an internally driven organization full of hope, optimism, and resiliency. This internal drive is related to an ability to outperform environmental constraints based upon boundary spanning behaviors, seeking to develop creative and innovative partnerships, and showing the resiliency to find alternative pathways when obstacles present themselves. The overall college attitude toward external constraints appears to be one of acceptance that the college cannot overcome the situations and must live with limited partnering opportunities and networks.

Chapter V

Gamma Community College – A Respectful and Collegial Institution Stymied by its Respect for the "Chain of Command"

Introduction

Gamma Community College (GCC) has been under the guidance of Dr. Smith for more than a decade and the impact he's had on the college, according to interviewees, has been nothing short of tremendous. Calming the climate and repairing the damage from a hard-charging change agent, Dr. Smith has worked to ensure that people are cared for and student needs are met. GCC proved to be an important case study because it provided useful information on the impact of presidential behaviors on institutional movement towards abundance even though President Smith's leadership style is based on practices contradictory to those of the CCAM. Additionally, Gamma provided in-depth information on one of the most important findings – that being the abundance push-pull effect, a concept described in detail later in the study.

Despite the president's focus on hierarchy and structure, there were numerous behavior classifications that, based upon interviewee responses, have worked to either leverage or prime the college to leverage its human resources. Among the behavioral categories associated with an institutional move towards greater abundance are the establishment of an institution focused on structure and defined responsibilities, empowering individuals to take charge over direction-setting, enabling the development of an ethical and collegial climate, and pushing for an atmosphere of high expectations

and responsibility to students and the college. Behavioral categories associated with institutional movement towards lesser abundance include creating an environment negatively impacted by a focus on the hierarchy, failing to equally distribute empowerment opportunities, and approaching external pressures with caution.

Indicators of Abundance Results

Of all the colleges studied, Gamma Community College was able to produce the most specific data. Based upon the college structure, information on partnerships came from three separate offices – career programs, enrichment programs and services, and workforce development. In career programs, there is an indication that more than two hundred different organizations are partnered with to provide clinical and internship opportunities and all of these partnerships were initiated by the college. While there are few partner hubs within the career programs, indications are that the college is involved in six to eight networks. Finally, the career programs office indicates that the college is approached ten to fifteen times a year for internship/clinical partnerships and five to ten times annually to connect companies with other partners. The enrichment programs and services office indicated that they are currently partnered with eighty-one separate organizations, the vast majority of which were initiated by the college. Finally, the workforce development office did not provide the number of partnerships held, but indicated that the college initiated 60% of all partnerships and that 80% of the partner networks utilize the college as the hub. The office also indicated that it is approached twice a month for partnering opportunities and eight times a month to connect partners to existing networks.

Information from the interviewees indicated that the college has a very high employee retention rate, as individuals are loath to leave the college and often finish their careers at GCC. Results from the staffing pattern portion of the survey indicates that on average, high-level administrative positions remain open for three to nine months, the same time frame as a mid-level administrative position. In regards to the education level recent mid-level hires, results indicate that 65% of those hired in the last five years possess advanced degrees. Finally, information on the number of college staff taking advantage of professional development opportunities was provided. Results indicate that no single group experienced more than a 50% utilization rate as 32% of administrators, 39% of full-time faculty, 46% of classified staff, and 40% of professional staff took advantage of professional development opportunities last year.

Information from the grants office regarding private gifts and grants was scarce as the individual completing the survey was unable to provide an estimate of the percentage of the budget attributable to private giving. Instead of providing a percentage, results were provided as dollar figures for the last five fiscal years with $8,000 in 03-04, $7,900 in 04-05, and $10,000 in 05-06, 06-07, and 07-08. The grants office indicates that all of these funds are provided by an American car company's foundation.

Regarding technology, the college has made a substantial investment in technology, as nearly 10% of the college's FY 07-08 budget is attributable to technology investments. The college has seen consistent, steady growth in technology investments over the past five years ranging from $3,918,471 in 03-04 to its current $4,764,401 level. Additionally, the technology office reported that technology is listed as a strategic priority at Gamma Community College. A new strategic plan was presented to the Board

of Trustees in the last two months and technology was included under the strategic priority to plan, achieve, and manage growth.

While partnership information was provided for workforce development, the office also provided information specific to their mission. The college has seen the number of workforce contracts double from FY 03-04 (forty-five) to 06-07 (ninety-one) and expectations are that the college will surpass that number in 2008 as the institution already had seventy-six contracts before the end of March. In regards to the different industries served, the respondent identified contracts within the manufacturing, IT, healthcare, education, retail, financial, and supply chain management sectors. Finally, the office indicated that with the high number of small businesses in the service area, estimating a local business penetration rate is difficult. However, based on the best estimate of the office, they maintain around a 5% penetration rate.

Regarding the enrollment and retention of underserved populations, results indicate that a high number of students receive grants and scholarships each year. The research office, while unable to determine what percentage of high need students receive these funds each year, state that more than five thousand students receive some non-loan related funding and that the college's foundation provided nineteen scholarships to students this year. According to the 2000 census numbers, 21% of the district's population was from a racial/ethnic minority group and information from the research office states that 27% of the student population is from a racial/ethnic minority. While recent population figures were not available, it appears as though the college is serving a student population that mirrors the district population.

Generally speaking, the college invests a substantial portion of its budget into technology, provides numerous students with non-loan funding, appears to serve a representative student population, and is asked to develop partnerships within the workforce development office. However, significantly less than half of the college staff are taking advantage of professional development opportunities and while the numbers have increased substantially over the past few years, the college holds fewer than one hundred workforce contracts. Based on the fact that the college is not transcendently leveraging potential workforce partners and participation in staff in professional development is somewhat low, GCC appears to be an institution more appropriately classified as a college of choice (with indications that it is moving toward greater abundance) rather than as a college of abundance.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Greater Abundance

Established a Highly Structured Institution

Focuses on getting the "right people" at the college

One of the underlying themes throughout the study of this institution was the desire for structure and understanding responsibilities. Obviously, a structure is only as good as its parts and ensuring a highly ordered structure based on understanding and remaining accountable to responsibilities is dependent upon having individuals willing and able to do so. Having the right people in place within a clearly defined structure starts at the top and a college staff member believes that President Smith was the right person to lead the college in a much needed new direction. "He is just the right guy at the right place at the right time. Would this style be successful anywhere, I really don't know. You know there are times when organizations are looking for a hard charging change agent,

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but a quick change agent…[that's not] Dr. [Smith's] style." Dr. Smith, himself, notes that

he was hired to adjust the culture and to ensure that the values driving the college were

similar to the one's that drove him.

> This institution had gone through a period of having a former president
> who was almost a dictator and that's the best way to describe him, though
> I hate to use the term dictator, but that's pretty much the way that it was,
> and the president had been here for five or six years, and the faculty and
> staff were pretty upset with the way that things were going here at the
> institution, part of it being that there was no trust in the institution or
> anything of that nature and that's what I walked into. So of course, I had to
> deal with all of those kinds of issues as I walked in here, so we have
> changed the institution to one that is very collaborative and an institution
> where faculty and staff participate in the governance process and where
> the faculty and staff have a lot of trust, particularly toward me and to the
> institution.

A long-tenured respondent agrees that the college was in need of culture change based

upon the debris left from the previous administration. She feels the college needed

someone who could come in and calm the college down and provide some order and

caring.

> It was a period that was disruptive, not necessarily disruptive in a bad
> way, but disruptive in the way that change makes things and I would say
> Dr. [Smith] was hired to be the dad. He was kind of like a dad. He came in
> to calm things down and to bring experience and to bring movement
> forward that was less radical and less political.

The aforementioned individual was not the only person to compare President Smith to a

parent. In fact, numerous individuals at different levels refer to the president as being a

father figure or as caring for the college. Another long-tenure respondent states "You

know there are some people on campus who fondly refer to him [as a father figure] and

there is a paternalistic aura that he gives off that it is very much more of a family than it

was prior to him. I mean, if it was a family before, it was the bickering brothers and

sisters."

Obviously, a president cannot run the organization alone and depends upon individuals who fit the structure and values that he or she sets up. Dr. Smith believes this is the most important job he has at Gamma Community College (GCC) and that only by ensuring that the "right people" are working in the college, can the organization move forward. "[What] I really believe in is this; it's that the institution will function nicely, if you really get the right people around you to make it function, and you've got to have the right people, you can't just have people around. I mean I can't do it myself." An administrator indicates that the president believes so strongly in the hiring of good people that he customarily reviews personnel decisions and will not allow a senior hire to occur until the right fit is reached. Presenting a recent example, he explains, "[There was a situation where]…he opened the search [for an administrator three times] and couldn't find what he wanted…[so an individual has moved in an interim capacity]." Another individual has seen instances where people had retired and were rehired in new positions based on their fit within the college. The respondent recalled the story of a current administrator who has returned to serve the college.

> [She] was vice president of the faculty for seven years and then returned to faculty…and stayed there until [she] retired, [and she was] retired for four months when [Dr. Smith] called and asked if [she] would please come back as [college administrative position]…and he wanted [her] to help out for a short period of time and, well, of course that has grown and [she is] still here.

According to another respondent, interim administrators are in place not only because of their fit under the current administration, but so that when Dr. Smith retires, the new president will be able to assemble a team that he/she believes will be an ideal fit.

Instituted respect for the chain of command[4]

President Smith is a man not only focused on having a clearly defined structure, but also on clearly defined roles and responsibilities. From the moment he stepped onto the college, he has focused on developing and maintaining a working hierarchy, and an interviewee believes that the development and smooth functioning of the hierarchy will be his greatest legacy. "A legacy that he would leave that would be impossible to remove would be the impact that he has had and the rippling and the trickle-down effect of his impact on the executive leadership team who work with people under them to work with the people under them." The executive leadership team consists of the various vice-presidents and represents the layer of authority directly under the president. It is this group of individuals who take the message from the president and drive it down into the college. While one college member notes "He [President Smith] is available to me", she also explains, without malice or contempt, "I am respectful to the hierarchy." An administrator expands on the separation of power that exists for individuals who don't directly report to President Smith. "I mean it's not necessarily that you have the one-on-one relations and you won't come up and say, let's do this because there is the stigma that he is the president." This individual also explains that the president believes in respect and would, in fact, find it disrespectful to work outside of the hierarchy.

> For me and I think for everybody, there is an awareness of the hierarchy in the organization and that is always there. He would not be stepping outside of the hierarchy. You know he would not be giving me a task to do without the vice president and I think he would not do it because he

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[4] Even through a focus on rigid hierarchy is inconsistent with CCAM assumptions, this code is placed under the behaviors associated with a move toward greater abundance based on how positively, in this section, interviewees perceive the focus on hierarchy. These positive perceptions indicate that college staff appreciate the focus, note how it has improved the culture of the college, and indicates that human resources are being leveraged to a greater extent than in years past.

perceives it as being respectful to talk with the vice president and to be in agreement with him.

An organizational member not only believes that the hierarchal focus is a representation of community colleges in general, but that it has worked to ensure increased collaboration and teamwork at GCC.

> I think there is a great level of teamwork across the whole college. The unit I work with is academic affairs, which is the largest and it covers all of the faculty in numerous units to work with the students. There are probably people who want to do different things, sometimes without going through the chain of command, which has begun, but that is the nature of an educational institution.

An administrator at the college also agrees that there are benefits to the strict hierarchy at Gamma. He supports the notion that having the hierarchy in place creates greater scrutiny and a system of checks and balances that ensures the college is not engaging in inappropriate practices.

> There might be times when people who have maybe more of a global vision of the college than an individual department might say, you know, there is a different way that we should be doing this. I think he wants those checks and balances in place so that you can't just feel I'm a department chair and I can make a decision and I know automatically…it will be approved at the highest level without ever being investigated. It has to go through scrutiny.

Partners with higher-level groups

An explicit example of how responsibilities are assigned by hierarchical level is seen in how the college establishes partners and partnerships. Although discussed in greater detail under another selective code, this aspect of partnering better fit under a code dealing with structure and defined responsibilities. When asked about whom the president works with in partnering, an administrator responded that the big picture is the

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purview of the president and that he works more with the community CEOs instead of individual companies and their CEOs.

> Working with the community is where he deals with more of that big picture, whereas the individual companies are really dealt with either at the vice president or dean level, and there's a lot of individual companies like you alluded to, the contract training with the retraining, but he's not so much involved in those kinds of entertaining CEOs where people like that are within the local businesses. He's working more with the CEOs who run the communities within our district.

Another administrator has seen positive effects on the college from President Smith's ability to develop higher level collaborations and feels one of the most important partnerships established by the president is with the local mayors. Additionally, a long-tenured respondent indicates his participation and membership in these bigger picture groups is a great asset to the college.

> He does a lot of external work with our community and our foundation and our board members and with the rotaries and he knows all of the mayors and also the chamber presidents. He can pick up the phone anytime and the senators, he knows our representatives and our congressmen and all of that. He sits on the boards of a number of different groups and…there are boards that I don't even know about.

This respondent also believes the job of the president is to be out in the community establishing connections and consistently meeting with community and legislative groups. Doing so means he is doing his job and assures organizational members that he is "out there promoting [Gamma Community College]." Another interviewee believes the president's job is to work at the national and state level and allow others to establish linkages to local groups. "I think he makes other people responsible for the partnerships here and he is very supportive of them when they come. You know, with local businesses and areas like workforce development." This individual also spoke of the support the president shows for the development of partnerships by organizational members and a

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department chair expands on this sentiment. She believes that working with local groups

is outside the scope of the presidency and that he should be the most powerful supporter

of the individuals actually establishing the partnerships.

> I think the faculty and staff are the individuals doing the legwork to make
> it happen and he is there to embrace it…I truly think he is as active as he
> possibly can and as active as he supposed to be and I think the
> responsibility is not necessarily with him, but he's there to embrace it and I
> think it's more about the administration and the staff and faculty below.

Embraces the role of visionary and sensemaker

Based upon interview data, it can be inferred that President Smith has embraced

the role as the college's visionary. A respondent, however, was quick to explain that his

role as visionary is not at the exclusion of individual voices within the college. She

believes that, instead, he elicits information and then establishes the college's direction.

> He is not the kind of leader who goes out and says this is what I would
> like to see. Now go do it. I think he sets the vision of this is where we need
> to get to and now, how do you envision us getting there and once he hears
> that consensus, then he'll share his views and a lot of times they are the
> same, but sometimes his go off in another direction.

Elaborating on the concept of guiding the college once a vision is set, an administrator

compares him to a ship's captain since he is responsible for the final outcomes, but

depends upon those working on the ship to ensure the college reaches the destination.

"He is the captain of a ship. He truly steers the ship through the waters that he sees ahead

and is out there looking ahead, he is looking to size up and see where there could be

dangers and challenges" and adds that President Smith "does it magnificently." Another

respondent also believes the president's job is comparable to a captain – that being to

oversee operations, but not necessarily to do the work himself. When asked what his

primary responsibility to GCC was, she stated, "To be there to support what needs to be

done in order for this college to succeed. Not to do, but to support. So if you need

something from him, you'll probably get it, but [he is] probably the leader of overseeing

and pulling everybody together." As the captain, the president also represents the face of

the institution, something one interviewee feels he does superbly. "Not to suggest that the

president is just a figurehead, but he is someone who the community can identify with

and that he carries a front for us that is positive and that the community sees us as a

college that is on the cutting edge of everything." Another respondent also feels that the

president needs to, and is doing a good job of, ensuring the college moves forward and

avoids stagnation.

> His job, to me, is to lead the institution forward because you don't want to
> get stuck doing the same old thing for years and years because the world is
> changing and we need to meet the changes that are happening and he
> needs to move us forward. We can't stay stagnant, so I see his job as
> moving us forward with all the pieces in place and all the players in place
> so that we can best meet the needs of the students and the student needs
> are ever-changing.

Finally, an organizational member sees his role as even greater than that of a captain or a

guide. He feels the president must be a visionary and like other interviewees, believes he

fulfills this role magnificently.

> Ultimately, he is the person responsible for the college…How the college
> will be in ten years and not next week. We know what next year will look
> like with the new buildings, but he needs to be somebody who can tell you
> where we'll be four years from now and so he has to be a visionary and a
> little bit of a fortuneteller to find out what our needs are.

Enabling congruence between organizational and unit values

In order to ensure the hierarchy is effective in providing focused direction and

effort, the values guiding the actions, beliefs, and understandings of organizational

members need to be aligned to some degree with those established at the organizational

level. One respondent, as well as other institutional members, believe individuals within

the college at all levels have bought into the organizational values due to the fact that

they make sense, are understandable, and are no longer "plastic."

> We do have the expectations and the core values and I also think at first,
> core values was kind of a buzzword and it was like we would go to a
> conference and come back and here were our core values, so at first they
> were very plastic. But as the years went on, we really identified where our
> values were and it took awhile and it took a while to buy into it, but now
> it's talked about a lot and I was involved in the first initiative and so now
> it's nice to see people buy into it, that it's not just a facade anymore.

An administrator feels one of the main reasons buy-in has occurred and organizational

level values have permeated daily operations is a catalyst created by President Smith.

Known as his list of expectations, this list provides understandable definitions of what is

expected out of every college staff member and connections to their daily duties and

responsibilities.

> We have our core values and everybody knows what those are and we
> have what we call [Dr. Smith's List of Expectations] and they talk more
> about your behavior in your work roles, so I think they do a better job of
> being more concrete about the core values, and I think it has really helped
> us, has really helped employees understand that in my role, what does it
> mean for me to have integrity or what does it mean for me to be fair, that
> kind of thing.

Different staff members within the college believe these values have infiltrated

the workgroup values for numerous reasons. One college staff member states "We do not

give lip service to those expectations as they are in our daily lives. They are in our

processes, they are in her interview processes, they are in our procedures and our policies

and so we live by them." Another respondent concurs with this assertion and provides the

example of how the core values, as made clear through the expectations, has found its

way into the interview process. "We have taken them and incorporated them into

interview questions that anybody can use across campus for faculty or staff and have also

taken those and incorporated them into our performance evaluation." An administrator

expands on the impact of utilizing the values in interviewing by indicating that it allows for strategic hiring. "We've taken the organizational values and have integrated them into questions that will give us a better understanding of where people's values are and the interview process really tries to be getting out where people's values are and making sure that they fit in with the organization." He also adds that appreciating differences is important in the hiring process and that "We've been able to make sure that the values aligned with the colleges and that's probably because of the tolerance that we have for difference and we are welcoming of difference."

In addition to the institutional policies and practices, one interviewee believes that it starts with consistent and continual communication. Her belief is that by continually putting the expectations forward in many formats, he has created an osmosis-like process credited with pushing organizational values into the workgroup. "I think it's keeping the lines open and communication is great and…the values of the college [are] out there, but in the presence of the campus it is repeated in the in-services and in staff meetings and in our department meetings." Another interviewee opines that the most likely reason that organizational values have made their way into the daily workgroup values is through the diversity of input responsible for creating the values in the first place.

> I believe that generally the college is guided by organizational values and that they helped to develop the unit values. I think it's that way because if you talk to anybody about the core values of the college and what the core values are, they will be able to tell you. It's not a secret and it is something that we all know and having been in all of those places especially during my tenure of having been here and being in the executive leadership team, in my time here, I can tell you that as a faculty member, even I knew what the values of the college where because I participated in establishing those values and my opinions were asked.

An administrator explained to the interviewer that workgroup values are absolutely linked to the organizational values and the impact can be traced all the way to the students. When asked to explain why she believes such a clear flow of influence has occurred, she provided a lengthy, but effective example from phlebotomy.

> We started with a little book called *What language does my patient hurt in*?, which was about how to deliver culturally competent care and for the program, students go out to clinical settings and they're working with patients from all different cultures. So they need to know how to interact with and what different queues were in from different cultures. So there is a student who read about the Middle East culture and they had an Arab man come in with his elderly mother and in that culture, when something is important, people will get into your face and will do what seems like yelling to us to communicate the importance of the issue. So the mother had got some very frightening news from the doctor and the son was clearly upset and want to the phlebotomist, who was our student, and got right in her face and was yelling at her, trying to communicate to her how important a blood test was and the student understood what all of that was and took care of the mother. And when they left, the phlebotomist, who was the preceptor, came out and said, were you frightened? And the student looked at her and said why would I be? And she said, well he was yelling at you and the student said no, that's part of the culture…It was very important and that's why he was talking loud and close and so what we had done was aligned with college's strategic direction. The faculty implemented the objective and designing an activity that taught the student something related to the strategic plan and the student learned what they were supposed to learn. They internalized it and utilized it in a clinical setting and not only did they apply it to the student but it was a teaching opportunity as well.

The researcher found almost no evidence from interviewees that organizational and workgroup values differed greatly. In fact, only one of the interviewees indicated there were differences at all. The staff member explained that his unit believed that for student success to truly occur, the college should mandate, at a minimum, reading assessment testing for all entering students – a stance the president has not been willing to take. Based upon concerns over enrollment and the fact that some students will never take

more than one or two courses, the president agreed to mandate testing for all full-time

enrollees and part-time students after nine credit hours.

Created task groups

An example of the structure initiated by President Smith was the elimination of

standing committees when he entered the college. He wanted outcome specific groups

dealing with tangible issues, over a specified amount of time, and disbanded after

completing the task. The president explains "About 95% of what we do is done through

these task groups…we say what we want the [group] to do, but we don't tell them how

[to] get there, but we give them a timeline, and so these groups go in and out of existence

and we expect tasks to be done." In keeping with the focus on the chain of command, an

administrator provides more insight into how the task groups operate and whom they

report to. "…If there is an issue that needs to be addressed, there will be a beginning date

and an ending [date] and then the task group will present the results in a presentation that

will go to the executive leadership team so that there is…resolution." He also indicates

that while no policy exists establishing the diversity of the task groups, there is a

conscious effort to ensure that multiple groups are represented so that diverse input is

gathered.

> We do look at them and try and make sure that there is representation from
> each division from each class of employee whether it's administrators or
> faculty or professional staff and we try and make sure we have them all
> and sometimes students depending on what the issue is. It doesn't always
> turn out that way and sometimes the groups could be based on again
> talking about which area we are tackling, so it could be heavy in one area,
> but there is a conscious effort.

The creation of task groups reflects Dr. Smith's commitment to order, progress,

and involvement from multiple hierarchical levels.

Makes decisions based on data and evidence

Nearly every interviewee informed the researcher that the president was a scientist by training based on the belief that he could only understand how President Smith leads the college within the context of the scientific method. Working within the scientific method approach requires data and evidence, two constructs essential to the president's decision-making approach. One of the respondents explains that while it comes off as cautious, the president simply wants to ensure that he has adequate information before making an important institutional decision. "Dr. [Smith] might be a little more cautious and he does come from a science background and I think he approaches a lot of these problems from a problem-solving and from a data perspective. …he always tries to gather information." According to a college staff member, the president is interested in two-way information flow and wants everyone to have access to the information he has and uses for decision-making. "He sends out the presidential memos and…we have a website that keeps the community and campus community updated on everything…and there is an electronic newsletter and it is just a constant stream of information that is shared with people." While not a taskmaster, the president is a self-proclaimed outcomes-oriented leader. He explains it is largely based on his math and science background and that he wants individuals throughout the college to be focused on completion of tasks and duties (i.e. task groups replacing standing committees). "I'm a task-oriented person…I am a [scientist] by training and that will get you to understand where I'm coming from…I come from that sort of data driven way of operating and I really believe that people should be task oriented." While an interviewee explains that he is generally a subtle and quiet leader, she sees "an intensity to Dr.

[Smith] for the goal of getting us to achieve the goal" and notes "he can be very firm without having to raise his voice."

In summary, the president is a man dedicated to a strict hierarchy and clearly identified roles with a philosophy that this will increase the college's ability to deliver upon its mission. He has worked to ensure core values are effectively communicated and understood throughout the college, new employees fit the culture of the college, and that people understand their roles and place within the college. He has assumed the role of visionary and depends upon those lower in the hierarchy to take care of the daily functions and local connections. Again, this information does not mesh with the assumptions inherent within the CCAM, but perceptions from college staff are that the rigid structures and hierarchical philosophy has resulted in a more efficient, calm, and respectful climate typified by trust in the executive leader. The responses from interviewees, as presented in this section, indicate that the changes initiated by President Smith have been perceived as a vast improvement over the old culture. This situation increases the likelihood that organizational members will provide their best energies and access to tacit knowledge necessary for transcendent leveraging.

Empowered Individuals to Take Charge over Decision-Making and Direction-Setting

Encourages others to make organizational decisions

President Smith is a participatory manager who depends upon others to deliver upon the mission of the college. When interviewed, the president was adamant that only an individual focused on sharing power and authority could exist and thrive since GCC is a collaborative institution.

> We are a very collaborative institution, one that believes in power, one
> that has a strong ego, or one who has anything else like that cannot live in
> this environment, because it's a very collaborative and power sharing kind
> of environment… collaboration is built into the institution and people are
> thriving around that collaboration.

An administrator, employed by the college for the majority of the president's tenure, sees

congruence between his espoused belief in collaboration and his approach to decision-

making.

> I don't find him to be the kind of person who is all about power and
> authority and that kind of thing. I don't find him to be that way and I have
> been here for a long time and never really encountered that as he always
> wants to get people involved and he wants to know what others think and
> wants to think about things critically before we do something and he is not
> about - this is what I say, this is what we're going to do. He is not about
> that. That's not how he makes decisions.

Another administrator also sees him as a leader who not only believes in sharing power,

but as a leader who depends heavily upon those individuals he has empowered. "He is

nurturing and he feels secure enough in himself that he has made the right decisions and

the people he's put into the positions of authority that he does not have to be on their

backs and constantly watching over them."

While the president believes in and relies heavily upon structures and roles, he is

clearly focused on delegation. When asked to describe his leadership style, a long-tenured

respondent explains that he has never felt micromanaged by the president. He is also

careful to explain that the structures and the chain of command ensure accountability and

eliminate the possibility of laissez-faire management.

> I never feel micromanaged. It is not laissez-faire either because there are
> structures and you have to be accountable for the information that you
> give and you are not just doing your own thing, but I do feel that we are
> given opportunities to make changes and to do our business without being
> questioned about every little thing we do.

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Another interviewee provides a similar response, but provides a clearer picture of how information filters through the chain of command and how it finds its way down to the lowest levels of the organization. "He lets people do what they are capable of…and they give information and answers to him. [He] is not telling anybody what he wants them to do. He wants to hear from everybody…and I really believe it's all the way to the adjuncts and back up." Another respondent indicates that while the structures are in place to gather information, there is freedom (to an extent) in how people go about meeting goals and delivering outcomes. She explains that even when goals are mandated, approaches are not, and "Dr. [Smith] is not a clunk you over the head kind of person. He is more subtle." She provides an example of one of the few times he has mandated anything; that being textbook cost containment so that students are able to afford attendance at GCC.

> There are few things that Dr. [Smith] would stand up and mandate …
> Probably one of the strongest mandates we're under is about textbook cost
> containment and I couldn't say he's 100% mandating it out, I don't see that.
> He did stand up at a meeting and say that we need to be concerned about
> the adult students and the next logical question is, who's responsible for it,
> and who will be dealing with it? We don't know who's supposed to be
> dealing with it. We've heard the mandate that we're supposed to be
> concerned about it, but the question is, how are we to decide and I would
> like to see the next step with him talking about how we're going to do it. I
> think he has the expectation that somebody will pick that up and take it.

Increased opportunities to provide representative input

Indications from previous sections are that the president wants input from people throughout the college and believes in a collaborative work environment. He specifically states that leadership of a college is based on getting people to work together for the good of the organization – something requiring communication at many levels.

> I really believe in collaboration and am interested in things where people
> are involved, where we get people together to form a team and have teams
> to really be involved in whatever it may be. I believe that really the

essence of my leadership is guiding the institution's setting of vision and then finding people who will buy into it and who will live it out and care for the institution.

According to individuals interviewed, this is more than an espoused principle. One respondent notes that input and opinions are sought from people throughout the hierarchy. "Input comes from everybody. It's not just certain groups of people…I mean they [executive team members] come down with the suggestions, but they do come down to get the opinions [as well]." While discussing how representative input was sought in the strategic planning process, an administrator recalls that individuals inside and outside of the college were charged with providing input into the strategic priorities guiding the institution. "We had different priority groups and we make sure to involve them and all of the staff and we involved people throughout the district and so there were selected groups of staff and faculty and administrators who got together and hashed out the priority statements." Another organizational member explains that getting input from multiple sources, especially external stakeholders, is key to the president's strategy for collaboration and moving the college forward. She provided an example of how external stakeholders were crucial to the strategic planning process.

> Probably the activity that had the broadest breadth and scope was when we were doing the most recent strategic plan and Dr. [Smith] invited all kinds of individuals to the campus to participate in this with the president and so there were rotary groups and chambers of commerce and principals and superintendents and all kinds of groups like that. There were a series of breakfasts where he had a person from the college at each table and they had discussion topics and he actively gathered information from outside of the college to inform that activity and to do sort of a gap analysis, not a full SWOT analysis, but partially, and I think eventually that information was fed into a SWOT analysis.

> During the interviewing, some respondents provided examples of actual structures put in place to ensure the president receives input from individuals throughout the

college. The two groups referred to are the Committee of Administrators (CA) and

Executive Advisory Committee (EC). The CA includes administrators from upper and

middle administration and the EC includes middle administrators, faculty, and staff from

multiple levels. One institutional member talked about these committee meetings, which

occur on a regular basis, as opportunities for administrators, faculty, and staff to interact

directly with the president, ask questions, and provide input into organizational decisions.

> "We don't do anything without getting input from people. We have [a
> Committee of Administrators] and we meet once a month and there is the
> [Executive Advisory Committee]. He calls them for a meeting and his
> expectation is that administrators will be there…You're there, that's the
> expectation. He has called the meeting and this is where we share ideas
> and this is where people ask questions and people are very open about
> asking questions. Then we have this council called [EC], which is made up
> of faculty and administrative, staff support, staff, and administrators as
> well. And it meets once a month and it's a forum where information is
> given out on different projects and it is given out to the group and input is
> asked for from that group as well.

Based on responses from individuals in multiple hierarchical levels, there appear to be

numerous opportunities for providing representative input at GCC.

Pushes decision-making to the lowest levels of the college

Several interviewees provided information indicating that decision-making is

pushed down the organizational chart and that the president is very interested in having

people throughout the college get involved in decision-making. An administrator

provided a description of how the president wants decision-making to be the purview of

people at every level within the college. "He [President Smith] listens very carefully to

people's thinking on things. He tries to get as much decision-making as he can to the

lowest levels of the organization and when it comes to decisions, he will generally listen

to folks and their thinking." Another college administrator agrees that decision-making

involves everyone in the college and is a representative process at the college. To make

her case, she points to the recently completed five-year strategic planning process.

> Everybody is involved in that and it is absolutely college wide and we just
> finished our strategic planning for the next five years…so, we go through
> a complete cycle where we start from scratch and we do our
> environmental scan and then we immediately bring in experts from
> outside. We bring in futurists. We've got everybody from support staff to
> faculty to administrative staff to professional staff who are all invited. We
> have representatives of the groups to sit in on the different strategic
> planning meetings and once the plans are drawn and the strategic priorities
> are set up, everyone in the college has the opportunity to react to those and
> we have a series of meetings and forums throughout the college and
> people give input and they are revised and it goes on and on for a good, I
> would say ten months before the document is finally put to bed.

One organizational member also believes that individuals throughout the college have

opportunities to make decisions and pointed to the recent branding effort to show the

researcher she has had opportunities to make decisions within the college.

> I am working on a branding statement for the college, which is a huge
> undertaking and very important to us as an institution, because it is who
> we are and what we are and how we put that to our students and to the
> community at large. So I really think that I've had a huge part to play in
> shaping it because we're constantly providing information to people. I do
> have an opportunity to say this is good, this is the message that should
> come from here or I'm not sure we're quite conveying what they want to
> hear.

While not making the final decision on what the statement will be, she believes the final

decision will represent her views on what is appropriate and should be included.

In conclusion, the president engages in a dispersed management and emphasizes

that he wants collaboration and teamwork to guide the organization. He has empowered

individuals underneath him by sharing authority, creating institutionally diverse groups

that meet regularly, and by creating structures ensuring that input for decision-making

reaches all levels of the college. As in the first selective code identified, it is interesting

that even with an institutional focus on maintaining a rigid hierarchy, there is

considerable attention paid to providing opportunities for input from throughout the

college.

Enabled the Development of an Ethical and Collegial Climate

Helped to restore the college's "humanity"

As indicated earlier, President Smith was not brought in to be change agent. In

fact, he was brought in to provide stability and peace to an organization that appears to

have been burnt out by a hard-charging change agent. Providing peace and stability,

however, required changes to the culture, especially the organizational values and

understandings influencing the behavior of organizational members and true culture

change, as opposed to climate change, takes a great deal of time and effort. One

administrator, who worked as a senior administrator outside of higher education for more

than a decade, remarks on just how difficult and time-consuming culture change efforts

are and points to the stability of President Smith as a reason why such efforts at GCC

could be successful.

> I was [an executive] for about twenty years before coming to education
> and I have seen presidents and I know that the typical tenure of one of
> those is about five years and to have someone in this role for [more than a
> decade]…It's obvious that it takes longer than what is typically a five-year
> cycle of a president to change the culture or the climate.

GCC was not Dr. Smith's first presidency and during previous tenures, he learned culture

change requires specific tactics – including establishing trust and understanding between

the college and the new president. He explains that from his first moments in office,

working toward establishing trust was foremost in his mind.

> One of the things that I think I've used, and something you have to do in
> an institution such as this, one has to really get to know people. You have
> to really get to know people and let people get to know me as the president
> or as an administrator at the institution and so I did a lot of that kind of

> work. I think the real key to all of this is building trust and you can only
> build trust over time. You can't build trust overnight. You have to do it
> through your actions and by the things that you say you're going to do you
> have to do them and you make a commitment to people who expect you to
> do that.

The president worked to establish trust, get people familiar with his leadership

approaches, and assess specific areas of the culture that needed to be addressed.

According to a respondent, one of the biggest issues President Smith tackled when he

arrived was the lack of integrity and "loss of values" at Gamma. "There was a perception

of a lack of integrity when he came in and one of the things he had to do was to bring

integrity back to the institution. So, I've seen him do those things with fairness and

consistency and integrity and bringing us back to an institution since we had we lost our

values." She also provided a financial example of how integrity has been reestablished

under Dr. Smith's tenure.

> We are coming off of a president that had an A, B, C, and Z list and if you
> were on the Z list, you got nothing and the A-list people got everything.
> We don't have that kind of environment at this point and if you have a
> need and the program is valuable, the money will be made available to you
> to pursue it and if something is brought forward by the best-loved person
> and there's no rationale behind it or if it's goofy, you are not getting
> anything.

According to a long-tenured administrator, Gamma Community College had lost its

humanity under the previous administration, a situation Dr. Smith dealt with immediately

upon entering the college. She explains that through his personality and actions, humanity

was brought back to the college and high expectations were not sacrificed.

> It [the college] was in need of a good dose of humanity and he really
> tackled that. First of all, I think we start with his personality. I think the
> climate of the college very often starts at the top and he is someone that
> exudes and really cares about people and he cares about their feelings. He
> still wants the job done and to a certain extent he is a task master and you
> better be doing the job, you better be doing it well, and he holds people to

high expectations and there's no question about that, but he does that in an atmosphere of caring and of creating a real team.

Building upon the idea of reestablishing the college's humanity, another interviewee provided a medical metaphor to describe the wounds inflicted on the college by the previous administration and the need for an organizational physician to come in and provide healing. "Dr. [Smith] came in following a very volatile polarizing term of [a] previous president and there were lots of wounds and I had a conversation… [and said] …you came to the college right about the time it needed to be healed." Another respondent believes the college has been transformed under the leadership of Dr. Smith. Having grown up in a nearby community, she remembers the reputation of the college when she was in high school and notes that the view of the college, both inside and out, have changed dramatically during his tenure.

> He just turned the place around and made it a world-class institution and that we are more like a university than a community college and our focus is on learning and we focus on our students and I don't want this to sound like a commercial, but I grew up in this area and I started here when I was twenty-five. So, when I was in high school, this college was called [derogatory name] and it didn't have a very good reputation and there was a lot of animosity between the old administration and the associations before Dr. [Smith], but I think this is a world-class institution and we all work together collaboratively.

The college has undergone tremendous changes under the tenure of Dr. Smith and indications are that it is now an institution that values and cares for people. A respondent indicates that the Gamma has become such a welcoming college that people genuinely enjoy their jobs and feel appreciated. "People enjoy being here… everybody [is] being supported and people are respectful of each other and…it's not just that I'm giving you the word that you want to hear…they truly enjoy being here and I think people generally are very accepting of each other." A college administrator takes it a step further and

indicates that when people start working at GCC, they often become lifetime employees.

To support this claim, she spoke of a recent report from external consultants.

> We had a comprehensive salary and benefits review a few years ago and the company came and said, you have some kind of magic that gets people to stay because their tenures are long and due to the culture. People will leave within two to four years here if the culture is not right, but if you make it past that, most people that are staying for ten, fifteen, twenty, however many years until they retire.

According to a newer administrator, the institution is a place where he would love to have made a career, if he could start over again. He also believes that the current culture is a reflection of who Dr. Smith is as a person and a president. "He is somebody who treats individuals respectfully and [then] they treat others respectfully…I have told a couple of the faculty that if I could reincarnate myself, I'd love to come back as a faculty member working here…It's that supportive." Another respondent agrees that one of the core values established by the president is teamwork and that it plays out regularly. She provides an example of how individuals from different units pitched in recently to ensure that the college's staff development day went off without a hitch.

> Everyone is out to help one another and we don't have the attitude of that's your job. It's, if you need my help I will help and we're a team and we come in and we help each other out, as we need to. For example, we have the staff development day coming up at the end of February and the development activities for administrative and professional staff and it's the first responsibility of our vice president and the people of personnel and human resources, but that is not the way we operate. We all come together to forge what we're going to do that day for our staff and we feel that it's each of our individual responsibilities to be there to help.

Gamma Community College, in addition to the vision and mission statements, has a statement of ideals that appears to confirm that Dr. Smith has and is continuing to push for a college focused on ethics and humanity. The statement explains the college places a high value on all individuals within the college as well as the

external stakeholders and realizes that people are central to the organization's success. Based upon these statements, the declaration puts forth a promise that the college will create the structures and processes necessary for people to be treated with respect, care, and professionalism.

Works to continually improve the college's internal environment

One of the ways that Dr. Smith has been able to lead such profound changes into the culture of the college is that he has focused so heavily on the internal facets of the presidency. In attempting to describe his style, an administrator referred to him as an internal leader – someone who is focused on and derives enjoyment from caring for the people and students inside of the college.

> Some presidents are internal and some presidents are external and if you use that framework, I would say that he is more of an internal president. I think that he does have external connections, but he spends more of his time here and he knows what's going on…he does know what's going on, and he does want to be informed and so he is involved in the issues that need to have a leader; what's going on and not being surprised and being involved in some of those decisions.

She expands on the concept of internal leadership by indicating that from the time he met with individuals on the search committee, he was looking to build upon and grow internal partnerships with subcultures across the college.

> From the very beginning he was very much focused on forming a partnership with the president of the faculty association and I think he was looking to form a partnership from the very beginning with that person who was on the search committee and it continued with the faculty association saying that this was a critical area and making sure that there were good relationships between the administration and the faculty and making sure that he had an open door with that person and making sure that they worked together to resolve issues that came up or to look at ways to move the faculty forward on different things that would be important, so to me, that is a partnership and I think that it is also true of other employee groups within the college who see themselves as members of a team.

One of the respondents has experienced his focus on the internal health of the college and explains that faculty members have largely bought into his vision and believe he has their interests in mind. "I know that the majority of the faculty have a lot of respect for him and they look at him as a leader and people are confident [that] he is going to make the decisions for the college and these will have the college and the faculty's best interests at heart."

Another indication that Dr. Smith is an internal president is the fact he makes his presence known on campus and takes the time to be seen across the campus. In addition to the fact that he eats with the students, faculty, and staff in the cafeteria, he shows up frequently at campus events. An organizational member explains he is a highly visible president, regardless of what is going on. "He is a part of the groups in the meetings, in the focus groups, and if there is an event, then he is at the event. He is very visible." She goes even further to indicate that his visibility is tangible proof he supports the faculty and their activities.

> Knowing that he is there supporting the event is very valuable to me as a faculty member. It is supported by the president and that's important. Obviously I could have these events and I am going to have them and if people from the administration don't come to see it, I'm going to continue them, but there's more weight to the value of what you're doing because of the support we receive.

It seems that conversations about organizational culture are never complete until someone introduces an institutional myth. One of the interviewees obliges by sharing a story she has heard multiple times, but which no one can verify. The story paints the picture of an engaged president strolling the campus and connecting with every student he encounters.

I've never witnessed this myself and it could be me telling stories out of school, but what I heard was when he first got here, very early in his tenure, he would come out of his office and go around campus and walk up to students and ask them, what do you like about the college. So that was really, really in the trenches.

Dr. Smith believes in improving the lives of organizational members and spends a considerable amount of time ensuring that people are cared for. An administrator confirms that while he maintains high expectations, he is also concerned about the college staff. "He comes off as having the ideal balance between being a very rational scientific problem-solving kind of person, so he wants to know the information and the details of the different pieces of it, but along with that, he is also very caring." Expanding on this idea, she explains that GCC, under his leadership, has become a place equally focused on social and performance elements.

You know, in many institutions I would say they're more social institutions, where people are friendly, and that's the predominant culture and then you have others that are more focused on excellence and achievement, but some of the social part is missing, and I think one of the unique things about [Gamma] is that it really has both of those things well in place…it's a balance of being a great place to work with great people, but also people here have a lot of pride in the work that they do and they really have a commitment to process improvement as well.

This focus on ensuring people are both pushed toward excellence and supported has, based on information from interviewees, resulted in exceptional personal accomplishments and feelings of care and support. A long-tenured respondent indicates that under his watch, multiple individuals from the upper administration have entered presidencies, a development he attributes to Dr. Smith's leadership style. "A couple of people in particular, took on more responsibilities than their jobs might define and I think that that has prepared them to go into a presidency without a narrow view of what their vice presidential role was." As noted earlier, this individual, as well as others, believe the

atmosphere created by President Smith encourages people to reach beyond their

perceived capabilities. An academic faculty member interprets his caring and person-

centered nature to be authentic and states "He is a very personable person and he cares

for people and that is not just to say something that is positive. That is something I see in

him, that he is a people person." A college staff member informed the researcher that

some years back, there was an elderly employee who, of all things, could not stay awake

in meetings. Instead of simply letting the individual go, she explains that the president

showed genuine care and concern for the individual.

> About five years [ago] I was in meetings with him and there was a person
> who was sleeping. He was here [at the college] for so long, and he did not
> want to retire and [Dr. Smith] wanted him to go out with flying colors and
> I believe he worked as hard as he could to keep him, but at a certain point,
> you have to make a decision like that, but I believe he wanted to make this
> as easy as possible for the retiree. I believe he has a strong human nature
> [and]…thinks about people and he doesn't want them to lose their jobs.

Interviewees also explain that from the outset of his tenure, Dr. Smith has focused on

providing opportunities for personal growth and health. An administrator believes he

wants holistic development of college staff – not just in aspects directly related to the job.

"I think there is always the encouragement to help people do better at their jobs and help

them to be more professional in all aspects of their life and not just for the college, but in

other areas as well." Another respondent concurs with the assessment that President

Smith is focused on the health and well-being of employees and provides some examples

of how this focus has played out through the provision of services to staff and their

families.

> For those who are going for degree programs here, especially among our
> support staff and a number of them do, you know, they get free tuition and
> their children and their spouses would only have to pay a quarter of the
> tuition. And there's a business center too that is free and at the fitness

center, which helps keep people healthy, and there is a comprehensive health program here and people come in and go in for a complete blood screening and flu shots and all that is free as well.

In addition to making people feel better, professionally and personally, the focus on internal organizational health has had a profound and dramatic positive effect on the relationship between two groups historically typified by animosity – senior administration and faculty. Before Dr. Smith took the presidency, relations between faculty and senior administration were strained, however, this appears to have ended during Dr. Smith's tenure. A long-tenured interviewee provided a historical view on the degree of change in the relationship between Dr. Smith and previous presidents.

> We had a very contentious relationship between the association and the president of this college, not particularly between the administrators and the association, but definitely between the president and the association and it was terrible. They were just looking for every chance to come at the president. So when [President Smith] came here, he completely changed the administration and the way the administration operated with the faculty association. In fact, it had been adversarial up until that point, even with the prior president and the second president and during the first president's tenure…but not with this president. He changed it all.

The president indicates the relationship has improved because of buy-in to the values guiding the college and indicates that negations, which had been long and drawn out, now occur with little animosity. "We settled the faculty contract in a few weeks and it has been settled for five years and we settled a contract for some of our auto workers here in less than two meetings here. There is a lot of buy-in with what we're doing and we respect people." The same respondent, who provided the grim history of animosity between faculty and administrators, now describes the relationship between the two as collaborative and team-oriented.

> They really work as a team and [President Smith] has included them when he has made decisions that impact the college or the faculty. He calls the

president and then they sit down and they discuss things and he gives rationale and asked for input on everything before he makes those kinds of decisions so when things happen, we know it's going to go smoothly and there will not be a backlash or reactions to things when they work things out.

Models the behaviors he wants to see guiding the college

Dr. Smith understands that from day one, people have been watching his actions as well as listening to his words; so he has focused on providing a consistent example of the values he feels should guide the institution. Invoking the image of a pastor giving a sermon, he indicates he has been preaching to the college since he started more than a decade ago.

> There are some things that I preach here all the time. I preach fairness. I preach consistency. I preach responsibility. I preach honesty and I preach this whole thing about do unto others as you would have them do unto you, the golden rule…I would bet you right now, there would be some people who would say they don't know what's going on and it's not because we don't preach communication, and there are people who don't read and don't listen and don't know what's going on in the institution.

Of course, if the message is not understood or the president behaves in ways incongruent with his message, organizational members will refuse to listen. At best, there will be misunderstanding and failure to follow, and at worst, people will disengage and countercultures will form. One of the respondents indicates that incongruence of behaviors has never been a problem with this president. In fact, she believes he actively and consistently lives out the vision of the college.

> He behaves at all times, 100% of the time, in congruence with the core values of the institution. He is like the poster boy for those things. He also wrote the expectations for staff and faculty and those [expectations] guide people on how they are to comport themselves when they're on the college's business.

Perhaps the central theme underlying the behaviors the president seeks to model to the college is that people always come first. This plays out through treating people with

respect and care regardless of the situation. President Smith illustrates this belief by

stating that disagreement is acceptable, but that people are never to be disagreeable. "I do

get some of the, I disagree with what you're doing, and…I said in the beginning that I

really believe in people having the right to say what they feel, but they don't have a right

to be disagreeable." An administrator provides a more vivid metaphor of how the

president has brought care and respect for people to the forefront of the college. He feels

the president has taught people how to "play together" and share the "sandbox".

> Interviewer: If you had one word or a phrase to describe what [President Smith's] main responsibility to the college is, what would that be?
>
> Respondent: To keep everybody playing nice and moving forward.
>
> Interviewer: Do you believe that he is doing a good job of that?
>
> Respondent: I do. Again, we now have three negotiating groups, full-time faculty, support staff, and I think about three or four years ago, adjunct faculty. So we have over six hundred adjunct faculty members, but of that membership and leadership, he has their support. We go through contract negotiations with hardly any issues and I mean things are thrown out on the table, but he has their support to show up to board meetings to show their support for what he wants to do and its just a matter of them trying to get everybody to play nice in the sandbox. So that we're not bogged down because of some personal differences and we can just continue to move forward.

In addition to putting people first, individuals throughout the college have noted that the

president has behaved ethically, honestly, and consistently throughout his tenure. An

organizational member has observed how ethically Dr. Smith behaves and how this has

been pushed throughout the institution. "Dr. Smith is a person of very high ethical

standards and he believes very strongly in personal responsibility and he thinks there is a

right way to handle the situations and you should do so at every opportunity and he

would like all of us to show that philosophy." The president also exudes honesty and

openness, which a college administrator has witnessed many times during her tenure. She recalls a recent CA meeting with the president in which he very honestly expressed his feelings of frustration and grief with the construction processes on campus. "He told us in the [CA], I know there will be grief and you will have complaints, but I don't want to hear them, because I will have complaints too." As stated earlier, this is a president who does not sugarcoat his opinions and believes truth should be uncompromised. The implementation of this view has ensured that people in the college understand where he is coming from and are not surprised by his actions, a feeling expressed by one of the respondents. She feels that individuals always know where he is coming from and "When he makes a decision about something or when a decision is made at the college, which in essence really reflects his leadership and where the college is going, people are not surprised by his decisions." Consistency has also played out in the way the president unwaveringly stands by his convictions. An interviewee explained that, "He is, this is what I believe and I think everybody is not going to like what I do, but this is what I am and this is what I believe in and this is what I feel is in the best interest of the college…it stops right there…he does not fold…"

The president has also worked to model how individuals at the college should respond to criticism and questioning by responding consistently to these situations throughout his tenure. An administrator notes he addresses criticism in a calm manner and deals with the content instead of the attack.

> If you are upfront and you're really asking why did you do this, he has no problem giving you the rationale…But you know, I still haven't seen him lose his temper, not even in a board meeting where I think I would've lost it, but he is not a pushover. He will tell you in no uncertain terms why he did what he did.

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A college staff member offered a similar response to the question of how the president responds to criticism. She declares he simply goes to the data to provide an explanation so that people can gain insight into why a specific decision was made. "Interestingly enough, some of those occasions [criticism] have come up and I have not seen him get defensive and I've seen him approach them in ways that try to explain to the person why the decision has been made." Another interviewee provided a tangible example of when he questioned the president about who was really leading the college. It was early in Dr. Smith's tenure and the chair was charged with talking to the president about faculty members' concerns that his presidency was being hi-jacked.

> When I was chair of the senate, I had meetings with Dr. [Smith] and we would sit across the table like we are right now and I just told him that the view of the faculty right now is that two people are running the college and neither one of them is you and he looked at me and he smiled and he said well, I can understand where that view might have come from, but I want to assure you that that is not the case. I also want to assure you that in time, you will see that that was not the case.

A long-tenured administrator also provided a useful example of how the president dealt with criticism when it reached his level. One of the main lessons learned during this study is that the president is a participatory manager, but this example provides some insight on how he also provides support for college staff when they need his presidential stature.

> We did a curriculum change and then we had a student who talked about we didn't have an opportunity for them to do clinicals so they could graduate and she got upset and her father started to argue and we met with the president and he got belligerent with the president and President [Smith] sat up and said if you can't be respectful, this meeting will end right now. We all treat each other with respect and the father sat down and we were able to the get along and finish up the meeting and then we were able to resolve the issue.

In short, the president has modeled that individuals presented with questions and criticism should address them calmly, head on, and lean on the evidence that led to the decision.

Finally, the president has attempted to model how individuals should respond when mistakes are made at the college. First, as noted by a respondent, the president would prefer that mistakes not be made. However, if a mistake is made, she believes he wants individuals to have a back-up plan so the damage is minimized.

> Sometimes with new initiatives, they fall flat on their face even though there was backup or good research, it might or might not work and he is perfectly okay with that. But he does want to minimize the damage and teaches people it's okay to do it, but it does not work, you also have to have a plan b in place since you always need to have a good plan in place.

As an example of Dr. Smith's commitment to personal development, an administrator explains that the president looks beyond the mistake to assess the intentions that led up to it. "He is not one of those presidents who is going to focus on mistakes. He is going to focus on what you're intending to do and if that didn't happen, what did happen and what did we learn from it." Another administrator agrees with this statement and provides a bit more context. She indicates the president will work to get to the bottom of the situation and why the mistake was made, but will always look to move beyond the situation.

> Nobody likes mistakes, but he understands that people do make mistakes and he listens very carefully to what has happened. Now first of all, if he feels that something has happened, he has no problem with bringing it up. He does not let things fester, you know, if there's something that bothers him, he will bring it up and then he listens carefully to the discussion about what has happened and why it's happened and then he will let people know that he is not particularly pleased with what's happened, but he is always looking at how do we get beyond this.

During the interviews, two examples of the president's care for people, in the context of making mistakes, was unearthed – one from a non-executive college member and the

other from the president himself. When asked how the president responds to mistakes, the

staff member explains:

> I can think of three instances, and they all have to deal with three people in high positions who needed to leave their positions. He worked with the people in those positions to try and make them feel good about themselves and to make them understand that it was where the institution was and not necessarily them in one instance and in another he was very frank to let the person know that the personality and the way they worked was not consistent with the college. It was done very respectfully and professionally, but it was about making hard decisions at the time and you can also see afterward, his concern that the people were doing well and that they were being successful and that they were not hurt as they were leaving here.

The president provides a more recent example of not only how he responds to mistakes,

but about his philosophy on how people should react in general within the college.

> I went to visit the people at the [workforce development board] and I even wrote them a letter certifying some of the things that they have been telling me and just this past Thursday, I found out that some of the information that had been given to me was incorrect and I'm embarrassed about it. So mistakes were made, but I have not been out to say that I am firing them, but what I have done is talk to the people about how did they do it. How did it get to be this way so that we could clarify the process that they went through and hopefully it will not happen again. Of course I'm embarrassed and I will deal with that part, but in no way am I putting a hammer over somebody's head over this because a lot of people were involved in getting this information together and bringing it to my office. So treating people fairly, being consistent…I am not one of those who will stand up and pound my fist on the desk and I don't curse. I don't allow cursing. We don't need that in dealing with these kinds of things.

There are numerous indications that the president's attempts to model more humane,

ethical, and civil behaviors have significantly impacted Gamma. While some of the

members, when asked what his legacy on the college would be, pointed to the growth of

the college, the new buildings, and the overall appearance, others looked beyond the

structures of the college and believe that his legacy will be the atmosphere and culture of

the college. One administrator believes that he has left the college with the greatest

possible gift, a firm foundation for the future.

> I think he would've left the college in an outstanding position to take on future challenges and I think he would have given us a solid foundation upon which to build upon and I think that's the biggest legacy that anyone can leave is that you give the people who are there the wherewithal to build upon and exceed where you have been.

Another interviewee built upon the idea of a foundation and feels the president will leave

the college with the ability to treat people right and respect each other – something

clearly lacking when President Smith entered the college. "He has created a culture where

people respect each other and I hope it will continue after he left because…You know,

you don't want to have to worry about being stabbed in the back and people tearing down

thing other people have built up." A respondent also expressed both a feeling that the

president has firmly established a college where people respect each other and treat each

other right and a concern that the changes will not outlive his presidency. When asked

what the legacy of Dr. Smith would be, he stated "The overall collegial atmosphere of

people not only being willing to work together, but to work for the betterment of students

and…it is now because of his ability to get people to work together for a common cause.

I think that will outlast him." When asked specifically if the changes typifying Dr.

Smith's tenure at the college would outlast his presidency, a director in enrichment

answered in the affirmative because they represent "true change."

> Interviewer: The last question I would like to ask is if he left tomorrow, what would be the lasting legacy?

> Respondent: I think it would be strengthening our processes and that the values that he has brought to the organization have been integrated into the culture. I think that's really how I respond, but now thinking about how easily that could be dismantled by somebody else coming in.

Interviewer: Do you think that the undercurrent at least exists to keep it going after he leaves?

Respondent: I do, because I believe it's true change and I think those values would be there and I thing that the thoughtfulness and the decision-making would be there and the quest for data would be there as well and often times people think of legacy in terms of buildings and things like that, but I don't look at it that way. I look at it as more of the collaboration and how people are treated and I think those things, to me, would last.

In fact, Dr. Smith has been so successful in integrating his values into the culture of the college that organizational members want him to stay on and continue to guide the college. When asked about his legacy, several college staff expressed sadness at the idea of another president leading the college. Here are some of the responses:

Respondent: They (administrators) love him. Anytime there is a word coming out that President [Smith] is going to retire, people get nervous people to start asking, oh, do you think he'll extend and the board has extended him several times because nobody wants him to leave.

Respondent: You know, it says that you are living up to your expectations when people don't want to leave and especially when you hear that from the faculty. You know, faculty can be cynical and hard on a president, so when you hear them say, I hope he doesn't retire for another five years, that says how good of a leader they think he is.

Respondent: He is a great guy and I love working for him and I am thinking about him retiring soon and I'm just concerned about that because as you know, changing a president can change the whole culture and you know, that can change the whole culture of the institution and what we have worked on for a very long time could be changed very easily.

Working to develop a proactive, internally drive culture

Despite information indicating that external pressures have significantly impacted Gamma Community College (discussed in greater detail later), there are individuals who feel the college is still primarily driven internally rather than externally. A administrator states she is "impressed with how proactive he is given all of the external situations that

can impact us, such as the fiscal concerns." Another college administrator believes the

college is filled with individuals willing and able to push to college forward based upon

internally agreed upon direction and a shared understanding of values. He intimates an

enculturation process has occurred and enables to college to remain proactive in regards

to external changes.

> I would say we are [Gammaized] and we have our views on the way
> things should be and when you hire staff and you have a lot of intelligent
> people here, I think we can make those decisions, regardless of what's
> going on in the world and right now we are looking at a lot of economy
> issues so, workforce development might be looking at how to help people
> who are losing their jobs or their houses or how to train people how to
> pick themselves up.

While acknowledging the difficulties with the external environment, another interviewee

asserted the college is still proactive in meeting stakeholder needs and ensuring students

are well served.

> I would say it's both, but we do reach out to the community, whether it's
> through surveys, and I say certainly, we invite them on the campus, where
> we've had strategic planning meetings, and we have had them off campus
> at hotels, and we have been invited. We've invited all kinds of members of
> the community and so we do listen… its both outside and inside…but I
> would say that we go out and get it.

A long-tenured organizational member believes that the tremendous planning

occurring in the college is a sign that GCC is proactively dealing with changing

conditions. She also believes it demonstrates the college is looking outside to

meet needs, not to be driven by them. "I would probably say [we are] proactive

because there is a lot of research that occurs…we get information on trends from

campuses across the nation and the state and I think we're looking at places where

outside influences will impact us."

In summary there is a great deal of evidence that under President Smith's tenure, the culture of the college has been changed and now reflects one where civility and respect for people is a cultural value. The college, described as having a "magic culture" by external parties, is one where people come to make careers, not just get a job and the president has helped craft an environment where these changes could occur through a focus on the internal environment. This internal focus is typified by his characterization as an internal president, a focus on developing internal partnerships, and conscious efforts to make himself visible. Additionally, he has modeled consistent behavior over the years and the message has been received that people come first, evidence and data are of paramount importance when dealing with conflict, and mistakes are a part of human nature. The president has so impacted the college that individuals from all levels of the college want him to stay and dread the day he retires. In short, the college appears to be one driven by respect and civility as well as achieving outcomes.

Pushing for High Expectations and Responsibility to Students and the College

Pushes people to work toward higher expectations

When asked about how the president would describe the ideal culture at Gamma Community College, two answers emerged – that students would be well served and people would excel in their jobs. When asked the question, one respondent stated that his ideal culture would be one in which all student needs were met. Specifically, she said, "If he went to any student on this campus and asked them is the college doing everything it can to meet your needs to be successful and whoever he went to and every student said yes, then I think we would be there." Another interviewee provided the answer that

student needs would also be met, but her focus was more on the need for people to live up to their responsibilities and advance within their positions. "I think he would want one, that it is one where everybody would take full responsibility for their duties and their actions and their jobs and that everybody would have a very full understanding of the student's needs and requirements."

Based upon comments about the president having high expectations for college staff, the researcher probed into whether or not the president pushes people beyond their perceived level of capabilities. While the majority of college staff resisted using the term "push" to describe the president's approach to personnel development, they frequently explained that he consciously "encourages" people to reach their full potential and stretch beyond their comfort zones. One respondent believes that he is effective in getting people developed, but that he does it through less forceful ways. "I'm not sure I would use the word push. I would say encouragement and it is conscious encouragement. It is very conscious, but I don't think push would be a word I would use to describe his style. For him, what he does is just as effective." Another respondent concurs with the distinction and notes the president continually emphasizes his desire for people to develop, grow, and succeed. "I think he consciously would like faculty and staff to succeed at the highest levels that they can. I think that is important to him. He talks about it at just about every in-service and so I know he verbalizes [it]." A long-tenured organizational member believes he provides a model of pushing, and people within the college have been inspired to emulate President Smith. "He does inspire excellence from people because he will go above and beyond and I think that does engender loyalty and people are willing to produce." Despite perceptions that the president is not pushing, it appears that he has

successfully encouraged and inspired people to reach beyond their perceived capabilities.

One administrator, however, would like to see the president become more aggressive in

getting people to stretch.

> I would have to say he is probably too easy-going and too nice, where I
> wish he would be sometimes more stern and its really not that he is not
> afraid to go out there and mean it's not that he's not afraid to make a
> decision on his, he likes the buy in and he wants it to be a favorable path
> that we're going down, but I wouldn't mind seeing him push people to get
> out and reach their full ability.

President Smith, by his own admission, is focused on developing a high

performing college, a desire requiring individuals throughout Gamma to stretch and push

themselves to achieve superior performance. "I talk about it at this institution that it is not

just about getting the job done. We must get the job done well…that's one of the things

that I preach at the institution…it's not enough to get the job done, one must get the job

done well." An administrator, at the college under multiple presidents, explains that

having high expectations is fine, but without creating an environment supporting these

expectations, the energy and efforts go to waste. She has seen numerous presidents at

GCC and Dr. Smith is the first one whom she believes has created such an environment.

> You can challenge people, but if you don't give them help or make a
> commitment to them and what they're working on won't see the light of
> day, you will have a real problem. For me, going back into the 70s,
> [Gamma] tends to be an innovative college in spite of the leadership that
> we did have early on. People would work hard, but it would get bottled up
> at the top, so they would never see any fruition of their work, but I think if
> people are given the go-ahead to do something and are given the
> expectation that they're supposed to do it, then in all likelihood, it will be
> implemented.

A college administrator agrees that the focus of the president is crucial to creating an

environment where people push themselves. Specifically, he indicates that the level of

interest President Smith takes in individual projects is a motivating factor for college

staff. "There is a great deal of personal interest in the project and a great deal of interesting things you're involved [with] and he's generally appreciative of the successes that you have and he doesn't beat you up for your failures…the motivation is there to find out what you can do." Another administrator interprets the environment to be one that challenges people, but also one, influenced by President Smith that allows people to excel. "There is a certain business atmosphere at the college and I think an atmosphere [like] that creates a more competitive environment and I think in a competitive environment you excel because you want your division to come across well all of the time and you want success." In fact, one respondent views the competitive environment as a catalyst for excitement over personal development. In her department, there are individuals so energized by the environment, they are eager to stretch themselves. "There's a grant we are going to be applying for and she [a director] was working with a group of people on the proposal and after the meeting she said, 'I'm just so excited and the ideas are coming…we're all so excited and can't wait to propose it to you.'" Providing her own story as an example, one of the interviewees explains that the environment of high expectations and responsibility encouraged her to stretch, take on new responsibilities and jobs at the college, and made her feel like an integral part of the institution's success.

> What Dr. [Smith] does here is he says here are the committees that we are going to have and we want you as a faculty member to get involved so that you will sign up for the areas that you're interested in. I have been on the non-tenured faculty evaluation committee and have been on hiring selection teams. I've been on the [EC] and the career days at the high schools. I pretty much sign up for almost anything, because I think it balances the position and helps you feel like you're part of the college more than just teaching classes. You could just come and teach classes and the extras are the extras, but that makes me be more of a part of the college.

An administrator concurs there is an environment of high expectations and credits it with giving him a sense of ownership and commitment unlike anything he experienced in more than twenty years in a non-educational industry.

> I feel more empowered than I ever have before, I feel a sense of responsibility to this organization that is much greater than I ever felt …and I must say that the operating budget that I was responsible for at the [previous organization] was the size of this college's whole budget. I was responsible for the neighborhood of sixty to seventy million as a division of the hospital and here, the entire operating budget is sixty million and I'm probably responsible for a third of that, but I feel more responsible here for the entire organization and I think it's because of his sense of shared responsibility and ownership to what you do.

Results from the interviews indicate the president has pushed for an organization able to meet increased expectations of service to students and stakeholders. In examining college documents, the researcher came across the mission statement – a document explaining that Gamma exists to educate the whole person, values excellence within all missions, and is committed to maintaining sensitivity while seeking to provide enhanced values. This document lends credence to the information provided by the interviewees.

Promotes the importance of professional development

In a culture where individuals are expected to push themselves and meet elevated expectations of performance, opportunities for professional development are essential, as college staff will undoubtedly need to acquire new skills, training, experience, and knowledge. One respondent explains that the president always promotes professional development and has firmly established it as an institutional value. "[He] is a strong proponent of it and creates the culture that encourages it. He has said over and over again at his state of the college addresses…there are lots of things for people to take advantage of and you need to make sure you avail yourselves of them." A well-traveled respondent

explains that in all her professional positions, at eight institutions in all, no college or

university has ever matched the opportunities she has had at GCC. "I feel that in all the

positions that I have had over the years, that I've probably had many more opportunities

to develop and more professional development opportunities here than anywhere else."

When asked about the professional development opportunities available to college

staff, Dr. Smith proudly talked about an initiative started during his presidency. It is an

initiative allowing for release time for administrators and staff, the equivalent of faculty

sabbaticals, which will allow them to complete professional development opportunities.

> We also have in the guidelines for the staff, a six-month sabbatical after
> they've been here for a length of time so that would let them, depending
> upon the project, do almost anything. Finish a doctorate or write a
> dissertation and its goal is allow them to finish. Or they could do other
> kinds of things if they put in the proposal to do it. As long as it benefits the
> college and benefits the individual, that is all we are looking for.

An administrator spoke about a partnership reached between the college and a research

university to offer classes towards a doctorate at GCC. Additionally, he talks about how

the sabbaticals have and are assisting individuals in completing the degrees.

> He has been very supportive of any professional development opportunity
> that we were interested in and additionally with the deans level on the
> academic side, the deans have been participating in the [research
> university] program and they have finished all of their coursework and are
> now working on dissertations and they've taken sabbaticals. As deans,
> they are more intermittent sabbaticals as they need the time off, but they
> have the equivalent of six months off with pay and they can use this time
> off, while they're finishing up their doctoral dissertation.

Another administrator provided an example of the opportunities for professional

development available at GCC. She talked about a learning and knowledge center on

campus providing formal and informal opportunities to all college staff.

> We have a [college development center], and it is an award-winning center
> here at [Gamma] and the fact that we have received money from the

government on a grant program and the programs that are set up every year are not just open up to faculty, but also to all staff who can participate and in fact, we now have classes that are offered during the day for our support staff. They are credit classes, so they can start working on a degree and people can go and work their schedule around those to go ahead and take these particular courses and we have those for the faculty and the human resources department has individuals who are specifically, it is their job specifically to train faculty and staff and that has become the commitment of this college.

In an effort to show not only the commitment of the college to professional development, but also its impact, two individuals provided personal stories of what professional development has meant to them personally. One respondent expressed deep appreciation and amazement at where she is and places the credit squarely on the president and how he opened up opportunities for her.

On a personal level, as a result of his leadership, I have had personal growth and have gone in ways and directions that I would never have dreamt of ten or fifteen years ago. And so here I am department chair of two departments and who would've ever thought that. Here I am as a Ph.D. candidate, and who would've ever thought that would happen. The opportunities have presented themselves because he's made the opportunities available.

Another interviewee recounted her unusual pathway to her position; one which includes being given "on the job" professional development and a great deal of support from the president and her vice-president.

I was twenty-six years old and I was put into the [position of] Director of HR in an interim position for a year – for a whole year. So yes, I think he pushed me. I had to learn and I had no mentor. There was no other professional in the office at the time. I had three clerical staff and I had to learn the ropes by myself and that was a great learning experience for me, but during the whole time, my VP and the president were very supportive.

In summation, the president wants a college where the needs of both the students and college staff are met. Rooted in this ideal is the reality that individuals will need to stretch, grow, and develop to ensure the ability to meet changing needs. Instead of being

pushed, however, individuals in the college believe they are encouraged and supported in their opportunities to develop. Additionally, they believe the president has crafted an atmosphere providing the impetus for pushing and stretching. Based on the overwhelming evidence that people are stretched, yet supported, as well as the personal stories of development, it is apparent that the president has indeed succeeded in developing a college that cares for its members while pushing for high expectations, excellence, and personal responsibility.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Lesser Abundance

Created an Environment Negatively Impacted by a Focus on Hierarchy

Pushes for respect of the chain of command as an organizational value

Despite the positive outcomes of a rigid hierarchy identified by some college members, others feel the negative consequences outweigh these benefits. One respondent explains that administrators are very "cognizant of the chain of command", a situation that has led to faulty data. "Something that I have learned within the last five years is that the quality of information for decision-making is questionable and…as you get higher up, the quality of information that you have is worse, because it is totally dependent on people below you…" She notes the chain of command has impacted data quality to the point where the president has insisted that his direct reports scrutinize data more carefully and he even looks outside of the college when appropriate. Additionally, the attention to maintaining the chain of command (a term used by nearly every interviewee) has severely hampered communication according to the director. She explains that when she reported directly to him in a meeting, due to an absent vice president, she found the

president to be far more open to conversation, although the expectation was that she

would not share the conversation with other individuals at the college.

> We reported directly to him when the vice president was gone and I found
> him, in that group, to be very open to that kind of discussion and to those
> kinds of questions and I was comfortable enough to ask him about internal
> and external, but there's also the expectation from him that I won't go out
> and share it.

In addition to issues with communication and data, interviewees explained that

working through the chain of command has resulted in confusion and an inability to

assess the impact of the president on the college. An area where this became evident was

in regards to partnership development at GCC. One negative consequence of the

president ceding responsibilities for local partnership development is that some

individuals within the college are unable to identify how active the president has been in

establishing new partners for the college. When asked, two of the interviewees had

difficulty identifying just how active Dr. Smith has been. During the dialogue with one

interviewee, she answered that she has no idea about what comes from the president's

many meetings.

> Interviewer: How active do you believe he's been in developing new
> partners for the college?

> Respondent: I don't have a lot of knowledge about that. I know he is out in
> the community a lot and he's in a ton of meetings, but I don't know what
> they do in those meetings. I'm not on rotary.

An administrator at the college had a similar response indicating that he knows the

president is out attending meetings much of the time, but could not identify, specifically,

what was coming out of the meetings. "I don't know all about it, but as far as locally, I'm

not as knowledgeable of what he has done. I assume he has had good contact with the

community, but I'm not sure what has come from that other than opening some off-

campus sites." In addition to partnering, some college staff are unsure if the president is

behind many of the initiatives and current climate because they experience them as being

influenced by their direct supervisors. According to a staff member, the college is

typified by a climate valuing hard work, pushing, and high expectations at GCC. While

unsure of exactly where the pushing emanates from, she feels it in her position at the

college. "I think in a lot of ways he [Dr. Smith] does [push] and I'm not sure if it's him or

directly from him, but we feel it around here." Unsurprisingly, another individual outside

of the executive team is unable to determine exactly where the push to stretch comes

from. This finding is congruent with the focus on hierarchy and chain of command at the

college. An organizational staff member indicates that she has felt pushed, which she

believes is a good thing, and she attributes it directly to her supervisor, not the president.

"I think pushing somebody, they might sit there and say I don't know. Like me. I never

thought I would be in this position, but because my boss has pushed me, I've done more

things and learned more things about technical issues than I ever thought I would."

Empowers the executive staff to guide the college

Generally speaking, the interviewees appeared to appreciate and support the

president's participatory approach to management, however, there were a couple of

concerns expressed. An administrator explains that he would like to see the president

stand up sometimes and make the tough decision on his own rather than waiting to gather

input. "Sometimes I think [he] has to stand up and that's just my way of thinking that he

sometimes, he has to make a decision and you don't always have time to get every single

piece of data or opinion…sometimes you just have to do it." While not indicating she

would like to see decisions sans input, another administrator explains that perhaps a little

more guidance would be useful at times. She feels his subtle style leaves people at the college guessing at times.

> Now, I do think sometimes you do need to [be explicit]. I don't necessarily think we're a college that always does well with the subtlety and when he came here, we didn't do well with it at all. There were times where wish I could pick up the phone and say, could you just tell people what you want so they will stop guessing and I think that is still in our culture. We still spend some time guessing what he is thinking.

There is also a conundrum surrounding the notion of dispersed leadership as the president leans heavily on a strict hierarchical, chain of command approach and yet depends upon input and decision-making below the presidential level. Responses from interviewees indicate that empowerment and a focus on the chain of command coexist because the executive vice presidents are the one group truly empowered to influence major organizational changes. One of the interviewees indicates that the president wants decision-making to "bubble up" from the lowest parts of the college, but that it still needs to go through the chain of command, especially to the vice-presidents, before a final decision is reached.

> He likes decision-making to bubble up and that he would like decisions to be made at the lowest possible level and then go through the chain of command, and I'm not saying that he will always agree with them, but I think he certainly empowers the people who work for him, particularly his administrative staff.

A college staff member expands on the notion that power is not shared with individuals throughout the college, but rather with those whom the president works directly with.

> …He delegates a lot of power to the vice presidents. That is one thing that sometimes I wish that he would take more control of because I think he operates, and it's not to say that the vice presidents are not good people, but I know he operates from a fairness perspective and doing the right thing… but he delegates a lot and he gives a lot of power and decision-making to the vice presidents…

Empowering the vice-presidents and depending on them for decision-making and direct conversations ensures the integrity of the hierarchy, however, it also appears to create confusion over the influence of the president as a chasm is created between the president and organizational members located outside the executive level. When asked if he feels the president pushes units to stretch themselves and deliver on challenging goals, one respondent indicated he does not feel the president's influence in situations like goal-setting.

> Interviewer: Do you believe he challenges units and departments to develop and deliver on stretch goals?
>
> Respondent: The reason that last question was kind of tough is because it really comes from the vice presidents and this is the same as well. So I think he gives a charge to the vice presidents and if you would have asked me if the vice president did it, it would've been easier to answer that question, because he does give so much power to the VPs at the college. And they're the ones who kind of control the direction that we are going. So through the vice presidents, I would say yes.

Despite the distance that this organizational member feels based upon the empowerment of the vice-presidents, a college member, who has been at the college for some time, believes that giving power to the vice presidents marks a positive evolution for the college and is a tangible indication the college has changed for the better. She remembers the autocratic approach to leadership of previous presidents and is happy to have a president who shares power.

> In my years here, I've seen people who just keep to themselves and will just do their jobs, but what you see here is that just about all of the jobs will come out of the vice president's and I believe that is a good thing because if you let other people guide and help, then you are working for the betterment of everybody rather than keeping jobs to yourself or trying to do it all by yourself.

Results from the on-campus observation provide confirmatory evidence that the vice-presidents are the empowered group on campus. The observation opportunity was an executive team meeting, a weekly meeting involving the president and his executive staff. One of the most interesting dynamics of the meeting involves the constant presentation of reports from lower level administrators, faculty, and staff. Of the four presentations viewed by the researcher, there was not only deference from non-executive staff members to the leadership team, but individuals had a designated seat from which to present and only one external staff member was invited into the conference room at a time. There were clear power dynamics at work and the vice-presidents essentially ran the meeting with an occasional comment by the president as he worked to keep the meeting on track.

Largely disregards representative input when making institutional decisions

While some interviewees believe there are opportunities for input and official forums available to people throughout the college, still others believe that few opportunities actually exist for non-executive members. When asked if any open forums exist to provide input or to question organizational decisions, a long-tenured respondent could only recall one such forum early in the president's tenure. "I can only remember one time, and this is pretty early in Dr. [Smith's] tenure, that we had any open forums like that and a lot of it was discussion about the policies and about the two people that I talked about who eventually left the college." That particular forum was centered on the need for the college to remove individuals at the executive level who were operating as hindrances to culture change. Opportunities to meet with the president by non-executive staff are seen by some as less than adequate forums for providing input or questioning

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decisions and an administrator in the college believes they operate primarily as

communication mechanisms for senior management. "Obviously the deans and upper

management have more contact with him based on their positions here…but I think he

tries to have communication with a lot of the mid-level managers and we have the

[Committee of Administrators] meeting as a communication tool." An institutional

manager concurs with this opinion about the CA meeting and is somewhat disappointed

because she feels it is one of the few real opportunities to meet with and discuss issues

with the president.

> Really, it [the CA meeting] ends up being a little bit of a dog and pony
> show sometimes. Dr. [Smith] will say at the end, do you have any
> questions and nobody asks any and nobody asks them because of the
> structure of that group and it is sometimes hard to ask a question in the
> group. If I were to go and ask individually, I would not have a problem
> doing that…[but]…he does not like the perception of there not being
> agreement. That is not a group where you have a discussion that's, that is
> not what it's there for, but it is one of our only mechanisms to do those
> kinds of things.

A long-tenured administrator has a similar impression of the EC meeting as the previous

individuals had of the CA meeting. He has knowledge of the philosophy behind the EC

group and bemoans the fact that the current structure is not what was envisioned.

> I think our hope was that that would become a forum of that sort.
> Unfortunately, I don't think that is what it's evolved into and that is
> possibly because of faculty as much as anybody else, but in my personal
> view it has evolved into something where a number of administrators
> come in primarily to give reports on what's going on in the college and it
> has not become a place where people challenge decisions and I don't know
> why. I don't know how it evolved into what it is now, but I think it is very
> much an emasculated version of what we originally had envisioned for
> that forum.

One respondent feels that, in theory, the CA and EC groups do provide opportunities for

questioning and providing input, but that a lack of implementation impacts the

effectiveness of the groups in achieving true representation – a situation she feels has led

to the perception that power remains in the hands of the few at GCC. When asked if the

there are opportunities for individuals throughout the college to provide input into the

college's processes, he responded,

> Formally, yes, that is the way we are structured [diverse input groups]. I
> would say so, but informally, maybe not. There are those who tend to have
> a little more power than others, and they tend to influence a lot of
> decisions, and this is just my perception, and so informally, I think the
> power is in the hands of a few. Formally we're set up where everybody
> should have a voice and we get opportunities to share that in the
> departmental meetings, but power is in the hands of a few and the vice
> presidents pretty much have control of making decisions and we
> are…based on our contracts, the faculty pretty much have to go with their
> decisions, but are they listening to faculty? I don't know. I don't pick up
> that they are, so power is pretty much in the few.

In addition to feeling that forums classified by some as opportunities for

representative input into college processes are ineffective, there are also individuals who

feel input on organizational direction is primarily sought from executive staff members.

When asked if the president seeks input from people outside of the executive team, an

administrator states that questioning of that nature comes through the president's

interactions with his executive team. "I think that would happen through the executive

leadership group. We meet with our own divisions and our own groups of administrators

pretty much weekly." When asked the same question, an organizational member provides

more detail into why the executive team would provide input from non-executive staff –

indicating this approach is preferred by the president.

> Interviewer: Do you believe people outside of the executive team are
> actively encouraged to question changes or provide input?
>
> Respondent: If he does, he gets it through his vice-presidents. We have an
> executive leadership team that meets every week and multiple issues come
> up through that and sometimes he will say that they need to go back to the

deans and the administrators and get more information on this so that other
things can happen. Sometimes, depending upon other people to get the
information for you is not a foolproof way to do it because they may have
ten things to do and then when they get back to their desk, they forget
about it and some things go through the crack. But that is his way of going
about getting input.

Asked the same question, another interviewee indicates that people outside of the

executive leadership team have very little say in what actually happens within the

college. He believes the strict hierarchy limits true influence and power to those at the top

of the chain of command.

Interviewer: Do you believe people outside of the executive team are
encouraged to provide input or question changes?

Respondent: The answer to that is not really and I really do think that the
administration, the executive leadership team, the vice presidents, they
kind of dictate what happens and if we vehemently protest, they listen, but
I think the game is to run the show and everybody else just get on board.
So I think the answer is no.

During the observation, the researcher encountered a situation lending support to

perceptions that representative input is not truly sought at the college. One of the staff

member reports presented to the executive team came from a college manager who was

addressing the issue of branding. She briefly provided the history of finding an

appropriate branding statement for the college, a process that, through the use of

numerous focus groups across campus, resulted in the development of an executive team

approved tagline. She explained, however, that a college in a neighboring state had a very

similar tagline and that she and others in her office, including one of the vice-presidents,

had restarted the process of finding a tagline. They reached out to the same consultants

who helped the college develop a series of options the first time, but this time, the small

group came up with a decision without the input of focus groups. When asked why the

process did not go out to the entire college again, an institutional member explained that the process did not result in consensus the first time and that there were tight timelines to consider. The staff member explained that regardless, the statement is reflective of the college's promise to the market and will deliver what the market needs.

In summary, there is no reason to believe the president has been untruthful in his assertions that GCC, under his watch, is an organization that believes in collaboration and dispersing power, but there are disagreements among the interviewees as to whether this vision reflects the reality at hand. Indications from interviewees, in this section, are that mechanisms are in place, theoretically, to gather representative input, but that they don't function accordingly. Perhaps due to the focus on chain of command, a number of respondents indicated that the executive team is the true decision-making body on campus and that the CA and EC groups, diverse bodies with regular meetings, act as opportunities for the executive staff to communicate with non-executive staff and that even when organization-wide input is gathered, decisions appear to reflect the will of the executive team more than lower level administrators, faculty, or staff.

Approaches External Pressures with Caution

Cautiously navigates the college through changing conditions

An institutional manager noted the tremendous increase in enrollment over the last few years has created an environment where the entire college has been taxed beyond the usual levels of stretching. "From 2001 through 2005, we had almost a 30% increase in students and it really has taxed the staff and the facilities and all of the doing community surveys and bringing in consultants and then doing a referendum to bring in money." The college was forced to conduct surveys and convene listening groups

throughout the community in an effort to get a referendum passed, a referendum that would provide new facilities to house new students and expanding programs. Gamma Community College, however, is also dealing with a significant increase in the diversity of students, an issue separate from but related to the burgeoning enrollment numbers. The manager indicates that despite all of the challenges facing the college, she feels, and believes the president would as well, that meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body is the biggest concern. "He would probably say that that's still the biggest challenge that he faces or that the college faces because of the changing demographics. We know they we're going to have more and we are at a real cross-section. It's about as diverse as it could be in every shape and form."

Indications from another respondent is that the difficult financial situations in the state as well as changing expectations for higher education has made partnering more difficult for the college and has fundamentally altered the ability to develop networks. "We went from a system that pretty much will work together to a system where traditional alliances are a bit of disarray and many colleges are asked to take more of a role than maybe they were before." When asked what innovative partnerships the president has been involved in creating, only one interviewee provided answers outside of traditional community college partners. The most commonly mentioned were the local K-12 systems; national organizations like AACC, local four-year colleges (articulation agreements), and a working relationship with an international delivery company located a short distance from campus. The only non-traditional partnership mentioned was the occasional four-year college that offers courses on campuses. Even these partnerships, as indicated by a long-tenured interviewee, have been sporadic and short-lived.

He has been very active in creating partnerships with other universities that offer courses on campus. Its articulation agreements and even having some courses taught on this campus and my gut feeling is that none of those have been particularly long-lasting and I am not sure why. Maybe it is just about competing for the same student resources, although you would think that would not be the case. I do suppose that it is hard for a four-year college to come to a place like this and offer courses as you can't offer everything and there are only a very select number of courses that you could offer.

Perhaps it is the difficult situations that have helped shape the president's approach to dealing with change. When asked, President Smith felt that navigating change is difficult for the college and stated that one of his primary mechanisms for guiding the college is effective communication to college staff.

Interviewer: How do you go about navigating the college to the different environmental changes that occur?

Respondent: Communication is one of the keys to all of this stuff and getting people to understand the gist of what it is all about and all of these kinds of things, keeping people well-informed when things start coming down and letting people understand why we do certain things in the way that we are doing them.

A college administrator also believes that communication is the main mechanism used by Dr. Smith to ensure the college is equipped to deal with external change. She finds his open and honest discussions with college staff about budgetary issues and legislative changes prepare them to deal with change at the occupational level.

He will communicate to us and tell us about what's going on he'll let us know what are the issues with finances and the state. You see all the buildings and there are huge changes going on here and he will keep us updated on those and the changes to the demographics of the district as far as the student population and how we need to meet the changing needs.

Communication was also identified by another respondent as an effective method for preparing the college to deal with change, but noted that communication is with the vice-presidents and not the entire college. Her experience is that the executive team is called

upon to build up teamwork in their individual units to effectively deal with external pressures. "His administrative staff understands that these initiatives are headed our way and we are going to have to deal with them, so he has a very pragmatic approach to it that this is what is happening and we will have to deal with it and so lets pull together and get it done." While the term communication is used, the answers provided indicate that executive staff are expected to share information and decisions rather than allowing for bottom up and top down communication.

An organizational member believes Dr. Smith's most effective mechanism for ensuring the college successfully navigates change is his focus on planning. While not always effective, she notes data gathering and a methodical approach are part of his nature and ensure the institution is better able to navigate changing conditions. "Dr. [Smith] is all about plans and understanding, but it is the methodical thinking processes and therefore we are poised and sometimes we hit it and sometimes we don't, but to me, that would be the underlying theme in all of these things." An administrator explains that each year, the executive team meets away from campus, scans environmental data, conducts planning, and then shares the results of the process with the college. "We talk about the planning assumptions…we always do an environmental scan and figure out where planning assumptions are to be for the next year and the planning assumptions are read by the executive team and are shared with the greater college."

While two people indicated that planning is used to ensure the college can navigate changes, two others believe the president's focus on financial conservation enables Gamma to effectively respond to change. A college administrator states that not only does the president have a keen sense of the budget, but he carefully monitors and

controls spending. She also notes he is very strategic in how he goes about saving in an effort to ensure wiggle room in later budget cycles.

> Dr. [Smith] has an unbelievable knowledge of the budget and of our financial resources and how they are being distributed. He recognizes that there are limits to those things…He keeps a close eye on the budget area and he is a conservative when it comes to spending…and so if something does pop up, you have some reserves or if something shifts, there is some reserve there and you have a little bit of a buffer where it's not always chaotic and laying off people.

Another respondent feels that his fiscally conservative nature in regards to salaries is a forward-thinking approach to cost containment. She believes that community colleges currently increasing salaries at substantial levels will pay for the move in ten to fifteen years, something GCC will not have to worry about.

> I have worked in some places that pay the high salaries in the state, and they have a pretty good tax rates, so they can do that, but the reality is that down the road, some of the colleges with the highest salaries, and they do their increases every year, they will probably be at some point in time having difficulty with that and so he's not only looking at what's happening today, but also looking at what could be happening in five, ten, and fifteen years so that he can make sure that the institution is financially solvent and can take care of the issues now and in the future.

Finally, an institutional staff member sees the development of college partnerships as the most effective avenue for navigating change. He feels the president looks to national associations for strategies and information on different approaches used across the country. "I think [national organization] gives us a lot of direction in that regard and I think he gives us a lot of direction in that regard and I think he has the ability to pick up the phone and call people like [national leader] and get information and direction." He also feels that through his exceptional sense of timing and by leaning on and working with local powerbrokers, he positions the college to effectively deal with changing conditions.

…you don't eat an elephant all at once, you eat it one bite at a time…he held a retreat with the board and he kind of talked about this changing environment of funding and about all of the different problems on the campus that were starting to occur after [decades] of operation and these are building issues, structure issues, and then the growing enrollment that we were seeing and we were running out of space, and so one year we kind of set the stage for that and we went back to the mayor later and began to introduce what we thought might resolve that and again in a retreat with the board a year later he said, you know, we talked about this last year, things have not gotten much better, here is what we are loosing in resources, and here's the changed situation and here's maybe one option that the board would consider. He navigated through the problem, that challenge, very carefully to the extent that not only did they support it unanimously, they got out and endorsed it and spoke throughout the [numerous] communities and we were successful in it and none of them were hurt in the following election by it. So he has the unique sense of timing that allows him to navigate through difficult things.

Depends upon external pressures to drive college direction

Gamma Community College has, by all indications, become a reflection of Dr. Smith – not an unexpected result based on his significant impact and long tenure at the college. The college, like community colleges across the country, is dealing with extreme economic and industry changes, and Dr. Smith continually speaks about the difficulties and the college's struggles in meeting the changes. He has, based upon information gathered during the interviews, placed more emphasis on the impact of external pressures than the college's ability to proactively meet the challenges. This emphasis on the difficulty of environmental conditions appears to have penetrated the organizational mindset and guides staff member expectations of what the college can and cannot accomplish. An institutional member believes that, generally speaking, external pressures will have a greater impact on the college based on their pervasiveness and comparable strength. "I would say the pressures from outside are stronger, because generally those are about meeting the needs and providing services…and the external forces are deeper

reaching than the internal." An administrator feels they are interrelated, but that external pressures determine what can be done internally. "We may want things to happen, but if we don't have a community that supports it and if they don't want to come in and take classes, we can't survive so it's equal. It is interrelated." She also believes the state of finances and the turbulent external environment has severely hampered the college's ability to innovate and stretch.

> I think if we had more to work with. That would be interesting if you ask that question in [a couple of years] when we have the new building up. I think we will be stretched and pulled to be creative and the challenge tomorrow will be as big as the college has ever seen because of growth, but I don't think we can be stretched and pushed…it's more about honing in on things and what we could do if we had the financial resources and I think that's part of why the full-time faculty numbers have gone and there are a lot of things we would like to be doing, but the financial restraints are not allowing us to.

Another interviewee explained that while individuals at the college put forward the notion the college is proactive; the institution is actually reactive. In fact, he notes the institution is often behind in technology enhancements and remains unable to meet emerging corporate needs.

> We talk a proactive game, but we are pretty much reactive. We talk about being on the cutting edge of technology, but we are not. We react to it three or four years later, that is a weakness of the college. I may be a part of that as well as far as a faculty member, and maybe a part of not pushing it hard enough and where I think that we are reactive is, if corporate America has needs, and that's the nature of education anyway, and education is pretty much a system that was designed to respond to the needs of corporate America and we're trying to prepare students to go out into corporate America. And so, as part of our need to do so, and sometimes you have to be proactive. You have to foresee the direction our world is going in and being able to stay a step ahead of that and I hear a lot of language going in that direction and I see a lot of writings indicating that we are trying to be proactive, but I don't really see it.

In all fairness to the interviewee, he wanted to make it clear that although he feels the

college is a reactive institution, he does not place all of the blame on the president. He

also explains "we have a very good president when it's all said and done…and some of

these things aren't totally in his power." An administrator indicates that the futuring

processes, strategic planning, and institutional visioning are unable to keep up with the

growth and believes this is why the college is reactive. She also shared with the

researcher that college staff have taken it upon themselves to create a group designed to

provide trend data to assist the decision-makers in the college. It is unclear, based upon

this interview, whether any members of the group will come from the higher levels of the

college hierarchy.

> On a scale from one to ten, I would say [we are] a four because we are a
> little more reactive than proactive. We have what I would call growing
> pains. We really are growing at a huge rate and I am not necessarily sure
> that our strategic planning and our visioning go along at the same rate.
> We have a futures group and an operations group and the two groups are
> looking at how we can better operationalize this. We've met two times and
> we're trying to figure out what we are and what we want to do is to be a
> trend identifier group and then to research the trends, but then the question
> is, what do we with the information once we have it?

Keeps the college from engaging in risk-taking

When asked about the president's approach to risk-taking, numerous individuals

feel President Smith embraces risk, but that his approach is conservative and calculated.

A college manager asserted that when the information is well presented, the president has

never denied his risk-taking opportunities. Specifically, he described the president's

approach as "Calculate it and take it. I'm developing some new programs and all I have to

do is tell him what type of challenges there are and what resources will be needed to

develop it and I've never gotten any issue." Another respondent concurs and states, "He

encourages calculated risk. I don't think he encourages willy-nilly risk. I don't think he

encourages people to just take the risk without understanding what the consequences are

to the department, to the institution, and to others." Although there is agreement that the

president supports risk, there is also the indication that the hierarchy impacts the amount

of risk engaged upon within the various units. A long-tenured respondent indicates that

regardless of what the idea is, it must be presented to the next level of the hierarchy and

they will make the final decision on whether the risk is worth it. "I don't think there are

places of the campus to just go out willy-nilly saying let's give this a try, but as long as

there's a good process in place for faculty members and they have a new exciting idea,

they take it to their chairs and to their deans." The requirement that risk-taking goes

through the chain of command led one respondent to indicate that managers not as

willing to engage in risk-taking behaviors as the president act as obstacles to risk-taking.

> Well, we promote and I mean he promotes risk-taking, and I think
> unfortunately, although he promotes it, is not always carried out by the
> leaders of his division…[I] think sometimes within divisional areas, things
> are micromanaged a bit, so it's hard to tell people to be a risk taker and yet
> they may be afraid to do so, but I wouldn't say that that's coming from
> him. I don't know. Perhaps he could still do, I mean he can control the vice
> presidents a little bit more to probably encourage a little bit more [risk-
> taking].

An interesting finding within the study was that the number of individuals who

indicated that going after the referendum was proof that the president actively encourages

and engages the college in risk-taking. Referendums are a natural and historical avenue

for community colleges to increase funds, so attempting to pass a referendum seems like

a low-risk activity to the researcher. However, many Gamma college staff view it as an

exemplary example of how Dr. Smith engages the college in risk-taking. A college

administrator noted that while the president is generally a cautious man, pushing for the

referendum was risky because it would open the college up to greater scrutiny by the community. "He is a cautious man, but the risk-taking is there because I would say the referendum that got passed was a risk… there is some risk because you're under a microscope…and you might not get by in and you might fail and have to do it again…" A college manager felt it was a huge risk for the college because the tight timelines were difficult to meet and the college would have to engage in a campaign to drum up support.

> What was a big risk for this institution, and this was a huge risk, when we undertook our referendum to get the [dollar figure] capital bond, because you could not believe [what] it means being in marketing and knowing what goes into a public campaign. It was not until November that the college decided to do it and we were on the ballot in March and that was hardly any time at all, but we did it and we were successful and I think that was a huge risk because a lot of times, colleges may get a referendum on the ballot three or four times before it gets passed, but we did it and we won and it was a huge risk because it was a time-consuming campaign. It took a lot of his time, a lot of the staff's time, and of course we had to volunteer. We had organized a huge volunteer effort so that was a huge risk because of the time factor.

Another respondent felt that pursuing the referendum was a risk for the college because failure was a possibility and failure would prevent the college from growing. She also believes that community colleges, in general, and GCC specifically, are generally not in a position to take risks.

> I think going for the referendum is a huge risk and the reception we received was surprising to me. The fact that it passed, and I worked and I walked the streets and I was impressed with the response we got from the people and how they value the college. But I would say that was something recent and it was a risk because if it failed, we could not grow. But the amount of time and money and effort and energy that was put into the referendum, I can't even understand how much was involved. Other than that, we are in a community college and I don't know what kind of a risk we can take because there are only so many resources to work with, so this was exciting. It's the risk of expanding… I don't think we have very many opportunities to take risks.

Despite the financial and enrollment growth concerns, one individual at the college

identified the local community as a favorable external resource the college could tap into.

This individual indicates that not only is the college located within a district with a

substantial tax base to draw from, but the local community is also very supportive of the

college.

> First off, its in the [region] of [county], and it's got a very good tax base
> and while it's not a wealthy community, it's got about four hundred
> thousand people and they have a good standard of living. So, we're talking
> middle and high middle-class people…and when the college has needed
> resources to do its job, they can get them. One example is when they
> wanted to fund capital process projects for the districts, they got a [dollar
> amount] referendum to build three buildings on campus and an off-campus
> regional education center in [extension site]…I was out during the
> referendum trying to get support from people and walking around asking
> people if they be willing to raise their taxes. And this is pretty much a
> blue-collar area to area that I was in and I was amazed at the amount of
> community support there was for the referendum, and it wasn't just vocal
> support and we passed the referendum, which is amazing at this time. And
> I'm not a person who likes to knock on doors and say, would you like to
> raise you taxes and what I found was I was getting more personal stories
> about a daughter or a classmate or a niece or nephew who had gone
> through [Gamma] and how wonderful it had been for them. I think that out
> of three days of doing this, I only had two people who were rude. So just
> offering that is indicating the impact the college has had of this region.

Risk-taking is a central feature of the CCAM and while the majority of interviewees feel

that the organization actively engages in risk-taking behaviors, attempting to pass a

referendum does not met the criteria within the model as the process is a regular activity

in community colleges across the country.

Depends almost exclusively on traditional revenue streams

Growth is not only a common strategy within the comprehensive community

college, but according to Alfred and Associates (2005), it has also been the historical

strategy guiding college operations, direction-setting, and decision-making. This also

appears to be the primary strategy encouraged by Dr. Smith as his focus on passing the referendum and growing state support appears to be the primary methods of growing institutional resources. An administrator, while explaining what unit and organizational values differ, indicated the president always has to concern himself with how organizational decisions will impact enrollment based on its influence on resources. "He always has to worry…how will that impact enrollment…he has always been a strong proponent of increasing the size of the college…[and] this is where our money comes from and to continue…he needs to have the numbers generated." Focusing on traditional approaches to growing resources without increasing entrepreneurial and innovative activities designed to supplement public funding has, according to interviewees, had a substantial impact on the faculty makeup of the college. The college currently has a 5:1 ratio of part-time to full-time faculty (although an institutional member explains the ratio is closer to national averages within the academic disciplines) and has seen exponential increases in part-time faculty and decreases in full-time faculty. One respondent indicated that the incredible enrollment growth has forced the college to cut costs while ensuring enough faculty remain to teach courses.

> Growth…just happened so quickly and then of course there's the financial perspective and we will hire more adjunct faculty because of the benefits and the salaries and we were, at a point, at about two hundred and eighty-six full-time and now we are at about one hundred and eighty. Over the course of the years we have gone down with the full-time faculty and increased the part-time to meet the needs of the growth.

The sheer number of adjuncts in comparison to the relatively small number of full-time faculty concerns her as she wonders if the college is able to effectively meet the needs of students. She also states that the college should look at ways to better integrate the adjuncts into the culture of the college.

I think what concerns me now is that there are nine hundred plus adjuncts and we have a total of one thousand and eighty faculty. So only one hundred and eighty full-time and about nine hundred plus adjuncts, so I think the concern is that they're just too many adjuncts to be part of understanding the culture and we can't meet all the needs of the students. The fact we have that many adjuncts, that is probably an issue, and I think that does concern me, because student success when you have that small of a ratio, even though it is our responsibility and we are in it together as a team with the adjuncts, it does concern me that they may not be a part of the students [lives] and I think there needs to be more of an emphasis on the adjuncts and whether that comes from the dean or the department level, it definitely needs to be done.

While examining the college's newest strategic planning document, the researcher discovered that the fourth priority deals with obtaining the resources necessary to ensure growth. The focus of this priority area is planning, achieving, and managing growth with tactics that include maintaining a process to allocate or reallocate resources based on strategic priorities, continuing to look for opportunities to maximize resources and contain costs, and continuing to plan for sustainable growth and dealing with environmental issues in plans for new and remodeled facilities. There are no indications the college is focused on utilizing innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to develop and grow new resources – a finding congruent with responses from interviewees.

In summary, GCC, like community colleges across the country, are dealing with hostile environments that include decreasing support for higher education, outsourcing of jobs, and increasing numbers of under-prepared students. In contrast to many two-year colleges, however, Gamma appears to have both substantial local resources as well as community support as indicated by the passing of a referendum to build new facilities. Despite these resources, the college is described as reactive more than proactive, rarely engages in risk-taking behavior, and appears to be held hostage by external conditions.

Additionally, the college continues to actively pursue public resources while, based on responses from interviewees, is not engaging in entrepreneurial activities, growing partners and building networks, or proactively pursuing private resources designed to supplement public resources. In short, Dr. Smith has modeled and encouraged a conservative and cautious approach to navigating external change and this has resulted in an institutional mentality that the college is unable to affect change in the external environment.

Chapter VI

Iota Community College – A Networking Hub, Partnership Incubator, and Catalyst for Regional Resurgence

Introduction

Dr. Harrison has led ICC towards greater abundance by enabling the transcendent leveraging of its tangible, intangible, and leadership resources and as a result, Iota Community College was classified as an abundant college. Perhaps the most useful information gathered from studying ICC was its classification as a partnership incubator and hub as well as the level of engagement and ownership over direction and decisions present within all levels of the college. While still possessing some presidential behaviors associated with a move away from abundance, the overwhelming majority of behaviors were perceived positively by organizational members and associated with the college's movement towards greater abundance.

Again, the majority of presidential behaviors identified by the interviewees were perceived as positive and associated with the college's classification as abundant. In fact, of the five selective codes, four were associated with movement towards greater abundance and the one associated with movement away from abundance contained only two sub codes. Behaviors associated with ICC's movement towards greater abundance included working to amplify the college's impact, engaging in clear, consistent, and transparent leadership, focusing on ensuring the flexibility and adaptability of the college, and treating people as the crucial institutional resource. The only set of behaviors

identified as moving the college away from abundance were those deemed to prevent treatment of the individual as the primary institutional resource and behaviors that included working around people at times to ensure goals are met and failing to deal with potential burnout issues.

Indicators of Abundance Results

President Harrison is known as "the idea man" and "king of partnerships" based upon his focus on continually creating partnerships to push the college, county, and region forward. When asked how many separate organizations the college is partnered with, he found the question difficult to answer due to the volume of partnerships. Among the partnerships mentioned included sixteen school districts (including an on-campus early college program), numerous colleges and universities offering degrees on the ICC campus, local government in operating the county's one-stop center, commissioners and local business through the on-campus technology incubator, other higher education providers and the workforce board through on-campus college and research centers, and seventy companies who together have pooled more than thirty million dollars to attract new companies and industries to the county. Finally, he estimated that the college is asked to connect partners at least six times a month.

In regards to human development, the president indicated that high-level positions are typically filled within three to six months, but also shared that the college has focused on growing talent from within and attempts to promote them based on the philosophy that people should have a career at ICC, not just a job. Through the use of traditional professional development opportunities such as conference travel, workshops, professional days, and sabbaticals, as well as the college's award winning center designed

to enhance faculty members' classroom skills, numerous opportunities exist for skill and personal development. Through the various opportunities, the college has experienced a 100% participation rate for administrators, 75% participation rate for full-time faculty, 70% for professional staff, and 35% for support staff. In addition to noting that support staff need more opportunities, he explained that part-time participation is poor (25%) despite a part-time faculty conference offered twice a year.

When asked about private giving, Dr. Harrison spoke of the major source of private funding utilized by the college – the foundation. The Iota College Foundation holds more than $20,000,000 in assets and provides the college with between $2,000,000 and $3,000,000 of revenue per year. Based on the college's ability to successfully pass levies as well as the cost sharing occurring through numerous partnerships and networks, he indicates that the private funding is "icing on the cake" and has allowed the college to pursue excellence without pricing students out.

Instead of talking in great detail about the finances behind Iota's technology investments (which topped two million dollars during the 2007-2008 year and accounts for around 5% of the budget), Dr. Harrison noted that the impact of strategic technological initiatives has been immeasurable. Described as an early adapter by an organizational member based upon his push for computerized distance learning more than a decade ago, the college has more courses, sections, and online degrees and certificates than any other college in the state. Additionally, there is a three-year update cycle on all technology tools so faculty, staff, students, and community members have access to the most up-to-date programs and services. He also explained that technology enhancement, development, and implementation has been part of the college's strategic

planning process for years – a process involving more than 70% of the faculty and staff and thereby ensuring the diverse technology needs of the campus are addressed at the workgroup and organizational levels. Further discussing the impact of technology on improving the college's ability to serve its constituents, he spoke of the college's state of the art teaching and learning center. This center has an experimental classroom where faculty can test out new technologies, conduct research on new and emerging pedagogy, and can work with staff to respond to funding requests.

In regards to workforce development, President Harrison explained the college's efforts are substantially more important than in the past as the county has seen more than half of the manufacturing jobs outsourced. He also explained that workforce development is completely different than in years past as the majority of large companies have left and more than 80% of the jobs in the county are housed within companies employing twenty people or less. Despite the difficulties, he indicated the college held more than two hundred and fifty contracts in FY 06-07 and was also working with more than sixty entrepreneurs through the innovation center. To provide context, he explained that nearly 10% of contract training within the state is initiated by ICC, an impressive percentage given the number of community colleges in the state.

While Iota Community College has not achieved racial/ethnic parity in regards to students (19% of the college population comes from a racial/ethnic minority group compared to 26% of the county), the college has been able to attract a high number of low SES students. In fact, while 23% of the county's population has a household income at 200% or less of the poverty level, nearly 30% of the college's student body receives Pell grants. Additionally, Iota has numerous foundation-based and privately funded

grants and scholarships for high-need students. Dr. Harrison was quick to point out that the college is not just focused on recruitment, but more importantly on retaining students; especially those with greater academic and financial needs. College staff provided a list of the various programs (more than twenty-five) designed to provide the support necessary for students seeking to persist to completion of a course, program, or credential. These include first semester probation counseling, peer mentoring and tutoring, academic support centers, college and life orientation courses, an early college high school, college preparation toolkits, specialized outreach and scholarships, and an office of special needs.

Based on the responses, Iota Community College meets the criteria for classification as an abundant community college. While the institution has less than thirty administrators and fewer than five-hundred full-time staff, the college has achieved the status of a transformational organization. Results indicate the college is not only the primary partner for any organization seeking to work within Iota County, but the president has worked to establish the college as the county's networking hub. Additionally, professional development participation rates is high, the foundation is growing, technology is viewed as an organizational priority, the college is the county's workforce engine, and there are numerous programs designed to increase the recruitment and retention of high need students. Under President Harrison's guidance, ICC has truly established itself as the driving force behind Iota County's resurgence and as an organization able to transcendently leverage its various resources.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Greater Abundance

Developed the College's Ability to Amplify its Impact

Established a greater sense of institutional purpose and responsibility

According to one respondent, President Harrison envisions Iota Community College as far more than a higher education institution. She explains that the vision he has for the college transcends traditional boundaries and expectations of a higher education institution. "I think…maybe he looks at things from a larger societal view because what he has done is he has taken the community college outside of its educational role and put it into helping the economy and helping the community." A college administrator spoke of the president as the "idea man" for the college and believes he pushes the college into new directions based upon these ideas. She also explained that college staff work with him to figure out how to implement some of his far-reaching ideas. "I have had issues where I've had to sit down and needed to negotiate things because he is the head idea man. He comes up with the ideas and sometimes you have to sit down and say, well, maybe we can do it but here the things we might have issues with." She also believes the college could, possibly, have too many visions at times, however, she also notes it beats the alternative of a status quo driven approach to operations. "He is very visionary and I've always felt… sometimes you can have too many visions. That can be the downside as we can get fractured trying to do so much. But I would rather choose that then [having] people bored and burnt out in other ways." An organizational member believes his grand visions are good for the college and looks to opportunities and challenges down the road. While she, and others in the college, finds

his "big picture" approach difficult to implement at times, she appreciates how innovative he is and believes he is setting the college up well for the future.

> He's a big picture guy and I think he is much more long term looking than the short and fast and to make the best decision for the moment. I think he's more contemplative than that and so he would you tend to look at something from more of it, how will this impact the overall institution over the long-term and I think that it's been very beneficial to this college and for its growth during the twenty or so years he has been here.

An examination of the impact the college has had on the community and county would lead one to believe the college is living up to this "broader vision" and is attempting to do far more than educate students. This greater sense of purpose starts with President Harrison, and according to an institutional manager, he makes sure that individuals keep an eye on the greater vision of the college, not just their daily duties and responsibilities.

> His role is that he should have the broadest vision of all the visions and it should set up the functions in the organization. And there are times where we have to get refreshed on a bigger vision, but it's up to him to keep us moving in a strategic and visionary direction and to keep in line with the mission and have us look up from the grindstone every once in a while to see what the big purpose is.

This greater mission, according to respondents, is premised upon taking responsibility for meeting the needs of the students *and* community by providing the best and most relevant programming possible. An administrator informed the researcher that "[President Harrison] places a lot of emphasis on the fact that the college is supported by tax dollars and we need to support the community needs and…we are here for students and we need to provide for students and provide for excellence in education." While alternating which is more important, community or student needs, a long-tenured respondent explained that there is a tremendous focus on serving the stakeholders of the college. In fact, she explains the mission of the college goes directly to improving the county through

increasing the education level and providing more opportunities for the college's

constituencies.

> First and foremost, he wants it to be a place where people can get a great
> education, because that is the number-one business of the college and I
> think secondly, he would like to see the college be at the forefront of
> moving the county forward economically and in terms of the strength and
> importance of higher education in order to make that happen. And I see
> them as two different things, one being the quality of education and the
> other being the means to serve and bring up the educational level of the
> county. So, we need to up the amount of people in the county with a
> college education and degrees if we want to move forward.

Meeting the needs of the community appears to be more than talk at ICC as individuals in

the college speak of a dedication to meeting all needs. According to one interviewee, the

president not only believes the college's mission is to meet all community needs; he

enjoys the opportunity.

> He enjoys the challenge of meeting the needs of the community.
> Regardless of what it is, the college will never tell a stakeholder that we
> can't do something. We will find a way to help you meet your needs,
> whether it's developing new programs and services or repackaging current
> programs and services or finding some grant money or some federal
> money or some local resources to help meet their needs. He relishes the
> challenge.

The president has been at the institution for many years and has firmly established an

institutional charge to impact the development of the local community and county. In

talking about his eventual legacy, members of the college pointed both to the expansion

of educational and economic opportunities as lasting impacts of the college on the

citizens of Iota County. A college manager asserts his "legacy would be the growth of the

campus and the development of the [on-campus four-year college building] and the

outreach centers and the educational growth of the college and getting the education to

the people and for the people." Expanding on that notion, an administrator declared that

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the president has brought quality education, at the two and four-year level, to an area

where such opportunities were rare. Additionally, she notes that the college has firmly

established itself as the gateway to education for the region.

> One of the greatest legacies that he would be leaving is providing
> educational opportunities and access to all degree levels for the campus
> and we're the only public higher education institution in [Iota] County and
> we're one of the most undereducated counties out of all of those in [state]
> and when he created the vision for the [on-campus four-year college
> building]…we now have [many] years of having individuals having access
> to [numerous] other universities and that didn't exist before, so, I think
> now if someone were to answer that, which I am doing, about what is his
> legacy is currently, I would say its that because it gave people access to
> their dreams that they never had before, that it [higher education] was in
> their reach.

Outside of just providing enhanced economic and educational opportunities, there are

those who feel the underlying goal for the college, as articulated by President Harrison,

has been to enhance the lives of those within Iota County. One administrator explains this

focus reflects how the college has taken on the personality of the president. She identifies

him as an "ethical and caring" man focused on the most important issue to most people –

quality of life.

> He's a very caring person and very ethical and caring about each
> individual and their well-being and their growth and their development.
> And on a more practical level, he takes that same genuine caring and
> concern deep into the community where his first priority is improving
> people's quality of life and his second priority is improving the economy.
> And that's what I value so much about him because for most people that's
> just rhetoric; they are clearly more concerned about improving the
> economy than improving people's quality of life and for me, that's what
> distinguishes him from others. He does put people first.

An organizational member adds that the president is focused on improving opportunities,

not only for those in the county, but by proxy, to society in general.

> I think if you were answering about his responsibility to [Iota] County, it's
> to have this county positioned for future growth and development. He is
> all about moving forward and he is all about creating a better place and

> whether that is a better place for an individual, for their opportunity, or a better quality of life for the betterment of society, I mean he's very passionate about knowing that the college can play part of the role.

This focus on the greater mission of the college starts with the president's focus on having a broader vision for the college itself. Instead of preaching to improve efficiency or even effectiveness, there is an indication that the president wants the college to be abundant. President Harrison is well-versed in leadership literature, focused on having and using data to make good decisions (to be discussed in detail later), and exploring the abundance literature for potential applications in higher education. An administrator explains that abundance has been implemented within the college over the last several years.

> Instead of thinking of things as a zero sum gain or being overly cautions or optimistic, you know, the whole option of if you believe it can happen or you see the possibilities and can do it you can succeed, he's tried to put the focus on the positive, you know, that there's a sense of confidence, a sense of optimism, and that's been a real push the last few years and he makes lots of references to the abundance model and he would like the college to work within the abundance model.

An institutional member believes the trajectory and focus of the college and community are intertwined and feels the president is not just pushing for abundance, but rather, "has brought abundance to this college and into this region."

President Harrison, while viewing his position as critical, understands the college needs highly skilled and committed individuals to achieve success in attempting to meet a broad and boundary-spanning mission. While recognizing the challenge of finding such talent, locating and developing such talent is and has been an institutional priority.

> I mean one of the challenges is assembling a team and teams come and go, particularly over a [lengthy period] when life changes in front of people and people retire and new people come, you know you go through the search processes, you try to grow the talent from within to the extent that

you can, and all of those factors really contribute so that any one point you've got people that are really committed to the vision, the mission, and are contributing their best efforts to meet it.

A respondent concurs that the president is always looking for talent and skill and uses herself as an example. Although she started as a part-time employee, both the president and her supervisor noticed her potential and when the right opportunity arose, they hired her into a full-time position.

I came on as a part-time employee to coordinate the [college] program, and jobs and family services, and it was a small job and very part-time and I think that he [President Harrison] and the division dean and the vice president for academic affairs identified some skills and abilities that I had and they brought me forward into a temporary full-time position and then three years later, my job was open to a national search for a year and they invited me into the formal process…he watches for good talent.

According to an institutional manager, the president not only works to find and develop talent, but also leans on talented college staff to accomplish the college's higher calling. She asserts that he is committed to "getting things done" and appreciates and pushes those he identifies as capable.

You know, he has the first break all the rules type of philosophy about spending more of your time with your high performers and he does that. He spends a lot of time with people that he believes can make things happen and can get things done and he's committed to doing that. So he tends to pull in the team members and I mean he knows that the harder you push some of them, the more you get out of them and the more they'll do.

Reaching for a greater purpose was not only talked about by interviewees, but also seen by the researcher. The observation at ICC was a state of the county luncheon sponsored by the county commissioners. The final commissioner spoke to job development and industry growth in the county and cited numerous new companies that had moved into the county in the previous twelve months. She

also spent a great deal of time talking about a new healthcare alliance, the

expansion of advanced technology jobs, and the relocation of a green organization

responsible for developing machinery used in alternative energy production. For

each of the three companies mentioned, a video featuring the company's CEO

was presented and each president spoke to the desirability of Iota County. They

explained the Iota was an attractive area due to the exceptional workforce,

something each attributed to ICC, and the ability to work with numerous regional

development groups, something the CEOs attributed to the efforts of Dr. Harrison.

It was apparent that the commissioners view ICC as the primary catalyst for

growth in the county.

Models "missionary" zeal for the college's purpose

Obviously, the presidency is an important position within any organization since

chief executives are ultimately responsible for the successes, or failures, of the enterprise.

President Harrison, however, understands that as a community college president, his

responsibility is to the county as a whole. When asked about what role he felt was most

important to the college, he indicated it was enabling the college and county to

effectively deal with change and to remain hopeful. To illustrate, he pointed to the loss of

manufacturing jobs and the role of the college, and himself in particular, in providing

guidance through a change management approach.

> In this economy back in the 1980s in which 43% of the workforce was
> directly related to manufacturing, today, twenty-five years later, it's 17%.
> So in that time, we have lost more than half of the manufacturing jobs in
> our county. So in that kind of a dramatic change, it has been critically
> important for people to keep grounded in the reality of the change that's
> taking place. You know, change management becomes just such a critical
> process within this kind of environment and so you have to help people at
> first understand what's happening, help them get involved in trying to help

manage that change, to realize what to do in the face of that change, then providing the support to help make the change and then to help them see the results of the change and to celebrate those results. You know, I think it's a pretty simple change management process of educating, of planning, of acting, of evaluating, and then of celebrating.

While this sounds practical, college staff members indicate the president operates and measures himself differently than most community college presidents. An institutional staff member illustrated this point when asked what the primary responsibility of the president is at ICC. Instead of indicating whether or not the president meets his responsibility, he explained Dr. Harrison is operating outside the traditional expectations of a community college president. "His primary responsibility is to maintain the college and keep us functional…but he goes a step further and that is based on other institutions and when I talk to them and their presidents…what he does is way outside the guidelines of what a president supposed to do." When asked to expand, he described the president's view as "global", which allows him to see the greater impact of the college's reach. He also felt that, in addition to having a global view, Dr. Harrison sees his position as more than just a job.

> He is very much concerned about the health and welfare of this community and its health in terms of jobs and retaining and getting the most out of the talent that he sees coming out of this institution. Being he gets it globally and I think that's something that a lot of people don't understand. I don't think he sees this as just a job. He sees this as something bigger…he does talk the talk and he walks the walk…[and] he does it for the community.

An administrator conveys a similar sentiment, but used religious terminology to describe the president's devotion to serving the county. "He is an ethical person, a very caring person, and…it's almost like a missionary calling because he is so committed to pulling this county up by its bootstraps and improving the quality of the lives of the people in this county…that has kept him here over these years."

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Instilled partnership development as a central institutional goal

With the college working to improve the county's prospects, the president has

focused on establishing, maintaining, and growing partnerships for more than two

decades. Focusing at the county level, however, requires the college to work outside the

normal realm of partnerships with K-12, local workforce groups, community businesses,

and local colleges and universities. It requires the college to develop a network of

partnerships designed to fundamentally alter the college's standing within its service area.

An organizational member, originally from the Northwest, explains that Iota Community

College has a network not only highly visible in and outside of the college, but also on

campus. When asked her opinion on how effective the president has been in establishing

partners for the college, she exclaimed,

> It's huge. I've never seen anything like it. I'm not an expert, but I've taught
> in four colleges here in [state] in three in the Pacific Northwest and I've
> seen a lot of different schools and my understanding has grown over time,
> but none of the schools that I've ever dealt with actively had partnerships
> like this that where we had physical buildings. There are times I feel a
> little bit queasy about it because it's like were getting businesslike, but this
> is [region and state] and this is what we need to do. People are constantly
> trying to boost the economy and trying to improve the general situation, so
> this is reflective of the environment of the whole state. So I didn't even
> know schools did things like this and I don't think he's been able to
> achieve all of his visions [yet].

A college manager is impressed both with how many partners the college has as well as

the president's commitment to maintaining and growing the college's partnership

network. "He is all over, and I don't know how he does it. Not only locally, but also on a

statewide basis. He keeps us open and looking ahead to see what the future looks like and

where it's going and how can we be a part of the solution. It's a really big strong point of

his." A long-tenured respondent has actually dubbed the president the "idea man" based

on the fact he will work and talk with other people, have an idea of how the college can

work to meet their needs, and will come back to the college to determine ways to make

the connection.

> He's the idea man and he is networking and he is meeting and then he's
> calling you to say, I've talked to so and so, do you think we can do
> something with them? And it's not just academic, but it's also the college
> to corporate connections and again he is the idea man and he talks to
> people and gets an idea and he'll come back to those of us who need to do
> it and say how do we do it? Can we do it and what are the ways it can
> benefit us?

While one respondent has coined the phrase "idea man" for President Harrison, another

has christened President Harrison as the "king of partnerships." He feels the title suits

President Harrison based on the fact he has never seen anyone more committed to or

effective at developing partnerships for a community college.

> I call him the king of partnerships and I truly believe that and as I watch
> him at some of the events, he is always looking for another opportunity to
> bring someone in to supplement what we do here and to expand our
> services into the community and he is the best at doing it, bar none. He is
> the king of partnerships and I can't say it any differently than that.

He adds that the president is also the king of partnerships because he sees further into the

future than most, understands where community and stakeholder needs will emerge in

coming years, and is proactively working to ensure the college is prepared ahead of time.

> He sees much further than most people can even imagine, which is why he
> is the king of partnerships. He sees so far down the road that you might
> question, you could question why [he is making the decisions he is], but if
> you get it and you understand it, you see that it puts longer arms on this
> institution; especially in a time where industry is bad and the housing
> market is bad and everything is going poorly. But he continues to reach
> out and bring everybody into the fold so that eventually one day, we will
> have this huge partnership of people in the community who get it and who
> care and want to make a better community.

President Harrison has been focused on developing an extensive network of partners for the college throughout his tenure, but is quick to point out that these partnerships span across the various missions. He explained that the college has four well-defined missions, all of which are equally important, and that great effort is spent to ensure the college has adequate partnerships within each mission area.

> You know, since we have been mission focused, we have partnerships in each part of our mission, you know we consider four major cornerstones to our mission, education, economy, culture, and community and in each of those areas we have had significant partnerships, in the educational program side, the [on-site four-year college building], obviously would be premiere, where we have [a number of] universities delivering Bachelor's and Masters degrees on our site…we have extensive partnerships with K-12 including an early high school of our own with two school districts; in economic development, partnerships with the county commissioners and the private sector in trying to grow companies and jobs; in culture we do so much with the arts and arts organizations in the environment and with the school districts and then with community, we are engaged in a wide variety of community partnerships so all of those are important. ***I call them a fabric of partnerships that really overlay or vision and mission*** (emphasis added)*.*

The term ***fabric of partnerships*** is apropos because it reflects the focus on establishing partnership networks that will amplify the college's impact on its service area, the county, and the region. Described briefly, the college's most important education partnership (as identified by college staff) is the on-site four-year college building located directly adjacent to the two-year academic buildings. An institutional member notes the importance of the facility both in terms of its purpose and placement.

> We have a [four-year college] partnership program [and it] is designed to help reverse the transfer program where people would normally graduate from and then go somewhere else to finish their program or to take the classes. He brought those programs here in a facility where now all the students can come in the front door get their associates and walk through the back of the building into the new facility and the [on-site four-year college] program is right there. So that's very unique.

An administrator, in discussing the extensiveness of the college partnership network, described a series of innovative partnerships providing tangible connections between the academic and economic functions of the college. She also explains how the college was the driving force for these partnerships, many of which are among the most innovative in the country.

> He is out there developing partnerships at every opportunity that he can be and we have partnerships that range from our economic development partnerships, state and regional partnerships…some of the ones that he is extremely involved with, having created and developed in [Iota] County, for example, is Team [Iota] County, that as a group they really look at attracting new jobs and employers in our county and in our region and the [Iota] County growth partnership and it's kind of an umbrella group that was developed in the past two years with the county and the county commissioners and it really tries to integrate and organize collectively. The county's economic development activities, where one of our most successful partnerships is for a business incubator…and it's the college and the county commissioners and the Chamber of Commerce.

Another partnership identified by a staff member as important to the college and the community is a new partnership established with the local city library system. Essentially, the newly renovated college library is now a fully functioning college and community library designed to bring more county residents onto the college campus.

> We've gone into a partnership with the [city] public library so that both the college and the public library will be here and do we can get the public on the campus as much as possible and I think that's a really important step so that people feel comfortable coming here, but also just the idea that the library, by combining resources with the public library, will make it that much better for both institutions.

Finally, one of the interviewees talked about a partnership with a local university designed to dramatically enhance professional development opportunities for faculty. The partnership brings some world-renowned academics onto campus to deliver development

days and sessions, but also allows faculty members to take courses towards additional

degrees from the Iota campus.

> Perhaps the most effective professional development opportunity that's
> been provided here is our partnering with the [four-year university]. They
> also provide professional development to faculty in addition to being in
> the [on-site four-year college building], so we've worked with them and
> faculty work with them and during the faculty development days, they do
> presentations and they offer sometimes a graduate course, where we can
> participate in them and there are workshops and so those are probably one
> of the most important.

Established the college as a partnership hub and incubator

A college manager indicates that when individuals, groups, and businesses within

the county need something, they approach President Harrison. "He's the go-to person

within this county and in fact, the region. He must serve on thirty boards. Any important,

any significant groups that form, he's on it." An administrator adds that not only is the

president asked to serve on every major board, but he is the most well-known and

connected individual in the county. According to him, not only do people seek Dr.

Harrison out for membership opportunities, but also come to him seeking advice as well.

"I mean it is a high profile position [community college president], but he's one of the

most well known folk in this county, he's big on economic development…he's well

known…and on just about every board and commission and [they] take his advice." Dr.

Harrison realizes the potential of being a partnership incubator and takes the

responsibility seriously. He is truly looking to develop full-fledged partnerships designed

to grow over time and impact potential partners yet to be identified.

> We are very responsive to those coming to us wanting to partner, to say
> we know the college has resources of many different types and they see
> the potential for some sort of collective action and so we try to be open to
> those kind of circumstances and see where we can find something that's
> mutually beneficial to those partners and where we have resources we can

commit. So we try to be very strategic with our partnership development, recognizing that partnerships tend to endure over long periods of time, and once you have developed that partnership you have the opportunity to parlay those relationships into further partnership kinds of activities.

A respondent talked about the on-campus four-year building as an example of how the college has become a partner incubator. Essentially, he notes that colleges and universities have approached ICC to try and establish their facilities on Iota's campus to gain access to new students.

I mean certainly the [on-site four-year college building] is the most…compelling partnership because it's helping thousands in our community who would likely not have gone onto advanced education otherwise. I mean for [four-year college] and [four-year college] to come here, they must be pretty sure that those students wouldn't be coming to their campus. There's no other incentive.

In talking about partnerships at the college, an administrator mentioned that representatives from the state's higher education board have been reaching out to President Harrison based upon his reputation and the success of the college in increasing the number of college graduates in the state.

He [Dr. Harrison] is forging a new partnership with the [chief executive] of the [higher education board]…and one of the things they're looking at is how do we create a university system in [state] that produces [hundreds of thousands] more graduates [in the upcoming decades] and that is affordable and efficient and effective and part of that is establishing a community colleges sector in areas that don't necessarily have community colleges in their areas and who are looking at those communities and then maybe looking at several branch campuses. They're looking to Dr. [Harrison] for guidance based on his past history and the [higher education board] is asking him for help.

One of the more interesting groups seeking out a partnership with the college, according to an Iota employee, was a local center for the mentally retarded. The center approached the college to establish programming for their clients on Iota's campus.

> I think one of the occasions I remember is when [a local center for the mentally retarded] had some interest in doing some collaborative projects here and he brought together some people and asked their opinion and asked us what steps might be taken to respond…and that's the kind of thing he does. He tries to identify the needs at the table and perhaps other people will be brought in based on what he learns from the initial group.

Finally, an interviewee provided extensive detail on a long-awaited initiative spearheaded by Dr. Harrison that was designed to start a fund focused on increasing investment in and development of entrepreneurial activities within the county. The goal of the innovation fund is to enhance the existing entrepreneurship incubator, create new jobs, and establish new partnerships between the college emerging entrepreneurs.

> This business incubator that I talked about, it serves maybe four or five hundred entrepreneurs a year, but it's something that he's pushed for and over the last several years he's pushed for the creation of a fund called [an innovation fund] that gives pre-seed dollars to entrepreneurs to help them start their own businesses and as long as they fit within certain guidelines, and mainly biotechnology and other types of technology…we have already put together a little bit over $1 million and we have awarded our first set of pre-seed grants and the cool thing is that these entrepreneurs, in order to access it, not only do they have to have a strong business plan, but it looks at how they will be able to produce jobs in [Iota] County and how do they connect to our students and they have to put together educational components. So we awarded our first round in December and our next round will be awarded in the spring and I have to tell you, there's not another place in the country doing that and I think that over time, that is going to be part of that synergy that you see happening. That will bring other types of innovations to our county.

In summary, the president has been focused, from the beginning of his presidency, on getting exceptional performance from the college designed to enhance the lives and opportunities of people within Iota County. The president leads passionately with a "missionary zeal" and has pushed organizational members to view ICC as more than just a college. This has lead to a focus on finding and developing the talent, building up the necessary partnerships, and establishing the college as both a network hub and

partnership incubator to deliver upon this calling. Utilizing these tactics has ensured that

a community college with less than five hundred full-time staff could indeed change the

trajectory of a county.

Provides Clear, Consistent, and Authentic Leadership

Utilizes a participatory, people-centered leadership style

When asked about the president's management style, an administrator at ICC

indicated that he does not see the president as a manager at all. "I would not consider him

a manager…he is a leader. He is a man of vision, a man of great vision." When the

president was asked that question, he agreed that his job is to lead the college rather than

manage the college staff.

> [Leadership], to me that reflects that balance, that balance of action,
> direction-setting, of implementation, of management, and decision-making
> and then the balance between people and inspiring people to move the
> organization forward, to deliver the results the organization has promised
> to the stakeholders it serves, that's [what] I would commit to and [what I]
> believe in.

President Harrison then elaborated on his vision of leadership to provide greater insight

into his leadership behaviors.

> I remember [a leadership]…model, which had the three dimensions, you
> know, one of them was the vision dimension, one of them was the people
> dimension, and the third one was the process dimension. And you know,
> all three of them had to play together to create a dynamic organization and
> after all these years, I still think that's true. Because if you only have the
> process commitment or the people commitment, or those two without the
> vision, you don't have a sense of direction, you don't have the inspiration,
> you don't have what it could be, so I think you need to have all three
> pieces. You know you have the processes, you don't demonstrate that the
> system works and that you make progress towards getting the vision
> accomplished, if you don't value people, then you don't capture the best of
> what it takes to get to the vision or to implement the processes, so all three
> components, I think, are critical.

The focus on gaining commitment from people, as well as commitment to a vision plays

out, according to an institutional team member, in his "bottom-up approach" to

leadership. Having previously worked in a very bureaucratic college, she immediately

observed how the president's hands-off approach could impact commitment. "From the

very first moment I began working with him, I begin realizing that he was very bottom-

up and he was trying to get individuals involved in the vision and direction." Another

college member shares the sentiment and labeled the president as a macro-manager. "He

is inclusive, and collaborative, and what I would call a macro-manager. And he truly acts

upon the conviction that leadership really is everyone's responsibility." Using a metaphor

to describe his inclusive, yet supportive approach to leadership, one respondent compared

his leadership style to a shepherd; that being he doesn't force individuals to work in a

prescribed fashion. Instead, she explains that he leads and guides people forward toward

shared direction.

> He very rarely says, this is what you are going to do. That is not his style
> and its [decision-making] usually through discussion and conversation,
> questioning and debate, and discourse in committee work. I think maybe
> shepherds is the right term in that he shepherds groups and people towards
> decision-making and I don't get the impression that he necessarily has a
> preconceived notion about where the flock is going, but rather that
> information reveals itself and obviously he is more big picture and broad
> knowledge than the rest of the sheep. And I use that term figuratively, but
> he brings us to a place where we will have our place in the worldview and
> we will come together and the decision that was reached will be the best
> decision for the institution.

Dr. Harrison understands that by providing an environment where people know their

needs are met and they have a say in organizational direction, people are energized to

provide their best energy and efforts..

> You know, people are the most critical resource that the institution has and
> so we believe deeply in people, try to create an environment in which they

are fulfilled in what they do and in their work with the organization. You know, you always have that balance of respecting the people and valuing the people, at the same time valuing the work and expecting success and supporting that success as you go forward.

An institutional manager is one of many college staff stating that the president is indeed focused on the needs of staff within the college. "He tends to put people first and I think he's honest and ethical in his dealings with people and I think you take that into account and however he was managing people he tends to be fair. He would not knowingly abuse anybody." One of the respondent has experienced his person-centered approach to leadership and views him as highly connected to staff and their activities at the college. "In the hallway, he addresses everybody and he is friendly and he is outgoing and he remembers everybody's name and if there are social activities on campus, he is buzzing around them. He recalls things about your family and things that are going on." An administrator provided an example of his person-centered approach through a conversation he recently had with a staff member. During the conversation, the staff member was made aware of how the president is more frank and direct in conversations with his direct reports than with non-executive staff.

> I would say that he will more openly express frustrations or concerns with me than someone on a lower level, I mean for example one time we were in a meeting and he, he just, he and I hadn't caught up on something from the day before, and he just made the comment to me how frustrated he was [with a] meeting he was in with the state board of regents and there happened to be a person in there from a little lower level in the organization standing next to me when he said it. A little later that person told me how shocked he was to hear him say that and I said, why? And he said, well, I've never heard him express discouraging comments before about anything and so he probably is a little more polished in keeping things positive at different levels of the organization where he might be a little more frank with me about a concern he has.

One interviewee taken aback by his person-centered approach to leadership believes it borders on androgynous leadership (Park, 1997), something she has never experienced from a male president. She spoke of how the president treats men and women the same and that there is no paternalism, talking down to, or need for control in his interactions with college staff across the college.

> One of the things that I find interesting about working with Dr. [Harrison] is that he is able to work with women without being either sexist or paternal and he is one of the few male leaders that I have met who does not take on that kind of paternal role and I find it really interesting, because he really has no problem working with and acknowledging women in terms of accomplishment and he empowers them. Also, it's not that he's not empowering somebody else; he's really just egalitarian. He can be warm and supportive without it being inappropriate and I find it really fascinating, because I don't find too many men in leadership roles, who don't take on a paternal role… but he is really able to work with women in a way where women feel very confident and comfortable. I've never felt talked down to, and yet at the same time, he is a leader. So it's an interesting sort of conundrum. Often there is a condescending sort of attitude and he doesn't have it. I feel very comfortable with him.

Finally, the president's leadership style is described as calm and highly patient, perhaps too much so for one college manager. "When he gets questions – his patience is amazing sometimes and I've told him…there are times where I've felt, it's just time to stop and tell them that we've processed this as much as we can, here's where we're going, but he generally will not do that." Despite the desire to move on at times, the individual respects and is impressed by the president's desire to process situations, issues, and questions to a point where consensus, rather than majority rule, is reached. The idea of consensus is central to President Harrison's leadership style as it indicates fairness, ethics, and a focus on providing a voice to minority opinions.

> He's very big on process. For example, in hiring there's a set process that we use, we go through those processes to get the right buy-in and build consensus and that's one of his key things, he's very, very strong on

building consensus. So he wants buy in, he wants to process policies, he
doesn't want anyone to feel they somehow got cheated through the
process he wants to get to a consensus decision, he's extremely patient in
working through process until you get it.

Models authenticity

Authenticity is a vital characteristic of effective leaders as people are always

watching, gathering information, and making assessments of leaders based more upon

what they do rather than what they say. A number of individuals at ICC note this is one

of President Harrison's strengths and one respondent reiterates the fact that building trust

takes time and that his consistency has helped her develop a deep belief that his words

and behaviors are congruent. "I have gotten to trust him over the five years that I have

been here and now I see it is real and I think its his way of being, both publicly and

personally. He is the same. He doesn't change. He is himself…he is very authentic."

Another organizational member concurs and expresses admiration at the fact he is a man

of his word. She expressed amazement at how he is acutely aware of stakeholder needs

and finds ways to meet them. "He is very focused and very deliberate. You can count on

him to do what he says he is going to do. He is organized. He is also honest and is very

good and phenomenally aware of the needs and works to address certain topics and to

address certain issues." To further explain how individuals in the college witness the

president living out his values, an administrator recalled a memo the president circulates

from time to time. The premise behind it is that individuals in the college need to

consider how their actions will be viewed in public and must be willing to stand up for

their actions if necessary.

> From an ethical perspective, you'll hear him say periodically that he does
> not want to do anything personally or as an organization that we would be
> ashamed to see on the front page of the newspaper and I think he had that

in an old memo before I started here and he still uses it periodically to say that the actions that we take, while others may not know all of the details, would we be willing to stand behind it if it came up on the front page of the newspaper? To me, that says he is a man of integrity that is being ethical and honest.

In addition to the memo, the respondent explains that a philosophy underlying President Harrison's actions and behaviors is based upon openness and honesty and that he sees this philosophy play out everyday in the president's relationships. Known as mutual gains, this philosophy is based on creating an environment of equity through consensus building rather than "majority rules."

> Honesty and integrity, openness, and he has a philosophy that he brought in called a mutual gains approach, which allows folks who have divergent opinions and perspectives to be heard and to bring those to the table until all prospectives are heard and are considered as part of the deliberation and are part of the final decision. He values people from the talent perspective and from an organizational perspective, he values excellence. You can see him striving to move the college to be the center of excellence and to help the county and to be a focal point of the county for businesses and industries and to help people achieve their goals.

An action identified by the president himself as an example of ensuring fairness, equity, and caring for people was how the college proceeded in reducing staff during a budget crisis some years back. He understood the importance of acting in congruence with his words and espoused philosophies regardless of the situation and did everything in his power to ensure the needs of all staff were met during the difficult times.

> We had a 25% reduction in state funding and had to end up implementing the first reduction in force for the first time in the college's history and that was a very painful process, but we tried to let our values [drive our actions] within that very painful situation. So we didn't reduce positions by seniority, we actually did a very thoughtful analysis of the vision and the priorities and we tried to go through and make decisions that would turn a very difficult situation into the best long-term result that we could and so we tried to look at it in that context and then we communicated in a very respectful way to individuals so that we tried to help every individual that was impacted to get reconnected with resources, assistance, and

human support to go along with a very traumatic situation and we communicated extensively on campus to every group that would participate or listen to try to help people understand what we were doing, why, and how that was consistent with the values and the vision and mission of the institution.

A long-tenured respondent provided another example of two values espoused by the president, the need to process until questions are answered and openness and transparency in actions. She was astounded by how much time the president spent with a student to ensure that he felt like he was treated fairly and had exhausted all his options.

The situation is that we have a nursing student who has failed this course twice and is going to be removed from the program…we are able to resolve most appeals before it reaches his office, so when it gets to his office, he knows this is going to be a very difficult situation. So I have watched him, he gathers everything, he pours over all of the, not just the student's records, but also all of the notes and details of the appeals process and then he brings together in his boardroom, the student, with me, the dean, the faculty, if there was a clinical instructor, the clinical instructor is there, if special needs were involved, then the director of our special needs office is there, and he processes the student appeal with everyone at the table and then he gives a summary statement and he says to the student, with great sincerity, I want you to know how much we care about your success at this college and I'm going to look over these materials and you will have a letter from me and he gives him the exact day that he can expect that letter and then he processes all that information that he has and sends a letter to the student with a copy to everyone else who was in the meeting that delineates every single detail about the appeal and what his final decision is. And the amazing thing about it is we had a student last spring who made another appointment with him and brought a new issue into the room. I have known people who will say you know I'm sorry, you didn't bring that issue up when we had everyone in the room so I can't address that at this time, but he went and started the whole process over. He brought people back together, he asked for more information about this issues, processes it all again and sends another letter to the student. It really is an amazing thing.

A specific set of presidential actions identified by college staff as illustrations of authenticity deal with his approach to criticism. A college manager, an individual who has been with him for nearly his entire tenure, believes his philosophies on providing

fairness and equity across the college lead him to reject labeling anything as criticism.

She believes that he interprets these situations as teaching moments and opportunities to

meet the information and sensemaking needs of people.

> If somebody were to challenge him, he would come and look at it from a
> very, almost like a teacher perspective. Let's talk this through then, let's
> look at what we've done, how we've done it, and if we need to get more
> input into this. Let's look at it from your perspective. I think that surprises
> a lot of people in the sense that a CEO and president of an organization
> may be as open to that, but I don't think he would even say that he takes
> anything as criticism. He welcomes questions and other points of view.

Another interviewee explains the president is deliberate in his responses to criticism and

responds to it in the same way he responds to many issues, by focusing on the data. "I

think that he responds as quickly as possible and I think, again, he's very deliberate. I

think that he often as quickly as possible gathers the information that he needs so that he

can make an informed decision." An administrator also believes the president approaches

criticism objectively and focuses on evidence and data. He also indicates the president,

based on his consensus modeling approach, addresses the criticism instead of the

"attacker" and is willing to adjust decisions when new information warrants.

> He tries to be very open and objective and one of the things that he is very
> good at is being open and objective and critically analyzing and trying to
> understand. The mutual gains approach can be done in a group, but he
> exemplifies it in his own way of approaching things, that he will try and
> understand what your criticism is and what the questions are and we'll get
> to the core issues, and then try and explain his position and his decisions
> and the context around it and why those led him to come up with the
> decisions that he did. Also, he seeks feedback from the person or the
> group and what did they think was the right decision or the right action to
> take at that point in time and why. He does a good job of not attacking the
> messenger, but trying to get at the issue and dealing with that objectively.

These assessments are in line with the president's description of how he believes he

addresses criticism – an indication that people perceive his behavior and words, in this

regard, to be authentic. President Harrison explains that, in the end, it's about reaching

consensus towards making the right decision for the college, not about him being right.

> [I] try to address them head on and understand what the criticism is, the basis for it, and try to communicate what the rationale for the decision was and to help people understand the why and also being willing to admit when mistakes are made, then to change the situation as warranted, when there's evidence that the decision could have been better. You know one of the things that happens when you adopt a continuous improvement mode is that there is the expectation there will be continuing iterations of decisions for trying to improve, so a decision in our setting hopefully doesn't take on an end-all, be-all attitude in our organization. People understand that things are iterative.

The only comments indicating the president does not effectively handle criticism are

based upon speculation and hearsay. One staff member, based upon the president's

people-centered and authentic nature, feels that criticism would hurt the president a great

deal since President Harrison, by his accounts, is always acting in the best interests of the

college and the county. "I think he doesn't like to be criticized because I think his

intentions are good and there's no malice in his decisions. So, if it's not for the good of

the whole, I think he probably takes it personally because you know, in his heart, his

intentions are good and he's human." Another respondent did not have an example of the

president handling criticism poorly, but has heard he can get defensive when criticized. "I

haven't seen it, but the one rap I've heard [is that he] doesn't take bad news well…when

somebody comes to him and says that this initiative isn't working…he won't get upset or

lose his temper…but he will get defensive and dig in for his side of the argument."

Intricately connected himself to the college

Focusing on developing strong relationships and connections within all

subcultures allows individuals to get to know the president rather than simply

interpreting, from a distance, the thinking and rationale behind major decisions and

efforts. An administrator explains that one of the ways President Harrison ensures people know him is to walk the campus and connect with staff on a personal level. She explains he is focused on forging relationships, which is not only one of his favorite parts of the job, but also a proactive and strategic way of ensuring that people interpret his actions as they are intended.

> It's [connecting with people] not only proactive, it's strategic. I mean you said you were asking questions about how he relishes his job; he loves his work. He is a president that walks the college frequently. He knows the name of every employee, if he hears the name of somebody hired recently and he hasn't met them yet, he writes it down and makes sure that he has an opportunity to meet that person. And then once he meets that person, he never forgets the name.

A college manager also believes that getting to know the names of the full-time staff at the college establishes the approachability the president is seeking. According to him, the president wants people to feel comfortable coming up to him and asking questions since it increases the openness of the campus.

> He prides himself on knowing folk's names. We're not a huge campus… [and] being a community college we have a whole lot of adjunct and so on, but of the regular employees, he knows most people's names and you know when you're out in the hall he doesn't say hi, how are you, it's how are you Joe, and that means a lot to people and that's important to a lot of people that the president knows my name and so he's very good at trying to keep things somewhat personable and trying to be approachable…[and] every so often he'll tell me about some conversation he had with somebody, an employee, and I'll be tempted to roll my eyes thinking, why are they bringing that up to the president? But he wants that, [he] wants that approachability.

Recalling her personal experiences with the president, one interviewee expressed amazement that the president knew her name in such a short time and that he still knows the names of some part-time faculty. She believes this behavior creates and maintains a sense of community across the college. "It is impressive to me that he knew who I was

after a very short time and that he knows even some of the adjuncts and that he knows

everybody and I think that has a lot to do with the sense of community here."

This sense of community is seen in the fact that people work very hard at the

college – a fact that one respondent attributes to the knowledge people have about their

actions directly impacting college operations and direction. He explains the president has

created an environment of ownership where college staff know the college will only go as

far as they, every individual throughout the institution, can take it and he effectively

communicates that the difficult financial situations require sacrifices from staff so the

county and students can be effectively served.

> Interviewer: Why do you think people are able to deal with it [being
> pushed to their limits] at [Iota]?
>
> Respondent: Well, I think a couple of reasons. One, he's done a good job
> of explaining to them, you know, the economic reality we're working
> with, because our board is very adamant about keeping tuition as low as
> possible. We have levy income, but it's limited in how much it can grow
> by state law, and then the rest is a subsidy and he's very good at
> communicating at those different open sessions (inaudible) the state
> funding, so I think they have a fairly good sense of the environment we
> are working in and then I think the other is just the dynamic personality
> that, you know, there is that party that thinks, oh brother, another new idea
> and there is another that thinks, another new idea, how intriguing, I mean
> people feel they are making a difference, they think they are contributing
> something, so you know, they find a way to suck it up.

Although the president is intricately woven into the fabric of the college, he is often away

from the college. After all, one can't be the "king of partnerships" from one's office.

Based on this fact, the researcher asked one of the interviewees how the president

maintains a presence on campus when he is gone so often.

> I guess even though he is removed, he still stays connected, we can get to
> him through e-mail if you need something and he will e-mail us if he is
> somewhere and he needs to speak with us and he is always connected even
> if he's not physically here. So you can feel his position and his influence

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even when he is not here and I think part of it may be because of who he places in positions and he puts the right people in the dean and the vice president positions so that you still feel his influence coming down through the organization.

It appears that consistency flows from the president throughout the management at the college and people interpret his actions and presence through those individuals placed in management positions.

Seeks to inspire rather than mandate

As a result of Dr. Harrison's authentic leadership and strong internal connections, organizational members explain that they are consistently inspired to reach for personal and organizational greatness. An administrator believes that inspiration begins with trust, something the president has engendered with his leadership style focused on putting people first. "In terms of the climate, I think people trust him and I think it was because his style was so different than the previous president and I think the people, he just took such an interest in people and he gathered their involvement and so those were all great positives." The president provided great insight into his leadership style and the focus on involvement in organizational matters at all levels and inspiring people to achieve rather than mandating or pushing. He understands that people work harder and are more committed when inspired rather than pushed.

> Over my career, I have had many people say that I have high expectations for what people can do and I think that's true. I have a lot of belief in people and the ability of people and if you set the agenda, you know, you really don't have to drive people to do really good work, I mean, it's really more about them being inspired to do really good work. They'll do more on their own than you could possibly drive them to do, so it's a matter of helping them to see what the vision is and there's no better way for them to see the vision then for them to help create it.

One respondent believes that people are inspired by the president's push for high

achievement as feels it is an impetus for college staff to push themselves and the college.

"You're not really pulling at the boundaries of what the system is…you are pushing it in

an even further direction and I think the leader, who is a transformational…certainly

brings people along to see the different picture… motivates others and inspires others."

An institutional staff member, when asked if the president pushes, provided an emphatic

yes. However, he expressed that this pushing comes through inspiration and that when

people don't feel pushed, they push themselves in an effort to please the president.

> Absolutely, unequivocally yes [the president does push people to the
> limits of their abilities]. What happens is that you see what he does and
> you want to be pushed and you want to be better for him and you'll never
> compete with Dr. [Harrison] because he is rare individual and because he
> pushes himself to the extreme and into the wall. So again, yes, and when
> he doesn't push, we push ourselves to go further.

A long-tenured interviewee explains that inspiration from and acknowledgement by the

president act as catalysts to push people forward, even beyond their perceived ability and

capability limits. She also expresses that people, genuinely, are inspired by the president

and want to live up to his example.

> I think there is an intangible reward for work here, which means that
> you're getting acknowledgement and you don't necessarily get more
> money, we would all like more money, but I think that is compelling for
> people. They really want to please the president and that acknowledgment
> is what makes it great. He does a lot to do that.

One of the documents examined by the researcher was a set of notes from a recent

institutional council meeting. An academic dean at the college was at the meeting to

present findings of the recent accreditation visit. In addition to presenting the results,

however, he also explained that college staff discovered aspects of the process they felt

could be improved. Based on these responses, he discussed his intent to draft a letter with

suggestions on how the process can be improved. The council approved the suggestion

and Dr. Harrison suggested that the dean indicate ICC would be happy to pilot the

proposed changes to provide useable data. There was no need for the dean to increase his

workload, but he was inspired by the president's focus on continuous improvement and

decided to make a suggestion that could improve the accreditation process in the future.

Created an environment where organizational and unit level values converge

Within most colleges and universities, there are distinct differences between the

organizational and subculture or workgroup values. Based upon information found

throughout this study, however, alignment seems greater when there is a clear and

consistent message and opportunities to develop a shared organizational vision. A college

member believes the values are highly related at both levels based upon the fact that "we

have a mission and a value statement that was not created in isolation and is adjusted

continuously with everyone." An administrator agrees and notes the college looks at the

process of developing a mission statement as both a continuous learning experience and a

chance to increase buy-in as individuals involved with the college, inside and out, create

the direction of the college based upon changing stakeholder, industry, and environment

needs.

> I think they're driven by organizational values and that is part of our
> [vision name]. We have values that we have developed with the
> community and with the campus community and the external community
> and there are values of excellence and I think regardless of whether it's
> somebody's organizational unit or the college as a whole, it's about the
> value of learning and the value of individuals, the value of partnerships
> and innovations and diversity and stewardship because we are a public
> entity. And finally engagement, that we want our stakeholders to be
> involved in the planning and decision-making processes, both internal and
> external stakeholders and especially the external component because for
> us, it's extremely critical that it's not just about what's inside the walls
> here.

A college member believes they are congruent and attributes that to the constant

communication between the president and staff as well as continuous opportunities for

input through multiple forums. She also notes she will accept the high number of

meetings since it has resulted in opportunities to effect changes at the organizational

level.

> I think that each division is represented on each committee in every
> important effort and I think that helps us to be more congruent, because
> we have input and we have opportunities for information exchange, so that
> we don't end up stumbling around in the dark and we probably have a lot
> more meetings than we would like to have, but sometimes the meetings
> are very important to make sure that we are all focused on the same
> planning process even though it might be a different pathway because of
> the different departments or units.

A long-tenured respondent concurs that communication and input are catalysts toward

congruence between organizational and work-group values. In fact, she specifically

believes the level of input throughout the visioning process has created natural alignment.

> We get there because the values are driven throughout the college and
> with the mission and values of the college and where the vision is and in
> respect to being responsive to the community and the faculty and staff are
> all very involved in that dialog and it's a joint decision by everybody and
> then it sort of filters down to the department because you've been so
> included in the process, but it just naturally goes in that direction.

Another administrator feels that the college's strategic hiring processes insure that values

at the individual and organizational level are congruent. She notes that hiring with values

in mind ensures the college is recruiting new talent focused on the same goals as the

organization. "We have an infusion of new talent… particularly because of the growth

and in replacing faculty and adding faculty, and with the new faculty…we can ensure that

their philosophies, their teaching philosophies are inline with the organizational mission."

One respondent feels the sense of congruence is greater at Iota Community College than

any institution he has been at before. He provided an example of just how values

established at the organizational level play out at the workgroup level on a daily basis.

> I've been here four and a half years, and I would say that people have a
> better sense here than anywhere else I have ever been, of what the
> overriding vision is. So one of the comments you will hear internally a lot
> is, you know, we're here to serve the student, so sometimes, someone may
> have an idea surrounding a business process standpoint, we could make a
> change that would make things better, more efficient, but if it harms too
> many students, if it creates a certain inconvenience that students aren't use
> to, that has to be taken into consideration and that will add to the
> conversation and so that tension will be there for an internal group that
> wants to make a change and will bump into the vision that we are here to
> serve the student and make it as easy on them as possible and so on and
> they will have to struggle with that….I would say that here, more than
> anywhere I have ever been, he has infiltrated their thinking, because they
> do know the bigger message and they do have some very lively
> discussions about it. Okay, we want to do this and we think it will help
> here, here, and here, but someone else says, but what if the students don't
> understand the change? Then, who wants to be the one to explain that to
> the president?

When answering the question of value congruence, the president stated that he

believes organizational values are important in guiding the overall understanding of the

workgroup values, but that workgroup values are the most compelling. He explains that

this is why the creation and maintenance of a culture focused on meeting the needs of

organizational members, students, and the community, is essential. According to him, a

person-centric culture will impact the degree of alignment between organizational and

workgroup values.

> The workgroup is the most compelling to the individual and I think in my
> experience, that has very much been the case. Institutional values and
> directions and beliefs are important as well, they are important at a
> different level. I mean people need to believe in the organization and in
> what the organization is doing, and they need to see that it is making
> process toward doing what it should, but on a day to day basis, people
> have to feel that their work has more to do with how people in their
> workgroup treat them probably more than any other factor. So that's one
> of the reasons it is so critically important to get every workgroup within

the institution functioning in such a way that respects people and values people and values people and supports people in fulfilling their part of the unit and it certainly helps people understand how the unit fits into the larger whole of the organization.

Generally speaking, there was agreement across the interviews that values are congruent; however, some respondents couched their answers by indicating the faculty subculture is still in transition. One respondent hesitated when asked if the values at both levels were congruent. Specifically, he pointed to the professional subculture (faculty) at the college and their focus on values at the department and discipline level and their resistance to some of the "non-educational" endeavors of the college.

> Dr. [Harrison] has his vision and innovation is a big part of that, but faculty may not place such a high priority on it and they may buy into it, but it would not necessarily be as strong for them and they may believe more in continuous improvement and making their discipline the best that it can. He's focused on what's going on with the innovation corridor and looking at big picture innovation and those kinds of things.

Another interviewee concurs that a chasm is still being bridged between the non-academic and "true academic" college staff over the focus on "non-educational" initiatives. She posits that the difference is based on global vs. local thinking and that ideally, the culture will move to a place where the difference does not exist.

> The ideal climate would be an environment where we are all striving to provide for the community and looking at the community as a whole and we're looking to help benefit the community and meet its needs. Are we there yet? No, and I think it is a battle between the perception of this is an academic environment with true academic people and we're here to educate people versus the opposing position that we are here to provide for the community and economic development in a more global perspective… there are faculty who are here just to teach and are frustrated about why the dollars are being put into the [on-campus four-year college building] and the entrepreneurship [initiative] and there was a lot of concern from the faculty that the dollars were being redirected there instead of being used to support the basic educational operations of the college…So I don't think we are quite there yet.

She did indicate, however, that faculty, in general, have started to accept the more global

vision of what the college does, its potential impact, and who it serves and attributes this

to communication opportunities with the president. "He maintains open communication

with the community about what's going on and how it impacts us and he does that very

well. It's an open dialogue of what the situation is and the direction we are trying to go to

deal with that." A college manager agrees there has been movement by faculty towards a

more global understand of the college's mission and indicates, through an example, that

this movement is reflective of organizational tipping. She explains that in the 1990s, the

president presented a radical idea on how technology could dramatically shift course

delivery and the number of students served. Initially, there was consternation and doubt

from faculty. However, with early adopters, a continual message, and the passage of time,

faculty bought into the vision and the college is now one of the leading providers of

distance education in the state.

> Our conception of distance learning [at the time] was telecourses. You
> watch on TV and you get a tape and you send in your homework and in
> this room, I remember Dr. [Harrison] discussing what the potential could
> be to create greater access to students, to take learning beyond their four
> walls and use new technology and there were also people that day who are
> from our information systems and services department and there was such
> a silence that you could have heard a pin drop, because instead of
> everybody being excited about it, they were all looking at him like are you
> nuts. But there was one faculty member there who was an early champion
> of this and said, you know what, I've been playing around with some of
> this and I actually have some ideas about how we could be able to do it
> and now I'm going to fast forward...Today, one out of every three of our
> students takes Internet courses and of all of the public colleges in the
> [state], we have the highest percentage of enrollment based upon our
> overall enrollment in distance learning. We have the entire Associates of
> Arts degree online and the Associates of Science degree online and we
> have students do their science labs online and what happened in [state] is
> that we have one of the most interactive and innovative approaches to
> distance education. So something has evolved during that time and it
> started with someone who had a vision, who is very patient and very

nurturing and kind of brings people along to help him imagine what the possibilities are and they take hold of them and it becomes theirs.

In summation, the president believes in a balanced approach to leadership that supports and nurtures people while pushing the college to achieving higher-level goals. This is actualized through a "macro-manager" approach typified by empowering individuals to determine what paths to take towards a shared organizational direction. He remains intricately connected to the college by developing healthy relationships with all staff, maintaining an unwavering focus on meeting student and stakeholder needs, and ensuring the a common message is communicated through managers at the college. President Harrison also engages in authentic leadership – that is espousing high-level values and then behaving accordingly. This increases the likelihood that college staff understand the values driving the college, and in the case of ICC, has led to greater effort from staff based on inspiration from the president.

Ensuring the Flexibility and Adaptability of the College

Developed a climate of positivity and openness

A respondent who has worked in nearly a dozen colleges over her career has just been taken back by the degree of civility and positivity at the college. Based on her experiences, it is the healthiest and most caring place she has ever seen.

> Even with the politics, it still works on a genteel level. So there's nothing that's really damaging that is ever done. I don't think people realize here how unusual it is and I think things become the norm. You just don't know, but in a lot of places it's more neglectful or there isn't such a sense of cohesion. Where as here, we just float around in it and we don't even know what we have until other people tell us. So I think it's worth permeates the atmosphere.

An institutional manager also notes that politics exist at the college, but that a transition is occurring where, internally, politics are not determining how the college is run. In fact,

she believes her area has reached a level where political behavior has largely vanished. "An ideal political climate would really not be political…It would be open dialogue, no hidden agendas, warm open and free discourse without any fear of repercussions and I don't feel in my area and with our staff that we have fear of repercussions." Another respondent has also seen increased positivity in the administrative culture of the college and during a recent conversation with the president, found out that he feels the level of positivity is higher than at any point during his entire career. She not only places the credit for that on his longevity, but also on his willingness to change and adapt. "He has repeatedly commented [recently] he has never felt that the leadership and that the engagement has ever been better in his entire career and part of that is the ongoing consistency of one leader [who has] has evolved and developed." One interviewee indicates that within the faculty subculture, there is a level of civility she regards as unusual. "There is a kind of civility here and I do think that's part of why we're so successful… the faculty meetings here, they are civil. People are not fighting with each other, so that whole tone comes down, which makes the discourse easier to deal with." She attributes this civility and positivity on the campus to the openness that has permeated the entire institution. She feels that by providing great freedom across the college, President Harrison has created an environment where people trust him, his vision, and that his actions contribute to a healthy and vibrant college.

> I think the college is there [an ideal climate] and I have been in good colleges. I taught for a long time as an adjunct in schools in the Pacific Northwest and then out here and they were all good schools, but there's never been anything quite like the freedom that I have had coming in at this stage of my life, coming in as junior faculty and being able to get the permission very quickly to take on projects and do things that I wouldn't have gotten to at any other school because I would've been junior faculty.

So he grants leadership. He has a lot of confidence in people, which I find is extraordinary and people want to rise to that.

Developed a culture that values evidence and consensus-modeling

From his first year at the college, President Harrison has worked to create a data and evidence-driven culture. Based on leadership and management research from the 1980s, he knew that individuals give their greatest efforts and energy in a nurturing and fulfilling environment. Armed with this information, one of the first actions he took when arriving was to administer a climate survey – something he has continued on a biennial basis. He explains that many decisions, including those impacting professional, individual, and college development come from the results of the study.

> I started administering [a national] climate survey…and I think there are four classifications of staff that it breaks it down into, and it goes through a series of questions about communication, decision-making, and all the factors you would consider in evaluating the climate of the institution. So starting with that, then had the ability to compare [Iota] within itself, among the various classifications of faculty and staff and then had the normative data to compare it with the national norms, and then based upon having that, had then used it in a variety of ways…[and we've conducted the] climate survey every two years since that time and have had the results evaluated throughout the campus and then used it to base some of our strategies for professional development, campus development, or individual development.

Administrators, faculty, and staff are all very familiar with the study and an organizational member provided input on not only what the survey measures, but how the college rates. He also explains how the data provides evidence that the college is effectively meeting the needs of college staff – a situation allowing Iota to better serve the students and the community.

> The top tier indicates that the climate is prosperous and people have opportunities for upward mobility and to utilize their talents and skills and abilities and the leadership is agile and open and honest and ethical. And we fall pretty close to that. If you were to fall into the lowest continuum,

you have a climate that was hostile and people don't trust each other and the very top level is right next to euphoria in terms of climate and you never really reach euphoria, but if people are happy, they want to stay where they like the work and they like the opportunities and they will be satisfied with the money and the benefits and they will like their colleagues and they will believe that the college operates in an open and honest manner and they're actually achieving the goals of the institution.

An administrator provided an example of how data collection is currently being used to reconstruct an academic program that has experiencing serious declines in enrollment over the last decade.

The FTE has declined [in engineering] over the years as the manufacturing base has changed and he is now working with the [internal data center] to do an external market search on how we can transform the engineering fabric, because engineering is no longer just about dirty jobs. It's about stem initiatives and green technologies. So what does our engineering program need to look like in the future and around the arts and humanities, because he is forward looking, he is looking at digital arts and taking traditional arts programs and integrating the technology.

In addition to establishing a data and evidence driven culture, the president has worked to create shared meaning in organizational decisions, directions, and visions. He believes that working from a consensus approach, while time-consuming, increases perceptions of fairness, equity, and ownership – all of which are tied increase the possibility that organizational members will grant access to their tacit knowledge.

You know, one of the real opportunities of the leadership role, the head leadership role, is that you have the chance to communicate the why behind the what and I try to take advantage of that and to do it in meaningful ways and to actively participate in the communication process myself, but more importantly, to get other people to articulate the same sense of meaning, and until people get to the point where they've internalized it and then can articulate it themselves in a wide variety of ways.

One interviewee is a strong proponent of the consensus modeling approach because it requires input from multiple groups and rejects a simple majority rules perspective. He

feels it creates greater energy and engagement and leads to a more effective and successful college.

> We will take some difficult issues and before we make any really hard decisions, we make sure that we have everybody at the table, and again, not everybody can be at the table, but that we have everybody in the campus represented by the groups there and that they make up all of the aspects of the college and we go through the pros and the cons, the good and the bad, and the long term effects until we come up with the consensus that will work for the good of the college.

One of the groups at the college designed to ensure that all organizational level decisions reflect consensus modeling is the institutional council. A college manager explains that this council, consisting of representatives from all groups, even students, is based on processing to consensus. She even notes there are times when decisions have to come to the group multiple times before consensus is reached.

> The institutional council is…the president's commitment to make sure that staff, faculty, students, and the executive committee come together once a week and process any new policies or any new procedures and share what the important issues are for their constituencies. So the [IC] would be the president, the three vice presidents, and the president of student government association…the president of staff council, and the president of the faculty senate. So consider that every revision to policy or every new policy that is developed at the college goes through a consensus-reaching process…and he will say at the end of every discussion, have we reached consensus? Are we ready to proceed? And sometimes we don't reach consensus when something is first introduced and so we go back to processing and then it goes back to IC again.

An institutional member at the college who has served on numerous committees and groups finds that the consensus modeling approach effectively limits the need for additional input-seeking groups. The reason is that decisions are processed so thoroughly throughout the college that individuals always have an opportunity to provide input during the decision-making process.

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I've been on the institutional research committee and I was on the faculty senate and I like the fact that he is really networking with other people. So you get the feeling that this kind of allows people to give their input, but there really isn't a need for input because there is so much consensus building and he may be a visionary and he may be moving us, but things don't happen unless there's kind of a general support for.

In addition to engaging the college in a regular survey of climate change, Dr. Harrison has illustrated his dedication to developing a data and evidence driven culture inside the college and in the community. One of the documents examined provided information on a research center located on campus designed to deliver information to the community, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and civic groups. This center is a tangible representation of the president's desire for a data and evidence culture and has the added effect of enabling the county to grow and develop despite difficult economic circumstances. In addition to providing information, the policy center acts as a knowledge network incubator as it works to link individuals to training, facilities, experts, and the technology to address the needs of local government and community groups. Information gathered and housed includes marketing research, census data, opinion polling, employer surveys, and much more. The policy center also possesses the ability to provide data analysis, program evaluations, and GIS mapping. The center truly acts as the community data collection and dissemination point with the mission of providing relevant data and information to decision-makers across the region.

Utilizes multiple, strategic mechanisms to navigate change

One of the ways the college has sought to remain flexible and adaptable to change is through the use of numerous mechanisms to adjust. One method identified by college staff was the focus on data and evidence to ensure the college as a whole understands not only the changes coming down the pipe, but also how to address them. One respondent

notes the president is perceptive of "trends" occurring at the local, state, and national levels and believes communicating these trends to the college has limited the negative impact of dealing with change. "He is very perceptive about trends coming in and about the environment and he's able to pick that kind of thing up and to gather the fact and I think that [navigating changes] hasn't been an issue." A college manager talked about the frequent use of external scanning to stay abreast of changing needs and environments. She also notes the college has multiple data gathering bodies to insure both substantial and accurate data. "We do a lot of external scanning and look at what others in the area do and we have [an internal research center] that looks at trends and we have an institutional planning council that looks at our annual enrollment and where some of the things out there are."

In addition to gathering data, interviewees explained that the president relies on communication with various parties to ensure the college can adapt to changing conditions. Internally, an administrator indicates that executive managers in the college meet regularly to discuss potential issues and strategize about ways the college can proactively address concerns. In reality, this is a psuedo think-tank where ideas are shared before being taken to the rest of the college for discussion.

> There's the three vice presidents and the president and [they] sit down [weekly] and [are] always looking at how do you think something might impact you and how do you go about getting people to share [their] opinions on opportunities and one of the things that I value so much about what he does is, he never takes lightly any idea that someone might have or a phone call that he might get or an e-mail whenever somebody who's external to the organization or internal who might say, have you thought about this opportunity.

Another interviewee also feels the president focuses on constant communication with individuals inside and outside the college, informing them of changes and potential

approaches. Based on his position, he is required to attend many meetings with the

president and notes how consistent, painfully so sometimes, the message is.

> He communicates as much as possible, he's very consistent in his
> communication and he's repetitive. I mean it's a challenge for me sitting in
> so many meetings with him hearing the same message over and over
> again…I mean he's explained the funding to them several times and his
> message changes very little. I mean even if there's a marginal change from
> the last time, he goes through the whole thing again and explains that
> marginal change and there's a part of me that thinks, do we have to spend
> a half-hour, forty-five minutes to explain this marginal change, but the
> difference is that I came from the state budget office and I know that stuff
> like the back of my hand and these folks, he's very much aware of the fact
> that every year or couple of years he gets into these conversations with
> them, they need that repetition, you know you need to hear things several
> times before the really sink in you know because some of it can be really
> complex and again that's where that patience comes in.

In addition to communicating internally, the president is focused on communicating

externally to ensure the college is able to effectively deal with changing conditions. A

college manager feels that the president is constantly working to ensure the college is

well positioned for the future.

> From what I understand, he has positioned us very well, because he is very
> active at the state and is known and regarded and therefore, to me, he has
> always been a strong advocate for community colleges and he is in it for
> the long haul. So I think he is always out there making the rest of the
> system aware and his peers of what's going on in our part of the world.

One of the interviewee explains that the president regularly meets with individuals in

power positions to discuss the college's situation and needs. In addition to meeting with

local and state powerbrokers, she indicates he meets with individuals in Washington D.C.

as well.

> He is right there, testifying and making sure that the powers to be know
> what's going on and he is in [state capital] all the time and he's been in
> Washington, and he places himself up there and is here doing a lot of
> those things and he's putting himself in those positions to make sure that
> people know what they need to know so that we can keep moving forward.

In addition to gathering and disseminating data, there are also indications that the president has worked to develop and adapt structures within the college so that changes can be navigated more effectively. An institutional member points to the many initiatives and developments within the college over the last few years as evidence the president is focused on creating the structures necessary for the college to ensure the needs of students and the community are met. She also believes, they are a result of his future-oriented nature and ability to see solutions years ahead.

> He is a global thinking person and he is very intricately involved, not only in [state], but particularly in [region and state] and what's happening with workforce development and the loss of manufacturing and the economic development of the area and that's one of the reasons that we have [boundary-spanning workforce development initiative] and the entrepreneurial center and the industrial park and we have a number of things going on and he is the driving force that is making sure that we move forward [and] are responding to the needs of the campus and all the goals set by the state to increase the number of students and the number of graduates in the state.

A long-tenured interviewee concurs, noting that the president looked at different areas of the country suffering from manufacturing losses to find a model that would ensure the county could grow in spite of difficult economic conditions. He explains that President Harrison gained great insight about working across traditional boundaries to build regional partnerships designed to navigate the college through current and future environmental uncertainties.

> Some years ago he assessed the state of the county and the community was changing because of jobs leaving the area. Especially with [automobile company] and [steel company] and [automotive service company], we followed [a U.S. city]…and how it had worked to turn itself into a technology hub and created new jobs and new opportunities after [manufacturing] left there and I can see this here now. This is being implemented with stuff like the [on-campus, four-year college building] and the entrepreneurial center and we are always trying to work with and

develop startup companies to become bigger companies. And what we're
looking to do is take the talent from here, and eventually the whole area,
and steer it into some of the startup companies and it's about keeping our
talent here and not getting much of the brain drain and growing the health
of the county.

Modifies processes and structures regularly

For colleges to effectively navigate change, everything must be debatable. Even if

an institution were to adjust values, vision, and mission to keep in line with

environmental shifts, the organization would be unable to adjust if processes are not

continually assessed for appropriateness and relevance. According to an administrator,

one of the processes undergoing revision in the last several years is the interview and

hiring process. She explains the college is focused on hiring for fit to ensure individuals

can help move the college forward. "We've spent a lot of time in the last six years really

rethinking our HR system to ensure they were hiring for the right fit for the positions and

if you hire for the right fit, then I think you will be more successful and I think he

[President Harrison] believes this is critical." Adding to this, another respondent notes

that Iota Community College is not necessarily looking for the most talented individuals,

but rather, talented individuals who buy-in to the values and vision of the college.

> If we know where we're going and the type of culture that we want to
> have, it forces you to think about the type of people that you hire and in a
> different way. So it's not always the most talented person, but it's the
> person who has a reasonable amount of talent and has the personality and
> the intangible skills that will fit in with the culture and help us achieve
> those goals.

An institutional member states that the president has focused on inclusivity in screening

committees as a mechanism to ensure that intangibles such as personality and fit are a

major part of the interview process. She also explains that the letter of appointment, every

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one, comes out of the president's office as an indication that he supports the process and the final decisions.

> I'm going to be searching ten faculty positions and the policies that addresses faculty screening committees identifies the number of people who should be on the committee, but understand that over [his tenure], he is responsible for most of our policies, so if you were to read them, you would see how inclusive he is because the chairman of the committee and the dean put together what they think is a good committee and then they send that to me and I review it and then he is the final approval on every screening committee at the college. He actually sends a letter of appointment out from his office and the reason that's important to him is because he's looking at the committees from the perspective of inclusiveness so that we are hiring people at the college, which is the most important thing we do after all, we're hiring talent into the college based upon the perspective of a diverse group of people.

Another respondent has experienced first hand how focused the president is on maintaining flexibility in the college's processes. He explains that President Harrison demands flexibility in processes so that people are cared for – a situation that has proven difficult at times for an individual in charge of organizational processes normally guided by rigidity and consistency.

> You know, he's this sort of person, well, in an organization, there's always something that's going to happen and a person is going to get caught in the process and the rules just aren't going to work, there will be some kind of disadvantage for them and he is always looking for those folks, trying to figure out how to address them and he's very comfortable making exceptions where necessary. He preaches against being overly bureaucratic and it goes back to having respect for the individual.

Ensuring the flexibility of processes is essential, but colleges also need to address organizational structures to ensure they do not negatively impact change efforts. An interviewee, when talking about civility flowing through the college, corrected herself to indicate that it flows across the college, not down. She explains the president does not like hearing "downward" and that in reality, the horizontal structure is part of what has

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created such an open and inviting college. "The civility of the feelings comes down or as the president likes to say, they come across. There is more of a horizontal structure here and I wouldn't be allowed to do what I do without that because he is just so hands off." A long-tenured respondent provided insight into this comment by explaining how the president fundamental altered the organizational structure of the college early in his tenure.

> …Within a few years of him getting here, he changed the organizational structure, he changed it at the administrative level and flattened it. In other words, he eliminated layers of assistant and associate deans and actually changed deans to become directors. He has also taken two vice president positions, one was academic affairs and one was student services and he combined those together because he felt they were not working in tandem. And I think with that shift and change he made his mark early on in his leadership to basically say that it's not business as usual. It's not going to be top-down and part of his philosophy is there is only going to be two or three layers between any employee on this campus and him.

Another manager believes that not only has the college become more nimble as a result of the restructuring, but that relationships have improved based upon greater contact among all staff. "You need to understand we have a matrix organization. We are very flat. It was always his desire that there not be more than one level of administration between him and the faculty and staff. So the literal organization of the college creates good relationships."

Consciously and consistently encourages risk-taking

In addition to ensuring flexibility in processes and structures, maintaining flexibility in regard to risk-taking is crucial in developing an organization able to adapt to changing needs and environments. One manager has watched the president over the years and taken cues on risk-taking from him. While noting that she is not a great risk-taker, she has been inspired to pursue new avenues and new ways of thinking. "I think because

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he takes leadership by example, he makes me feel empowered to take some risks that otherwise I might not take at a place where the leader wasn't a risk taker." Dr. Harrison explains he has always believed risk-taking is part of innovation and that innovation is the key to meeting emerging needs and addressing emerging challenges. He has focused on creating a culture where people are encouraged to do things differently and use their own approaches, insights, and tacit knowledge to ensure the college can affect change across the service area. Additionally, he explains that risks must be measured and never negatively impact the students being served or the community funding the institution.

> Well you know, we try to communicate that risk has to be part of the entrepreneurial spirit and that's part of how we do our work…we place a high value on how to do things differently to produce different kinds of results and your question about whether that's diffused throughout the institution, definitely. We've worked hard to try to get people to recognize that its often the people that are closest to the operation or the activity that have the greatest acuity on what could be done differently to improve the results that we get.

An administrator has experienced the president's push for risk-taking as part of a continuous improvement process. He explains that the president has focused on taking risks that will build upon strengths rather than simply negating weaknesses (a central feature of the abundance approach).

> So it's [risk-taking] about continuous improvement and it's not necessarily about using the traditional continuous improvement model where you drill down to find a problem and then you fix the problem. He doesn't necessarily bypass the problems, but if there is a problem, what do we do well within the context and what can we do better and where do we go from here. So that's just a totally different philosophy, and that's where we are trying to get at in terms of innovation and risk.

Another interviewee feels the risk-taking behaviors of the president are crucial and have benefited both the college and the county. She admires his courage because she feels it is far more difficult to take risks in a political position like a community college president.

> I think he's taken a lot of risks. He's taken a lot of risks and I applaud him
> for that because it's difficult to do when you're in a political position.
> So I think he has been willing to take a lot of risks like the
> entrepreneurship and innovation center and [four-year] partnerships. These
> are things that I really applaud, because I think they're too many people
> who are willing to sit on their laurels and not stretch and not take this type
> of risk and I think it's been beneficial to the county and the people in the
> entire college.

While risk-taking behavior is seen from and encouraged by President Harrison, it could best be described as selective risk-taking. For example, the president indicates that he wants the college looking for new ways to serve students and the county, but only when consistent with organizational values and based upon sound reasoning.

> Now you know by personality, some people are averse to risk, some are
> more risk-takers, but we try to create an environment where we encourage
> people to take risks, but to take them in the context of good judgment and
> sound reasoning, you know, so we're not unfettered risk-takers, but we
> encourage risk in ways that are consistent with the rest of the values. For
> instance, one of our values is to be good stewards of the public resources
> that we have been provided. We don't take financial risks that are
> unwarranted, that are unreasoned or not thought through.

An administrator agrees that the president desires innovation and when necessary, risk-taking, but only after being thoroughly researched. He explains that at ICC, "[Risk is acceptable] as long as it's well calculated or even if there is some data with a good hunch, [however], he wants you to put in the time and energy to make sure that it was the best decision based on information you had at the time." When asked about the risk-taking behavior of the president, another respondent provided an example of how he pushes for taking risks, but only after potential consequences have been weighed.

> We will delve into areas and things that you wouldn't think about, but it's
> really after investigating the feasibility of it and I'll give you an example
> of that. He approached me about five years ago and we were approached
> by another college that wanted to start a nursing program and nobody else
> would partner with them within the region and they were way in the [other
> side] of the state and he said can we do something to help them? Can we

do interactive video or something like that? It's like he was willing to look
into that, but then we had to investigate all possibilities.

Views failures and mistakes as part of a continuous improvement process

Based on information already presented in this chapter, the researcher was made

aware of the fact that Iota Community College operates from a continuous improvement

standpoint. The president has worked throughout his tenure to craft processes and

structures designed to increase the adaptability and flexibility of the college.

Additionally, the president noted that criticism is part of the process of continuous

improvement and that he believes organizational members understand that decisions are

iterative. One respondent believes that the president's approach to failure is reflective of a

continuous improvement and learning model and provides her unit's recent exploits into

national accreditation as an example of this philosophy.

> This thing [working towards national accreditation] is a process of
> continual improvement and that's probably the way he sees it that there
> never is failure because you are always improving and there never really is
> an endpoint…[So] we are going for accreditation with [national
> accrediting agency]…and it's unusual for community colleges to go after
> this and in fact, there is only one other community college in [state] that
> has it and there aren't many nationally that do, but it's the beginning of a
> wave and [Dr. Harrison] recognizes that and supports us and continues to
> support us even though we didn't get it the first time around, which is
> common. This is a tough set of standards as we're finding out and he's
> given me a lot of support and he hasn't been frustrated with the fact that
> we didn't get it right away. He is able to be very supportive and very
> permissive and it's a way for us to be able to take our own initiative.

A long-tenured interviewee explains that mistakes are also seen as part of the innovation

process and while nobody likes mistakes, the president understands it will happen. The

goal, however, is that individuals learn from their mistakes and adopt the lessons so the

college is better positioned in the future.

He believes in innovation and part of innovation is that you're going to make some decisions that will put you on a path that wasn't really right and they were just the wrong decisions, but he always comes back to, what did we learn from this process and how can we continuously improve …I've heard him say many times, we strive to be the best but when we don't, we must work to learn along the way and what you learn will tell you what we need to improve on.

A college administrator also feels the president does not dwell on mistakes. He describes the president's approach to mistakes as moving beyond fault and towards meeting stakeholder needs. Interestingly, he also feels the president focuses too heavily on the opinions of stakeholders at times.

Like everyone else, he doesn't like mistakes, but unless you have a recurring theme, his reaction is to think through how to serve the client, how to make it up rather than get hung up about whose fault this is and so, and he will bend over backwards and that's where some tension comes in because sometimes I have felt they [the clients] have some responsibility as well and they're being a little bit unreasonable, but he's going to err on the side of trying to appease them.

A college manager also sees a bit of a problem in the way the president addresses mistakes. While she appreciates that he focuses on the person and does not ascribe blame, she feels he has been too forgiving at times in the past and has led to problems for the college.

Pick up and move on and learn from your mistakes. We've all been there, we've all been around the table where mistakes are made and so he is very forgiving. Maybe almost too forgiving in some situations I have been familiar with and I think he may have a soft side where he gives more and more chances and maybe he shouldn't have because some of his decisions and come back to haunt us.

These two quotes indicate that there is a potential downside to the very forgiving nature of the president. However, this approach appears to reflect the president's desire to guide a person-centered organization and as such, reflects the authenticity spoken of by other organizational members.

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In summary, the president's focus on ensuring the college is flexible and able to adapt to change starts with shared vision. President Harrison believes the college is the primary change agent in the region and has enabled it to operate outside of traditional higher education industry boundaries. He has also worked to craft an organizational culture that accepts change through a focus on positivity and openness, use of data and evidence, and consensus. While data and evidence provide guidance in dealing with change, a focus on positivity, openness, and consensus help establish a climate where people are supported, empowered, and encouraged to help create change. In regards to change, the president has established multiple mechanisms to ensure the college can effectively deal with change. These include data gathering and dissemination, communication with internal and external stakeholders and power brokers, and the development of initiatives supported by outside partners. He has also pushed for changes in the processes and structures inside the college so that person-organization fit is achieved and organizational architecture promotes rather than impedes change. Finally, he has modeled and supported a continuous improvement philosophy that promotes data-driven risk-taking as well as forgiveness of failures and mistakes.

Treats College Staff as the Preeminent Institutional Resource

Leads by distributing authority to others

Regardless of a president's intentions, perception of his/her behaviors to organizational members is what really matters. Individuals from different ranks at Iota Community College expressed the sentiment that Dr. Harrison values them as people and employees. One interviewee remarks that the president values all college staff and that individuals within the college feel equally valued regardless of their position or rank.

"You feel that he values every individual from a maintenance worker to the vice

presidents. He truly instills that we are all here for one purpose and we're part of a team

and we're all equal even though we have different jobs and responsibilities." Another

respondent indicates that the president takes a different approach to correction with his

direct reports as than with other college staff. The suggestion is that President Harrison is

slow to critique individuals outside of his executive team so they are empowered to take

control over aspects of the college's operations and direction.

> He's one of these guys who will, he loves it when things go as they should
> go and he will try and stay out of the way, but at the same time, he does
> have his vision and he will push back when he believes things are not
> going the right way and he'd probably be a little more direct doing that
> with me than someone one who reports to me or someone in a faculty
> group or something. He might still have that in his mind that these guys
> are heading down the wrong path and I'd like to get them back on track,
> but he would probably take his time, be much more careful in how he does
> it and probably guide them whereas with me, he might just say, this is not
> the way we're suppose to go.

An organizational staff member provided a great example of how the president

empowered him to pursue an effort that would prove beneficial to the college. The

individual was chosen to lead the staff council and had numerous ideas about how the

council could be changed to benefit staff as well as the college and President Harrison

kept pushing him to advance the council and the college even though his direct supervisor

was unhappy with the time commitment of the position.

> It turns out that my director did not like what I was doing, but it ended up
> being good for college. So what happened was some years back I was
> elected to chair the staff counsel and that's a position with a lot of
> responsibility and there is a lot of work to it and at the time it was only
> slated to account for ten hours a week of time. But what I found out was
> the work I was doing was taking twenty and sometimes almost thirty hours
> of work a week and I, with spending that much time with that job, I ended
> up spending less time doing the job that I was hired to do. So I talked to
> Dr. [Harrison] about it and he told me how important the role was for the

good of the college and he just kept encouraging me and he saw what I was doing, some of the ideas that I had, and he thought they were great ideas and he was wondering why, why is it that these things are not already in place and he encouraged me to go forward and he just saw it as a great thing. But my director gave me the worst review that I ever had because I'm spending less and less time and he was looking at what I was doing and saying we need you more over here doing the job you were hired to do. And you know, on the review, I normally would get exceeds. Every year, exceeds at this and exceeds at that, exceeds on everything, but this time there were no exceeds and that was the lowest review I ever had and he said that I could go to HR to complain, but he wasn't going to change it and HR would not force him to change it. So I took a bullet for the team and I went to talk with one of my mentors and what he told me was at the end of the day, if what you've done has made a difference and changed things, that's really all you can ask for. The work that I'd done for the staff counsel helped and it pushed the institution forward and my director came back to me and was happy about it and he even adjusted my review and now the staff counsel president has been given twenty-five hours a week to do that position.

Depends upon representative input in decision-making and visioning processes

Among the most common themes throughout the study of ICC is that the

president is a leader or democratic manager. An administrator explained that Dr. Harrison

is not the type of leader who makes unilateral decisions. In fact, he quipped, "I can't

recall a time where he has come in and said, I've made a decision to go this

way…certainly its led to inquiries and more research and maybe more than that in the

long run…[but], I can't remember him coming in and saying this is what we are going to

do." Another interviewee has personally experienced the president reaching out for input

and although Dr. Harrison ultimately makes decisions, she believes these decisions are

actually group decisions based on the tremendous amount of input he gathers.

> He has sought me out within areas of my expertise and frequently he has e-mailed me and asked to see me for input on situations where he needs some decisions or directions and so I would say, yes. He's the type of guy where he goes out and he networks and he gathers all of the information and he brings it back and then he filters it out to people and then comes up with decisions based upon the input of those individuals.

Another interviewee at the college indicates that the day before her interview, she and faculty throughout the college were asked to participate in a group looking at how to accommodate new state requirements. "Just yesterday I received an e-mail indicating that all faculty members are invited to attend a meeting to discuss the new university effort. The statewide system effort and so he would bring faculty coordinators and directors and faculty together." In addition to the informal outreach for input, there are systems in place designed to gather input into decision-making at the college. There are numerous committees at the college, some permanent and some temporary, and according to one respondent, there were over seven hundred at one point. When the researcher expressed surprise at having so many committees in a college with less than five hundred full-time staff, she laughingly responded, "Well, we have condensed them." There are still hundreds of committees; however, an organizational member stated that the most important mechanism for ensuring diverse input into college decisions is the institutional council. This group meets weekly and operates on a consensus model so that information can be processed until consensus is reached. "[In]…the institutional council, topics are generally talked about within our units and can be taken to our vice president and faculty, staff, and students, can take their issues to their representative and it will be discussed in that meeting." Not only does the president seek out representative input, but he was also the driving force behind the creation of the staff council. An interviewee indicates that early in his presidency, there were no structure eliciting input from staff and he realized this situation needed to be remedied.

> I talked about councils before [and until the 1990s], [but]…the staff counsel did not exist and since there was no staff counsel, it was really him saying to the staff that if you want to organize as a group that would be analogous to the faculty senate and ensure you're represented in the

decision-making process, we would welcome it, and so he actually worked
with them for that to happen.

In addition to the internal input structures, a college member explains there are feedback

loops both inside and outside of the college so that all stakeholder groups have a degree

of input into the decisions that will ultimately affect them.

There are feedback loops that he uses as well to help process information,
but he also extends outside of the college as well. So I constantly believe
he's involved in a lot of activities outside and not just involved in boards,
but giving presentations and because that gives him another perspective on
how people outside of the college, some of our stakeholders, feel and
value the college.

Based upon comments by President Harrison, it's no coincidence that individuals

throughout the college, based on interviewee comments, experience a climate of diverse

representation. He explains that the very structure of the college, established early in his

career, precludes the college from effectively operating without decision-making coming

from multiple individuals and diverse input in organizational decisions.

By design, we created a flat organizational structure with relatively few
administrators. So we only have twenty-six or twenty-eight administrative
positions that run a college of [more than ten-thousand] students and that
means [they] can't make all the decisions necessary to operate the
institution, so they have to delegate and diffuse the decision-making and
that provides wonderful opportunities for people to be involved in owning
the processes and systems of the organization and of course some are more
entrepreneurial than others, but we try to encourage that and I think people
generally reflect that and we have a lot of creativity because of that.

The president also realizes that the visioning process is important because it

provides a tangible sensemaking mechanism for internal and external stakeholders. He

explains that in order to truly involve all stakeholders and increase buy-in, individuals

play a pivotal role in establishing the direction of the college.

When we create a process for developing the vision, for the institution, we
spend a lot of time and effort getting people engaged in helping to create

that vision and mission because then people support what they helped to create, they see how it fits together, they see the larger context, so engagement in a process is critically important and you know people help create the vision and direction and then they see process toward the vision and direction, and then they're able to internalize the benefits of the direction because they see the results and that's motivational in and of itself.

An institutional manager adds that staff understand that meeting the needs of stakeholders requires the input of individuals located inside and outside of the college. He also expresses that the visioning process initiated by the president is in its third iteration and that each version has been improved based upon lessons learned.

We just finished our third iteration of that process and it is broader in scope where back in 2000 it was related just to internal stakeholders, but since that time the last version included over fifteen hundred community members. Not just community leaders, but day-to-day folks. People in the trenches and at the grassroots level from throughout the community. We got them involved and obtained their views and used those results to develop a strategic plan that really changes the culture and climate and you have to change because you're responding to the needs of the community and that gives you evidence that this is what the community wants.

In an effort to describe the sheer scope of the visioning process, an administrator talked about the number of people and listening groups involved.

We had over fifteen hundred people participate in over one hundred twenty listening and learning sessions. There were one hundred people, fifty from the college and fifty from the community who were on the final visioning council and took all the input from these focus sessions that were located all over the community and within the college and from that created our [visioning] plan. It's quite a remarkable process. It's the most extensive community engagement process that I have ever witnessed or been a part of.

Established professional development is an institutional priority

According to President Harrison, professional development is among the most important institutional endeavor based upon its return on investment. He is adamant that

regardless of budget situations in the state, the college will never eliminate professional

development opportunities.

> We have believed that those opportunities are so critically important that
> we have treated those like our most critical resources so that if we have to
> cut [because of] the state budget, we don't start by cutting the resources
> that go to professional development. We'll cut everything a little bit in
> order to adjust to whatever financial exigency requires while maintaining
> our proportional commitment to professional development.

One of the major reasons he indicated he would not eliminate the professional

development budget is that doing so would slow the growth and development of the

college as a whole since getting individuals involved in development opportunities is

intricately linked to organizational health. "We do a lot to try to get people exposed to

new ideas and to get them growing in their own fields, we make the assumption that if the

people are growing, the institution's growing will take care of itself." An administrator

explains that professional development is linked not only to organizational growth, but

also to personal growth through development of careers at ICC. She explains the

president has placed an emphasis on retaining people over time, but with a focus on

advancement rather than maintaining the same position. "Part of his philosophy is that we

want somebody to spend their career with us, but we don't want them to be in the same

career and in the same position for their career with us and so he looks for ways in which

we can develop them."

When asked about professional development opportunities at ICC, college staff

identified a number of opportunities not only made available, but encouraged by the

president. One college staff member stated "[He encourages through] persistent

references, in forums, and for example, he would likely mention people who are on

educational leave to keep it at the front of people's minds." Another mechanism, besides

persistent references, that President Harrison has used to encourage staff to avail

themselves of professional development opportunities is the institutional review process.

According to the president, "In our performance management system, one of the

interactions between a supervisor and a person being supervised each year is their

professional development goals. What are they working on? What are they pursuing?"

Interviewees provided numerous examples of professional development opportunities for

faculty. Specifically, one interviewee provided insight into not only some of the

opportunities, but an example of the budget flexibility designed to allow faculty to attend

more expensive conferences.

> Each faculty member has an account for professional development each
> year and so faculty can use it as they get it or it can accrue each fiscal year
> so that they can attend a larger conference or do some sort of study or use
> it in a sabbatical or something…we also have faculty development
> opportunities twice a year as a formal week long development
> [opportunity] and faculty are able to take part in certificate programs and
> we recently just had a program on adult teaching and there's been a course
> every semester for the faculty to take and it is funded through the vice
> president for academic improvement and that is available to anyone who is
> interested in pursuing [it] and most recently was developed as a certificate
> so that it isn't just a loose course but could count toward a degree as well.

An administrator elaborated on faculty development opportunities and discussed an

innovative teaching and learning facility on campus designed to assist faculty in

integrating new technologies and teaching philosophies into their classes. Additionally,

the center assists faculty in responding to and obtaining grants.

> We have a [state of the art teaching and learning center] which offers
> faculty an opportunity to respond to RFPs for innovate projects and course
> redesigns, and we're actually opening up a new library learning resource
> center in the fall and we'll have an experimental classroom for faculty, so
> that when they do their research for these innovative learning projects or
> for course redesign they can actually use this prototype of a future
> classroom to learn state of the art technologies and learning theories.

The individual also discussed some of the opportunities the college has established

specifically for adjunct faculty. She noted that with the increasing number of adjunct

faculty members, efforts to integrate them into the culture of the college are gaining

importance.

> Another unusual thing that we do here is that we have an adjunct faculty
> conference and I mean one of the great challenges facing colleges today is
> how to ensure the quality and consistency of adjunct teaching. So we
> actually have an annual adjunct faculty conference with breakout sessions,
> very professionally done, and we hold it twice so that adjuncts who can't
> come in the evenings can come on Saturday. We also have an adjunct
> advisory committee and adjunct faculty advisory committee that I meet
> with twice a year and address professional development with them.

> While indications are that professional development opportunities are prevalent

and the president supports and encourages them, a director in fine arts indicates that some

people are simply unable to take advantage. She explains that the college is always

buzzing with activity and new projects and that some people are just unable to make the

time for professional development.

> Everywhere I look on this campus is professional development and there
> is a professional development line and the people have opportunities, but I
> think sometimes people don't take advantage because if they are gone, the
> work just piles up. It is [professional development] encouraged, but
> sometimes you see people walking around with the deer in headlights look
> and they wonder if they take advantage of it [professional development],
> where am I going to make up the time.

Despite the difficulty of engaging in formal professional development opportunities,

indications are that numerous informal opportunities exist for college staff. One

respondent explains that some of the best development she has received is through the

executive team mentoring. Not only does she frequent the offices of executives to talk,

but has also seen the president simply stop by meetings to provide input. "I see the

administration here and other people as leaders and as mentors. Whenever you have

questions or discomfort, you can have a chat session…and sometimes [President Harrison] will stop by a meeting you are in and talk." Another respondent agrees that informal mentoring is important and something that he avails himself of.

> Interviewer: … What do you believe are some of the most important informal opportunities you've had for professional development?
>
> Respondent: One, very easily is access to the president and the vice presidents on a day-to-day and daily basis. Just through conversations, informal and formal, through meetings and hallway conversations. You know, it's about figuring out what's going on, but also to listen and learn about how they approach problems and how they achieve their level of success.

An organizational member asserts that professional development is a priority and that the atmosphere is one that supports opportunities, formal or not. "I think if you had a really interesting idea of something that would be professional development, it would get support somewhere along the line, because that is the general attitude here." Her statement is supported by an interesting example of informal professional development described by another interviewee. This individual explains that college staff are empowered to find their own opportunities for leadership and that interesting ideas, if deemed to have merit, are fully supported. To prove this point, she talked about how she is being supported in her effort to establish a "horse sense for leaders" program at the college.

> One thing that I'm doing in partnership with a person that I have worked with in the skills area is that we both have an interest in horses…so we, together, are both searching for the correct mix of people and beasts to bring to this campus or make available to this campus. A horse sense for leaders program and it's fascinating, not just because of my interest in animals, but because they so mirror your ability to communicate and so we are looking at a couple of trainers and people who are doing similar work to see if it's a good fit with our culture here. So that is an extension of my personal interests and its tangentially related to what I do, but most of the human resource development opportunities that I choose to engage

in are more directly related to what I do because time is precious. I definitely think that this will be encouraged, so far we have not been discouraged and I think its powerful enough content and we will have it developed over the summer when we have an administrative leadership team meeting where we try not to talk about operational issues, but rather about some overarching strength-based leadership strategies and things like that. So we would like to have a horse sense for leaders ready to test drive for that, so that's the goal.

Pushes people beyond their perceived limits

An organizational manager, who has worked with President Harrison for nearly his entire career, believes he does push people to their limits, but is unaware of it. "I don't think he's any more conscious of that than he is with himself. I think he is just compelled and I think he is just so in the moment [*akin to the POS concept of flow*] and in the process of doing things." When the president was asked, he explained that he does not feel he pushes people. Rather, he feels he has high expectations and he works to inspire people to meet or exceed those expectations. "What I try to do is to inspire them to give their best effort toward fulfillment of the mission and vision and if they are inspired and have given their best effort, then we will have accomplished the most that we can accomplish with the resources we have." While other college staff are inspired by the president, they equate his inspiration to pushing. Rather than being seen as a negative, however, one interviewee considers pushing, as conducted by the president, to be a positive.

> I call it leadership by example. He makes it known that it is very important to him as a leader and just as a part of that philosophy, to help people to push themselves. I don't see pushes as a negative, where I know some people might. I see it as more of a lift up from behind and move yourself forward [rather] then pushing back. So I think his pushing is positive.

A college manager agrees with the view that people are pushed by the president, however, he sees it as an extension of his role as institutional "idea man." He explains

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that with all of the president's new ideas, the college, and thereby individuals, are always

pushed to find ways to further the college's impact on the county.

> He has a new idea every five minutes and he shares those ideas with us, so
> we are moving in a lot of directions at once, but not in an inconsistent
> way, but you know for instance, we are going through a lot of major
> building projects, and at the same time he's putting in more programmatic
> things and it never occurs to him to say oh, we better hold off on this
> because we have so much going on and he'll just add, add, add if he
> believes there is a critical need. So yes, and with the state funding, with
> the growth, funding has been fairly limited so with the enrollment growth,
> even some people whose main reason for being here isn't working directly
> with students will tell you they feel they are pressed harder than ever
> because they are not staffed to deal with the enrollment growth. And on
> the level, I think most people would tell you the do feel pressed to their
> limit.

An administrator also feels pushed based on the new initiatives, partnerships, and

programs started by President Harrison. He explains that busyness is never a good excuse

for refusing to take on new initiatives and activities because, according to the president,

the county depends on the college. "There is always a new initiative or a new project

and…he doesn't want to hear that your plate is full. It's, 'we need to meet the needs of our

community and the community's needs are changing'…he's so vibrant and excited about

doing that and…it just reverberates." He also adds that the president's energy is

contagious and pushes people to stretch themselves to keep up.

> He is still excited and still has a lot of energy and it is very evident. So my
> point is that it motivates others because you're always being stretched and
> you're not going to be complacent because he's so excited about the stuff
> and there are opportunities that just trickle down to everybody, so nothing
> is stagnant. There is no doing the same thing yesterday or year after year
> and there will always be new opportunities for you to be engaged and to
> develop your skills and abilities.

In review, the president has stated that people are the primary resource at the college and

this assertion is largely supported through a variety of behaviors. First, the president has

worked to distribute authority throughout the college via a flattened organizational hierarchy and empowerment of people to step outside their roles and find ways to improve college performance. Secondly, he has pushed for diversified input into decision-making and visioning/direction-setting processes through the creation of diverse committees, by gathering input from inside and outside of the college, and utilization of consensus management. Also, the president has pushed professional development as an institutional priority and has established an innovative learning center for faculty, worked to integrate adjuncts into the college culture, and pushed for a culture where informal professional development occurs on a regular basis. Finally, the president has inspired institutional staff to give their best energies and go beyond their perceived limits by modeling positive behaviors, focusing on continuous improvement at the individual and college level, and encouraging all staff to engage in creative and innovative endeavors.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Lesser Abundance

Occasionally Neglects the Well-Being of Organizational Members

Works around people to ensure goals are met

With an organization the size of community college, not everyone will buy into the organizational culture, especially in a college that values hard-driving, self starters and individuals eager to contribute to the development of the organization as a whole. A respondent expressed that there are people at the college there "just for a paycheck", but also insists that if they would look "deeper", they would find great opportunities for development, growth, and connection. "Some people are just here for a paycheck and there's nothing wrong with that because that's what you work to do, you work to get paid. But if you ever look deeper, sometimes you will find some good stuff if you ever take the

opportunity." An organizational member adds, "We all inherit people though, and so you try and develop them and at some point, we recognize and understand that they may not have the potential for what your expectations may be. They may not have the same expectations of themselves as we do." When asked about how she deals with such individuals in her unit, she indicated that her focus is on making a place for people who are contributors.

> You know, I think that becomes where the three of us as vice presidents and any of the twenty-six other administrators and directors come in. I think while you need a lot of members on the team and you need some individuals who, and I'll describe them that they're steady, and they come in at 8 clock in the morning and they're there to get the job done every day and they are very happy doing what they're doing and they see their role and how they contribute to it. So it's not like there's a passive resistance or an undercurrent to it, but the question is, how do you help people to see that they all have a place?

The researcher asked a follow-up question based on that answer focusing in on what happens to individuals who are not steady and don't measure up to the high expectations. The individual explained that while uncommon, these incidences have presented problems for ICC. In short, the college often ends up trying to circumvent these individuals in order to accomplish the goals and mission of the college.

> We are not very good at that [dealing with non-steady, lower performers]…We aren't very good at that. You know, sometimes we do and we are able to, but sometimes you just try to add some members to the team that will help move that along and quite frankly, sometimes you just end up working around them, but I think it's natural and we're just not that good at dealing with it.

Doesn't address potential burnout concerns

Iota Community College is a hard-driving institution and this is one of the main reasons it has had the tremendous impact on its county and region. The college takes its cue from President Harrison and a respondent expresses some concern that perhaps he is

pushing himself and the college too hard. "He sees process and he reminds me of that and checks in on me, which I find extraordinary. He is not detached and quite frankly, I worry about him falling over from exhaustion, because the man works very, very hard. He really, really does." She adds that one of her major concerns is that at some point, he will burn out. To prevent this, she wants him to slow down and reflect instead of constantly moving forward.

> I worry about him getting burned out. So not that he slows down, but I think he needs to maybe not feel so personally responsible for everything. I don't think it's not that he doesn't empower so much as the amount of authority that is housed in him. I think really a lot of it is personality and I don't know how you get that out of him. I mean, everything is set up horizontally, but I think he has a tendency to overdo everything. He talks too long at commencement and sometimes he doesn't sort of know when to stop and I think sometimes maybe he needs to stop a process and maybe reflect a little bit more, because he sees so much that needs to be done.

Her concerns, however, also extend to the institution as a whole based on the fact that people are inspired by and want to emulate him. Looking around, she sees an institution that teeters on exhaustion at times as well as a place where people need to be cared for.

> I think that the school can and does sometimes verge on the state of exhaustion. So that would be my only concern about his management style. I mean, I like the fact that he gives people room and he empowers them and he is able to acknowledge a wide variety of giving to the school and of the different abilities that people have and his able to see that, but I do worry about the stress level sometimes, because people do really, really work hard here… I think people need to be cared for here because of the atmosphere…and I think that he gets reminded by other people that downtime may not be a bad thing.

The issue of how burnout is avoided or dealt with was met with mixed answers, but essentially, indications are that the college has not had to deal with that issue yet. When asked about initiatives or programs, one interviewee indicated that nothing currently exists, but the college should probably look into creating something. "With

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anything, you've always got to re-energize and it's not that each individual doesn't, but that is something that could really be addressed." The respondent also feels that while there are some stress relief activities like staff luncheons, the best thing the president could do is to model behaviors that would allow for stress and tension release across the college.

> I think there is a cycle where people get tired and then revived and they get tired and then revived. You don't hear about people leaving too often because it is so comfortable here, but I don't know, I would almost think that he needs to address that himself for us. Someone has to talk to him about taking a vacation or stuff like that. You know, leading by example might be better for me and I see our office staff getting stressed out at the times and people are stretched thin….

Another interviewee believes that exhaustion is a national epidemic and the result of trying to do more with less. Despite this, she indicates that the college needs to be more proactive in caring for the institutional staff.

> I am not aware that it has been addressed and I do think it is potentially a problem and one of my problems, I think it's almost everywhere nowadays in certain organizations, people have left but the workload has not changed and expectations have changed or risen, but the people power hasn't changed. I think that is a problem here as well and I don't see any cure for it because of the nature of business as a whole. I think that's the way it is out in "the real world." Everybody's trying to do more with less resources and that is one of the reasons why people have bags under their eyes down here.

An organizational member believes that two issues are important in preventing burnout: person-organization fit and opportunities for growth. He explains that if people don't fit the culture of the college, burnout is more likely and suggests that they find employment elsewhere. He also feels that advancement opportunities, like the ones he has had, work to prevent burnout by providing chances for growth.

> I think it's probably that some people who are not the right fit for the college and even for those who are the right, its just about the level of

energy that is necessary and I think each person will need to deal with burnout in their own way and one of the things that the college is good for is I now have a new job. I now have a new job, and it's not that I was burned out from the other job, but you know, when the opportunity came up and the college did a national search, I was allowed to apply for the position and I was selected and accepted the job and my point is that as an internal employee, you have options and opportunities for other jobs here on campus. Even for staff, we have what we call a progression plan and you can move from department to department if you want to move out, but even within your current position, you can progress out, which will require different and new skill sets, and which will require some professional development and some education and so those are some ways to help prevent burnout. The other thing is that there is just a myriad of committees that you can get involved in that are outside the scope of your day-to-day job.

In summary, it appears that the college values hard-driving staff, but struggles with individuals who do not share the same internal drive. In some instances, the people appear to simply be worked around instead of integrated more fully into areas where their talents could be used. Also, burnout, quite frankly, appears to be the elephant in the room nobody is talking about. Obviously, President Harrison is a unique individual with a tremendous amount of energy, but even hard-driving individuals find it difficult to keep up with him. The college would benefit from having the president model that downtime "is a good thing" and establish initiatives designed to deal with the looming issue.

Chapter VII

Theta Community College – An Institution Focused on Becoming Abundant, but Hindered by Lack of a Grand Vision, Conflicting Values, and Distant Leadership

Introduction

Theta Community College proved to be an interesting and useful case site for this exploration into the presidential behaviors associated with a college's movement towards and away from abundance. President Johnson took over the reigns of the college and has been working to undo the work of two predecessors who believed strongly in a hierarchical approach to leadership. She has been operating from a participatory approach to leadership, working to push the college towards enhanced performance and positivity by filtering leadership outside of her office, utilizing various tactics to increase representative input, and seeking to repair rifts between the administration and faculty. While the results are mixed, the college appears to be moving, generally, in the right direction.

The researcher found three categories of presidential behaviors associated with movement towards greater abundance. These included working to create a more inclusive and connected college environment, developing a culture focused on positivity, and engaging in a person-centered, empowering approach to leadership. Additionally, three categories of behaviors associated with institutional movement towards lesser abundance emerged from the analysis. These included not creating a truly safe and inclusive college, not fully instilling positivity into the culture, and engaging in a detached leadership style.

Indicators of Abundance Results

Based upon responses from interviewees, Theta and Iota Community Colleges were the most active colleges in regards to external constituencies. Quantitative responses to partnership questions, however, indicate that the institution has approximately sixty partnerships, with around 50% initiated by the college. Additionally, the majority of the partnerships (85-90%) include only the college and a single entity rather than multiple partners forming a partnership hub. Finally, the college is contacted once or twice a month for partnering opportunities and five to six times a year to connect existing partners with potential partners.

The majority of interviewees feel TCC is a great place to work, a statement supported by the relatively short time period that administrative positions remain open. According to the survey, high-level administrative positions remain open for an average of eighty five days while mid-level administrative positions remain unfilled for just under four months. In regards to professional development, 75-80% of administrators took advantage of formal opportunities last year, but only 40-50% of full-time faculty, 20-25% of classified staff, and 10-15% of part-time staff participated in professional development activities in 2007.

Information on private grants is mixed as the high number of contributors indicates the college is actively pursuing private funds, but the low monetary figures show that TCC has not gained enough private funding to truly impact organizational operations. The survey respondent, when asked about the number of private contributors, explained that in an average year, the college receives funds from nearly five hundred

separate entities. Although a large number of donors, the accumulated funds constitute, on average, 1.4% of the operating budget.

In an effort to ensure that administrators, faculty, and students have access to cutting edge technology and tools, TCC has made significant investments in technology over the past five years. Since 2003-2004, the technology budget has increased from $4,500,000 to more than $8,000,000 in 2006-2007 (with more than seven million as of March 2008). Additionally, technology enhancement is a priority at Theta as the director of information technology reports directly to the cabinet and technology is listed as a priority in multiple sources. Specifically, technology is addressed in the upcoming strategic plan, which will include technology as a strategic planning area. Additionally, technology enhancement is serving as a focus area in one of the college's continuous improvement projects.

Of all the survey results, the information on workforce contracts provides the greatest support for indications that the president has pushed the college to become more involved with the local service area. According to the results, the college has an average of more than four hundred contracts in a given year and already offered services to nearly three hundred and fifty different entities as of March 2008. The survey respondent also provided insight into the breadth of representation, providing information that contracts include emergency services and first responders, manufacturing, skilled trades, service organizations, non-profits, law firms, automotive related services, governmental agencies, military facilities, and many more. The survey respondent also explained that the college has achieved a 2.9% business penetration rate.

President Johnson and some of the interviewees spoke of the need for TCC to provide a gateway to education for the underserved student populations within Theta County and information provided in the survey support this claim. The survey asked about the number of students provided with grants or scholarships (not loans) and results show that approximately six thousand, five hundred students receive aid of some form each year. This aid appears to reach a substantial number of high-need students as the numbers indicate that 70% of high-need students receive non loan-based aid. The college foundation is one of the primary reasons that so many high need students are provided aid as the Theta Foundation is responsible for delivering more than nine hundred grants a year. Also, the college has reached a point where substantial number of low SES students (19% of the college population vs. 12.1% of the service area population) and a representative percentage of minority students (17% of the college's population vs. 19.2% of the service area population) are served.

Results from the survey are mixed, but are also, generally speaking, in alignment with information provided by interviewees. Indications are that President Johnson is an external president, but focused on providing extensive educational opportunities. The sheer volume of private contributors, workforce contracts, and financial aid opportunities for high-need students support the assertion that Theta is intricately connected to the community and that students in need are not precluded from attending TCC. However, information from the survey also sheds light on the fact that the college has not been able to fully leverage partnership and network opportunities, private funding, or human capital outside of administration. Results from this survey are even more valuable when compared to information from the interviewees as filtered through the abundance

framework and corresponding coding schemes. Finally, this survey provides insight into the push-pull effect that exists within the college and is preventing the institution from reaching classification as an abundant college.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Greater Abundance

Working to Create a More Inclusive and Connected College

Pushes decision-making and direction-setting outside the president's office

While Dr. Johnson's predecessor was an autocratic leader, she has worked to instill a new understanding of leadership, one that includes gathering input from individuals throughout Theta Community College (TCC). One respondent explained that her version of leadership is not based upon strict lines of hierarchy, but rather upon interaction and communication designed to transcend traditional bureaucratic structures. "She often talks about…a circle. You know, when you refer to up or down, she'll correct you and tell you she sees it as more collaborative …her ideal [would be] that people are collaborating across departments…and resolving issues at the lowest possible levels." Another interviewee concurs that the broader approach to leadership reflects the openness she wants to see guiding the college. "Her goal is to have a culture that people can come together to do a common job for the betterment of the institution, that the hats are taken off…there is no hierarchy…we all become leaders in our own individual areas, which makes us a leader of the college." An organizational staff member explains that she sees the desire to increase input from people throughout the college as giving people a voice. She serves as the note taker in organizational meetings and states, "everybody has a voice – that it's not just one person saying this is how we are going to do it. It's a collective,

that we all have the chance to put our two cents in…it's definitely consensus and she

wants to hear what everybody has to say."

In an effort to elicit input from a variety of groups, an organizational manager

noted that a number of councils and committees, all charged with providing input, have

been created and/or expanded under her presidency. "We've got a number of councils or

committees at the highest levels of the college…we've got our [strategic direction-setting

councils], and we have the cabinet, and…she's working to articulate a more seamless

discussion between those various groups." He went on to describe one of the specific

committees designed to provide input to the president and the cabinet. "[We have] the

administrators committee, which is all of the managers, that is anybody who has

supervisory responsibility, she regularly meets with the group to solicit ideas and also

provide feedback." Another committee the researcher became aware of during the

interviews was the academic council. A long-tenured respondent explained that this

group consists of all the chairs within the college and largely exists due to the president's

suggestion.

> We were saying for years that we needed to get together and meet and it
> was the chairs coming together and meeting with Dr. [Johnson] and that
> started actually last summer. There were a lot of very unhappy chairs and
> we actually had several different meetings with Dr. [Johnson], where she
> met with us individually to say okay, what are you people unhappy about?
> And out of that meeting, the academic council was born and she said, 'I
> can't keep meeting with all of you every time. I've got a pretty busy
> schedule, but why don't you all start meeting and then pass your
> information to the deans and the deans can pass it up to the provost and
> can bring issues to the president's cabinet.

Another interviewee agrees that the academic council has been a critical addition to the

college as it allows individuals to work towards greater unit, division, and college

productivity and effectiveness. "We're wondering why we never had one before, because

were finding all sorts of things that need to be done as a whole group of chairs together and I think that will make our processes work a little smoother and consistently across the campus." While this is a new group, the president provided an example of a group she initiated at the onset of her presidency to increase input from throughout the college. In fact, she left herself and the cabinet out of the meetings so that individuals could work without any perceived influence from the executive team.

> When I first arrived at [Theta]…one of the first things that we did was to create the institutional development committee and the purpose of that group was to create a grassroots, broad-based group that everyone in the college had a representative on and there wasn't even a representative from the cabinet on that group. And that's not true now, but it was then and we purposely didn't put anybody on that group that reported to me because I didn't want it to be perceived that I was driving the decisions…and its not just in administration and not just from faculty, but from all areas of staff and all of the unions are represented. The security personnel and the maintenance personnel. It's very broad-based, and this was our beginning of our journey to involve people and involving them in decision-making across the college

Obviously, changing a culture takes time and a college manager notes "…she sought to push decision-making to the people most closely associated with the places where decisions need to be made in the organization and I think we have made great progress in that regard, but [we] still have room to improve." An administrator believes that dispersing decision-making through committees is both logical and necessary so the college can grow and operate effectively. Explaining that college operations, which include two campuses and off-campus sites, would be hampered if only executive team members were responsible for decision-making, she praises the efforts to increase the number and importance of committees across the college.

> There are a variety of groups that have people from different levels involved in that and not every executive team member is involved in all of those things, I'm certainly not involved in every piece or every aspect. So

there is so much, we like to say around here, there are so many committees going on that if the executive team were the ones always making the goal-setting decisions, we'd never get out of meetings.

One respondent, when asked about where decision-making occurs, provided an example of how she has the authority to make decisions impacting the entire college. "[We have] over eight hundred clinical contracts with healthcare agencies in [college state] and in [neighboring state] …That's [legally] binding on this entire institution…and it's my signature, it's not the president's, it's not the vice presidents." Another interviewee provided a similar example – one in which the college had to respond to state and national authorities' concerns about private lending. She shared that she was given authority and responsibility for responding and the president stayed out of the matter after sending the request to her office.

> I'm sure you heard about the lending fiasco that occurred from some private lenders and we had to provide some documentation very quickly. …She got the request and it trickled down from her and I look at that as a positive to say I pass that on to [me] and I trust her. She can take it forward. I did do a follow-up memo with her to let her know this is how I responded…She sends things for me on a yearly basis that you have to set up this report to that department and she signs off and I've offered to show her, but she hasn't asked to see it.

While the previous president worked to establish a vision and then push it out to the college, Dr. Johnson has created the structures necessary to get input from the entire college in an effort to develop a shared institutional vision. One respondent shared a metaphor that the president uses about gathering at the family table. The concept behind the metaphor is that everyone meets at the table to discuss and come up with a decision based upon the conversation.

> I really think she wants to meet and her metaphor is that we all need to gather around the table. Let's get to the table. It's like what the family does when they're trying to figure out where to go on vacation…so the

metaphor she uses is ok, let's sit down at the table and figure this out, what does everyone want to do and after she has listened to everyone, she helps them arrive at a consensus that's respectful of the multiple points of view and allows people to see, that we have to follow a vision…And by the time she has articulated it, everyone at the table has reached the same conclusion. Damn, I'm not going to get my way because it's clear we have to go another way and by the time she says it, you already know where we're going. So in that sense, it's a participatory level of exploration that allows people to discover a common solution.

As indicated by an interviewee, the college has not achieved the level of buy-in the president wants, but according to President Johnson, it is not out of a lack of opportunities. She talked at length about the forums and other opportunities that all staff have to influence decisions or directions at the college.

We have a review where the college can attend a meeting and it's not just a matter of reviewing the policy on the website and give us feedback. You can do that, but we do have meetings, Chris, we have open forums and we're looking at this new policy in whatever and we want your feedback on this policy and by the time that policy goes to our Board of Trustees, its gone college wide. Now, if you didn't care enough to read it or to go to the meetings. If you didn't care enough to do that, then it's your choice, but if this is something that you cared about, you have a chance to influence it.

Another respondent agreed with the president that myriad opportunities exist, but that she cannot force people to participate. "I can ask this division or this particular area, but if nobody wants to participate or serve or be part of the thing…that's no fault of her's, that's no fault of the desire to make it [gathering input] as diverse as what we can make it."

The researcher was presented with evidence that there are numerous opportunities for participation in both direction-setting and decision-making groups during the all-campus meeting. As Dr. Johnson was ending her portion of the all-campus talk, she described her vision of a fully collaborative college and feels the team-based management (TBM) teams, continuous improvement accreditation model, and development of a pluralistic leadership model that will assist Theta in achieving this

vision. Dr. Johnson asked a faculty member to talk about her work on developing the new leadership model and how it will work to create even more leadership opportunities by pushing responsibility for decisions throughout the college. After the faculty member finished her presentation, the president thanked her and then asked for all individuals who are currently or have worked in college planning committees, team-based management teams, any of the administrative committees, or any other organizational group designed to craft and or implement major organizational efforts to stand and be recognized. The researcher looked around and noticed that nearly all of the approximately three hundred people stood up to be recognized. While some of the committees are not voluntary, the team-based management initiative is and indications are that a majority of individuals are taking advantage of opportunities for making decisions and influencing direction.

Established team-based management

Designed as an extension of the Total Quality Management (TQM) initiative popular in higher education throughout the late 1990s and into the 21st, team-based management (TBM) is a process that intentionally creates teams consisting of individuals from different units, departments, and divisions as well as management levels. The goal is development of broad-based solutions to problems within an environment of equality and devoid of traditional hierarchy. One respondent explains the benefits from the process include more than solutions to problems. She believes that the process is important because it provides a formal structure congruent with the president's declarations about expanding leadership and providing opportunities for "little wigs" to engage in directing the trajectory of the college. "It's not just the big wigs that are going to solve all the problems and figure things out, because she's established this environment

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that small groups are going to tackle small problems, and perhaps those small problems

will help fix some of the big problems." A college manager also sees impact beyond

simple solutions to small and moderate problems within the college. She believes that the

consistent interactions between team members is responsible for creating a stronger

college; opportunities that did not exist in the past.

> Certainly the primary purpose of it [TBM] is to make us a better
> institution, but an added bonus has been that really for the first time,
> people from different groups are working together for an extended period
> of time for an academic year and we might have had some in-service
> programs before, but typically, academic services was one and student
> services was another, and we would get together for a day and then we
> would walk out of the meeting and it would be gone. So [team-based
> management] teams have done, I think they're very carefully configured so
> that there is representation from any number of different workgroups on
> these committees.

Another respondent views team-based management as especially important to staff

members usually excluded from leadership opportunities. In fact, she sees it as a psuedo-

professional development session.

> I think for staff, [team-based management] is huge. I had a staff member,
> who is the chair of one of those who was chosen as a champion person
> who oversees the committee to lead and she is a support staff member and
> I think she'd learned so much from that experience because she got so
> frustrated and said people are not doing what they're supposed to be doing.
> And I said, wow now you know what it's like to supervise. So I think by
> having those variety of opportunities is certainly providing professional
> development for people.

An administrator also believes that classified staff members benefit the most from TBM

and has been excited by the dynamics of the groups and how individuals outside

management have been empowered. She has seen that individuals within the groups are

grasping the opportunity to help solve institutional problems and participate in the

institutional decision-making.

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I have to tell you that the real worker bees and people with ideas were folk who are staff members. For example, we had the receptionist in [college unit] and she has been here forever and she was one of the champions of the team and she had a lot of ideas and took a lot of leadership within the group and we have a marketing person here who reports to someone who reports to someone here in marketing, so she just started here not too long ago and she took a lot of leadership with the group. So I thought the dynamics were great, no one sought, no one tried to take over the group because of their position.

One interviewee feels that one of the benefits of team-based management is how it has primed the college for transitioning into the new continuous improvement based accreditation model.

It was really pretty clever for her to bring in [consultant] and to do the [team-based management] training, because I think that really set us up to understand what the [new accreditation] process is like and how you can take the problems and cut them into little pieces and address them as small groups, addressing a small piece and eventually it comes together and the big picture comes together. You can address the problems and the issues and then solve them and move ahead to the next problem or issue, so I thought that was, in hindsight, that really prepared us very well to accept the concept of [the accreditation] startup and that was really clever.

Working to create organizational and workgroup value alignment

From the start of her tenure at TCC, President Johnson has worked to create a more open and inclusive organization and feels that by increasing input, representation, and influence from non-executive college staff into organization level values and decisions, values driving behaviors and attitudes at the subgroup levels will more closely resemble organizational values.

Those of us who really believe that an open and collaborative environment, which takes more time, not less time, is harder, not easier, takes more work, not less work, if we really believe in that within the organization level, that values that are chiseled out with pen or on stone or in board meetings or wherever will actually reflect more and more of the group values…gradually and progressively those group values should be closer to the organizational level values, and there should be much less difference between them.

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An administrator agrees it takes time for subgroup and organizational values to mesh and

perceives that the college is in a transitory state where "siloed" thinking is turning into

organizational thinking.

> This school is in that moment…between situations in which they are in
> their silos or they've learned to be a member of the larger
> community…many [are] comfortable in their silo, [but] I think there is a
> critical mass recognizing the silo is not the operative way of being a full
> member of the community

Other staff members feel that values are already congruent and one respondent states,

"Well, each department has its own philosophy and vision, but it's in lockstep with the

institution; we dance to the same tune all the time." An institutional manager agrees that

the values are intertwined; not only in speech, but also in action. "One of the things I

have noticed here is that we have our core values and our mission statement and they are

everywhere and people talk about them all the time and we sort of infuse our core values

into everything." According to another interviewee, there is a good reason that

workgroup values and organizational values are aligned – that being that initial attempts

by President Johnson to establish organizational values and priorities are based upon

input from the various subgroups. "Those core values grew out [of] responses…that came

out in the institutional development committee and other committees so they were

generated that way…[and] those were the core values that the institution, that the people

in the institution wanted to see happen." A college manager provided an example of how

the organizational values have found their way into the daily operations within

workgroups. According to him, the degree to which this happens differs by division, but

the structure has been established to encourage alignment.

[President Johnson] probably spent two years, three years repeating over and over again these are our values, this is what we stand for, and everything we do should emanate from these values. My division, student services, has implemented [organizational values acronym] in my own division by even having awards by nominating employees that embody one of the core values and let's give an award to that person. Some of my departments [heads]…had a [organizational values acronym] workgroup with her staff where they would talk about, well here is what the president says and how she sees [organizational values acronym], our core values, and here is how our boss, has talked about it within this division, so how do we implement these core values right here within our [department]? They shared it, they had meetings on it, they came up with examples, they shared it with each other and read it aloud and tried to figure out, within the [office], the core values, so they're figuring out how to implement, how to take broad organizational ideals down to the departmental level and even to the personal level. Even now with our performance appraisals, the [department head] asked how have you exemplified the core values at the [department] level?

In an effort to assess whether organizational and workgroup values are largely aligned, the researcher attended an all-campus meeting. As the meeting began, President Johnson explained that all college goals must come back to the goal of helping students achieve a better life (a statement she repeated on numerous occasions) and explained that the college is the primary point of access for the majority of students in Theta County. She then talked about the workforce and community service division of the college and praised the unit's efforts in increasing opportunities for students to move into higher-paying, more stable careers. She asked him and any of his staff present to stand and be recognized for their efforts. She then moved into discussions of student retention and talked about the college's approval of a title III grant as well as work on the first-year experience and was hopeful that these two initiatives will help students have "a banner first year." As each unit and major project was discussed, she made sure to

include information on how the underlying goal of meeting student needs was

being met at the specific workgroup level.

Approaches mistakes, failures, and difficulties as part of a growth process

The president cringed when asked about how she views failures and how the

institution responds to situations classified as failures. She did so because, as she

explained, she perceives mistakes and failures to be part of a continuous learning process

designed to achieve incremental progress.

> That's a loaded word [failure] when it comes to our goal-setting because
> our goal-setting is really pretty progressive. Let me give you an example.
> For example, a certain department, and this is hypothetical, let's say a
> certain department has a certain goal for a certain amount of enrollment
> increase and didn't meet that goal. For a certain enrollment increase, we
> wouldn't consider that a failed goal. We would consider, obviously, ways
> of changing business and ways of changing how we're doing it.

One respondent provided an example of how the president's approach to dealing with

yet-to-be reached goals plays out. He explains that instead of attacking people, she

prefers to attack the problem and find a way to reach the end goal.

> I think we've all realized that there's not been enough focus on the
> retention and success of our students as we've experienced incredible
> growth over the last ten years, the focus has been on just trying to keep up
> with the enrollment growth and like with the other situation that I just
> described, we've been fortunate enough to get a title III grant and part of
> that discussion has been an acknowledgment that look, we haven't done
> what we need to do as an institution and we need to evolve and mature and
> focus on the other issues that might have gotten short-shrifted during the
> past and so again I think her leadership style is one to say, ok, this is a
> problem, lets not find ways to point fingers at people, but instead let's try
> to tackle it.

Another interviewee asserted that the president's approach to handling mistakes has

benefited the college and allowed people to take risks for the sake of college learning and

advancement. "She allows people to take risks. Now does that mean accountability goes

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out the window, no, but when one takes risks, one's position is not in jeopardy." A long-tenured administrator agreed and explained how the president's non-retributional approach to mistakes has created an environment more open to creativity and innovation. He also contrasted President Johnson's approach to the previous president.

> Making a mistake doesn't mean you are going to be fired on the spot. Previous administration believed that if you made a mistake, you could be fired on the spot and they sent that signal and they [college staff] were terrified of doing anything that might involve risk. What [President Johnson] has said very concretely is it's okay to take risks, I trust you... We're going to learn from it and move forward because we are a team.

According to various college staff, President Johnson also looks at mistakes from a strategic perspective. Noting that the college has struggled with student retention, one interviewee stated that the president looks at mistakes as a catalyst for growth and change. "She provided the environment in which…[we could] move forward with these ideas that will help us to become a more effective institution in student learning assessment…what she did what was she tried to use the difficulties to allow us to grow and change." Yet another staff member believes the non-retributional approach to mistakes has allowed for culture change. In the past, individuals throughout the college vigorously engaged in finger pointing, however, those self-destructive behaviors have been limited during her tenure. "There is the ability now not be afraid that there would be retaliation and I believe it's helped to stop some of the finger-pointing…it's like okay. Let's accept this, let's admit this, [and] we can now discuss and learn from it." Learning was also mentioned by another respondent as a strategic benefit of the president's approach to viewing mistakes. She elaborated on this approach by talking about a "get out of jail free" initiative used by individuals when they make mistakes.

She issued [forgiveness] cards a while back so that if you made a mistake, you could just send [the] card. I think her philosophy on mistakes is that if you learn from them, that's good, if you didn't, that's not too good. I don't think anybody has to be afraid of making a mistake because she makes them and says I blew it on this. She doesn't play a 'gotcha' exercise.

One interviewee also talked about a goof award and the forgiveness card, explaining that they are tangible indications that the college should forgive individuals and maintain an environment where people are allowed to make mistakes. While the goof award no longer exists, forgiveness cards are still in circulation to ensure that staff feel safe in making creative attempts to better serve students.

There is the [goof award], but then there's also the [forgiveness] card, so she understands that people make mistakes and that the only way that you can learn is by making your mistakes and evaluating what happens, what went wrong, and she is not the type of individual to jump down your throat if you make a mistake. And she sees it as learning and change opportunities and I think on the card that says something like, I was trying to do something to increase student success, but I [fell short].

President Johnson has worked, according to interviewees, to change the retributional culture of TCC and the researcher decided to examine the two humor-based methods utilized by the president – the forgiveness cards and the goof award. Indications are that the forgiveness card was introduced at TCC during the opening week all-campus meeting in 2006. Dr. Johnson provided the cards via the intranet with the idea that "it's ok to make a mistake because we are all human." Apparently, the cards were used primarily during the first semester they were introduced; however, a few individuals are still using them. Another change technique introduced during that all-campus session was the goof award. This "award" involved a mock ceremony in which people were nominated and received a "trophy" based upon a gaffe made during the previous year. The philosophy

behind the award was "Sometimes we get so busy and involved, and for all of our good intentions, there are times that we blunder, bungle, flounder and just plain [mess] up."

Increased external input and relationships

According to one respondent, the president can frequently be found out in the community working with and on different boards and interacting with power players. Although not privy to all interactions, the respondent asserts that the publicity she has received is tangible proof that she maintains a consistent presence in the external community.

> She's been very active and all you have to do is pick up a newspaper and you can see where she's working with [local group] or with groups in town. She's on the boards of several organizations and whether that's an honorary position or not, I don't know, but she's been sitting on the boards of several nonprofit organizations in town [and it] seems as though she's very well tuned to the infrastructure in town so that she has access to leaders in the community.

When asked about how active the president is in establishing partnerships, a college administrator remarked that she isn't. He explained that she is seeking out collaborative relationships, an activity in line with her open and connected approach to leadership.

> I don't think she would ever use the term partnerships, she uses the word collaboration and one of our major initiatives throughout the institution is to build collaborative relationships. Everything we are working on, from an initiative with the [local art museum], the unions in our area, the town organizations of many of the small villages that surround the [city] area and the [second campus city] area, she is constantly encouraging us to develop collaborative relationships. Partnerships sounds like a transaction, if you do this for me, I'll do this for you. Dr. [Johnson] isn't a transactional leader, its not if you do this for me, you'll get a raise, if you do that, you'll get fired. She doesn't work transactionally. She assumes that we are all guided by a common mission just as she is and so the primary goal for her is to develop those relationships within which, success occurs. And so partnership isn't a word that I hear from her, she talks about collaborative relationships. You know, you don't have a partnership with your brother. You don't think of your brothers or sisters as partners.

A college manager has worked extensively with the president on building external "collaborative relationships" and stressed this is an area of strength. He feels that she has been a visionary in working with the local four-year colleges to create a regional consortium of higher education designed to improve educational and employment opportunities.

> [She is trying] to reach out and work with the higher education institutions to realize efficiencies, [to] work together on academic programming [and] one of the very specific things she is trying to do right now is to develop applied baccalaureate degrees with the [local research university] and [local university], which are very closely situated, and so that is a very real discussion that is happening right now and we are probably going to form a [regional] consortium of higher education institutions and she has been real integral in moving that concept forward.

A new "collaborative relationship" mentioned by multiple college staff revolves around a college extension center located downtown. One college manager extolled the importance of the new extension center, located within the local one-stop (unemployment office), and explained that it provides a local presence on "the other side of the river." She explained that although Theta Community College is closer to downtown than the local four-year university, the river acts as a natural barrier responsible for steering individuals away from TCC.

> We now have a presence based on a conversation she had with commissioners. The [unemployment center] is a one-stop shop for somebody who has lost their job. So they do counseling, career counseling, things like that…we actually offer classes in the site where you get your unemployment. You have to go to the [unemployment center] so it was a great move for a campus which is five minutes away from downtown venue as opposed to the [four-year university], which is more like fifteen minutes and you would be amazed at how many people would say that they are closer, because there's a river between us. And it's like we're at the end of the world…so this was huge to get a visibility, a presence right there.

Another interviewee added that the extension site located within the one-stop is crucial because it provides access to higher education for individuals who would never step on a college campus. She sees it as a gateway to education and praises Dr. Johnson for establishing the connection.

> I believe we're providing access to learning opportunities to citizens of [region of state], who would never ever step foot on this campus or a four-year university. It just is forbidden territory to them, but when you go there, it speaks volumes. Most of the courses that are being offered there are for credit and towards a degree and another offering [is] developmental education. I believe computer courses, and again we're talking about a population that for the most part [doesn't] have computers in the home, and we set up, I think three different computer labs. Some of the composition one and composition two courses to ecology and sociology courses for those who are tenuously thinking about getting a degree....you can do our LPN to ADN progression program and become an R.N. and then you got the ADN to BSN program offered at many of the institutions where we have articulation agreements and we have it with all of them.

In addition to creating relationships with other higher education institutions, organizational agencies, and businesses, the president stressed that the most important external stakeholder group the college works with is the student body. She constantly emphasizes to faculty that they are the most crucial link to the external environment and all college staff must work to fully develop relationships with students in an effort to increase their chances for success.

> Everybody who reports to me has a responsibility to be in the community. Faculty members are the most influential people reaching the community, because every student is a community member and an external stakeholder in some way. So living and breathing those values for higher education and changing the world is the best way to reach those external stakeholders.

An administrator provided an example of a relationship Theta is establishing, on a yearly basis, with low performing high schools in the area. The president understands that these

students are in desperate need of higher education and envisions TCC as their gateway

"to a better life."

> We are taking the lowest performing high school in the [city] public
> schools and we're going to offer, and that's a real low-income school,
> [local high school], we're going to offer all the students in that school who
> only get partial financial aid, we're going to give them a scholarship. All
> they have to do is graduate high school and they will get to come to
> [Theta] for free as long as they get some financial aid and everyone in that
> school does.

According to college staff, not only has the president worked effectively to

develop new collaborative relationships, but also to work more effectively with existing

partners and external advisors. A respondent explained that under the previous

administration, the relationship with a local four-year university became strained to the

point where the institutions were not on speaking terms. She notes that President Johnson

has worked to not only rebuild bridges, but also to improve and expand the relationship

for the betterment of both institutions.

> Prior to her coming, there was a great deal of animosity between the [four-
> year university] and [Theta], over two past presidents who had huge egos
> and lots of innuendos have gone on to the point that several years ago
> [Theta] went to the [state higher education board] and was fighting the
> [four-year university] and the [four-year university] went to [state higher
> education board] and was fighting [Theta] and it became a very public
> spectacle. When Dr. [Johnson] came on board, and with a new president at
> the [four-year university], she really reached out and has worked very hard
> to establish excellent relationships with the [four-year university], she and
> the president at the [four-year university] are definitely on a first name
> basis, have a comfortable relationship with each other, understand each
> other and the [four-year university] was recently awarded our community
> partner award for all of the work that the college and the [four-year
> university] are doing together. We're sharing faculty, Fulbright Scholars,
> they bought our old buildings, it's just, you know, that's a partnership that
> just had to be rectified.

An interviewee also mentioned that the college is actively seeking input from external

advisory groups and has even created a structure to increase communication between the

different schools and the local workforce. "Each school on campus has focus group advisory councils…an external group that advises the school on the programs and educational requirements needed for students to succeed in the external world…[so] if something needs to be changed, that's the channel of input." To provide greater context and understanding of how the external advisory groups work, he provided an example from engineering.

> …So say engineering, within engineering, you have architects and they would have a committee that would be composed of people and architecture firms, planning firms who advise them on the curriculum and the importance of the degrees and if something is shifting, nursing has an advisory committee and so does business. There's somewhere close to two to three hundred people that are on various advisory committees from the community and they definitely give their input to the college so that we can meet the needs of the community and the workplace environment

In summary, President Johnson possesses a vision of diffused leadership and input and believes that these efforts will result in the provision of increased access to and success for students. She has worked tirelessly to create the various structures necessary to facilitate increased representation – including the creation of administrative and college wide councils and the introduction of team-based management into the campus. These structures have helped create an environment where organizational level values are influenced from the bottom up and have been integrated into daily activities at the workgroup levels. Additionally, her positive approach to mistakes that views failures as part of a continual learning process has created an environment where college members provide time and energy into creative activities designed to impact student success. Additionally, her time in the community has paid off with new collaborative relationships, expanded opportunities for students, and external advisory groups working directly with the college.

Attempting to Establish Positivity as a Cultural Value

Ensured continual movement towards improved institutional functioning

Comments from many of the interviewees indicate that the culture of the college was dysfunctional at best under the previous administration; however, no quote sums up the situation better than one from a long-tenured organizational member. "I mean we were ready to self-destruct before, so we very much needed someone to come in and help us to grow and change and she changed the culture, the values, but also the behaviors internally as well." Another respondent explains that the reputation under the previous administration was one of pure dictatorship and punishment and that he was warned by ex-Theta employees to stay away from the institution. "When I used to be at [local university] and was looking at this job, people who used to be at [Theta] told me you don't want to touch that position, that place is just totally dictatorial, you make a mistake your head gets put on a platter." An administrator added that the culture enforced order at the cost of innovation, creativity, and freethinking. "In the old culture you didn't do anything until you got a direct order and then you did exactly what you were told to do, no more, no less." A college manager added that in addition to doing only what you were told, people needed to keep substantial documentation to protect themselves from retaliation. "When I got here, it was a whole different mindset, it was how can I protect myself, mentality, and here's the stack of documentation so you can't come back and screw me, I've got proof." The interviewee who noted the college was ready to "self-destruct", believes the board was searching for a president who would expand leadership to others. He provides some insight into how tightly controlled the college was under the previous administration.

I believe that [culture change] is one of the top five reasons that [President Johnson] was hired. We had a president who was very authoritarian, wanted all the decision to go through him, it was clearly a top-down oriented administration and there were very few people involved in the decision-making process besides the president and even the vice-presidents had to get the approval of the president. Until about two years before he retired, we even had to have every purchase order signed by the president. So when the president left, I believe the Board of Trustees were very interested in more decentralized decision-making and involvement from everybody in the college, so Dr. [Johnson's] charge, I believe, was to assist in changing the culture of management and decision-making in the college.

According to a college manager, staff understood things would be different from the outset. She explained that Dr. Johnson spoke of initiating changes during her town hall portion of the interview.

It was very obvious then that it would be different in a positive way and that you knew changes were coming. And you know, she made that clear in the interview process and to some people it was perceived positively and to some it was perceived negatively. Just because whether you like it or don't like it, some people do like the status quo. So it was kind of shocking in the fact that, wow, she just laid it on the line and stated this and not from a dictatorship sort of view or anything like that, but from the get-go, she made it very clear that she believed in the people that were at the institution.

President Johnson explains that she understood how bureaucratic the previous administration was and felt the institution needed less rigidity so that individuals throughout the college could participate in the college's processes and direction. "When I got here the cultural was not nearly as open as it is now. It was not nearly as collaborative …the president was the last area for input within the college. I think the college is just more open and more collaborative now and that was a conscious effort."

The president had a tremendous amount of work ahead of her when taking over and according to an interviewee; one of the most important changes was dismantling the silos built up around departments and units. While not yet complete, she explains that

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great progress has been made. "Before she came, we were pretty much set up into individual silos and people rarely moved amongst each other to work with each other to achieve common goals and that has changed a lot." Another respondent concurred and added "The institution seems to be really enveloping the whole collaborative atmosphere and slowly but surely, they're starting to break down some of the silos on-campus and getting more lateral information flow." Explaining that culture change is a long and difficult process, a college manager indicated that while participation has started to set in, the college has not yet reached a collaborative state.

> The phrase I would use would be ***participatory, but not yet collaborative***. I think we have made major gains in terms of getting larger numbers of people participating in the life of the institution, I don't think the structure, the infrastructure, has yet gaped that participation into focused action. [Its one thing] for everyone to participate, it's another thing for the patient to arrive at a consensus and a shared vision that leads to strategic initiatives and strategic action and that's not a criticism, changing that takes a long time. There's no magic pill that makes people suddenly feel like not only do they participate, but that they have a shared vision (emphasis added).

While not yet participatory, one respondent has also seen tangible evidence that the climate has improved dramatically during Dr. Johnson's presidency and attributes some of the improvement to the fact that college success has been linked to staff success. According to the director, infighting was a major problem before, but now, people have learned to avoid "tackling people with the same color jerseys on."

> It doesn't matter what building, what group we're in, you can have some goals that are specific to you, but this is the driving force for all of us if we're successful. If they're successful, [Theta] is successful and the reverse is true. If [Theta] is successful, then we're successful. And we have the [philosophy that we] don't tackle people with the same colored jerseys on…We talked about it a lot to try and understand and we've taken the same colored jerseys from the little one to the big one. Same colored jerseys means all four of you at the front desk. You all have the same colored jerseys. Everyone in this building has the same colored jersey as well as everybody in [Theta] has the same colored jersey. And before

there was that separation of us and them and that's kind of helped to realize that no, we do need them and that we all have the same colored jerseys.

The overwhelming opinion in regards to the college's improving culture is that Theta Community College is moving in the right direction under the leadership of President Johnson, but her vision has not yet been fully realized. A college manager understands that some people will always take issue with the college's direction and decisions, but feels the college now operates with consideration for the best interests of individuals throughout the institution. "There are just some people who are contrary…you know you're not going to make them happy, but…people at the college think the college is moving in the right direction…we are making changes that are positive for many people, not just for people at the top." Another interviewee provided the metaphor of the college as a parent with adult children to explain how the college is effectively transitioning towards a collaborative culture. While noting that the transition has not been completed, he sees Dr. Johnson's leadership as the catalyst for the college's increasing level of maturity.

> I see how remarkably she recognized where the institution is in its evolutionary growth. [Theta] is a middle-aged institution, its like a young parent that finally has the house paid off, has two and one half kids, and a two car garage and looks around and says, now I am a grown-up! What am I suppose to do with these kids now that I've paid off the mortgage? And the necessities are taken care of, I've met the primary needs, what do I do, how do I manage wealth, how do I manage the future, how do I become the leader as opposed to the young person who kind of does what their parents have modeled for them? So in that sense, she has really helped shape the institution in one of those critical transition moments in its life span, institutions have life spans just like people and as a [forty-something] year old, [Theta] has all the characteristics of a [forty-something] year old.

An administrator has seen dramatic, positive changes over the last seven years and feels

that the decreasing levels of animosity between faculty and the administration have

played a major role. He feels the culture is one that values all groups and has led to

improved relations and the potential for non-adversarial bargaining in the near future.

> There was a long period of animosity between the faculty and the
> administration before she got here and one of the things that I haven't
> mentioned to this point is she wants to move towards a mutual gains
> bargaining agreement between the college and the faculty union and I
> think we are really close to doing that. We are not quite there yet, but the
> level of trust has increased to a point where we can even contemplate that
> and as we get closer to our next negotiations with them, that will begin
> next year, there is a very strong likelihood that it won't be the
> confrontational type that this institution has endured for the last fifteen
> years when the faculty first unionized.

An organizational member agreed that faculty relations have improved and provided her

personal experience as proof. Although she has been a critical contributor in getting the

leadership initiative up and running, she had one foot out of the door just a few years

back based on, in her words, the poor treatment of the faculty.

> I was one who was very disengaged and disenfranchised and had accepted
> another position at another college and then had this opportunity to do this
> [help construct the leadership initiative]. And it's been wonderful, and I
> guess we'll were kind of doing things through leadership initiative and
> through some of these other things, and they are creating parallel systems.
> So pretty soon the group that's in is going to be bigger than the group that
> is not. So we'll continue to see some cultural change.

Changing a culture not only takes time and energy, but well-conceived and

appropriate approaches as well. Based upon her vision and personal convictions,

President Johnson has attempted to move the college towards more collaboration by

increasing communication, openness, and transparency. These behaviors are

diametrically opposed to the previous administration's approach to management and have

created inroads for change. In regards to communication, the president feels this is the

most difficult area to deal with in colleges and has been working to build a foundation of

strong communications across subcultures from day one.

> Communications is always the biggest problem any organization has at
> any given moment in time. That's always the case, that's always our
> biggest challenge, but opening communication at [Theta] meant valuing
> individual points of view without fear of retribution, that you could
> express your perspectives and your points of view. Your opinions, and you
> could do so literally. But you could literally open that door to the
> communications across the college…And we obviously are not there yet.
> There is no arrival in this journey, but we're in the process right now of
> designing an integrated leadership model within the college that's based on
> all of the changes that we've made across the past seven years and we're
> hoping that model, which will be uniquely suited to us to [Theta]
> Community College, will help us reach the top of that hill, although there's
> no end to the journey.

A long-tenured interviewee provided a specific example of how the president has worked

to increase communication through a recent reorganization effort. Issues with grievances

were not reaching the provost, which was making matters worse, so the president decided

to shift the reporting lines for HR to ensure that communication gaffes regarding

grievances would not continue.

> For example, you know HR gets a grievance from [the faculty union],
> regarding some lab techs over in the academic side, that they're in the
> non-credit area and should be part of the bargaining unit. The grievance
> was not communicated directly to the academic provost when it was
> received, so he would be aware of it at the very outset or that there were
> even any discussions going on before the grievance was filed, whereby the
> resolution could have been addressed even before a grievance was filed,
> he saw it and said this makes sense, the grievance makes sense, why
> weren't we discussing this before it reached the point of a grievance? So
> again it's communication issues from certain areas that disappointed her
> and I think that's part of why we've had this reorganization where now
> HR doesn't directly report to her, it reports to me.

A college manger has also seen how increasing communication has helped change the

college culture by decreasing institutional stereotyping. She noted that as a result of

division and unit segregation before President Johnson's arrival, individuals would base

opinions of entire portions of the college on isolated and random interactions. By

increasing communication and interactions, she feels that people are less likely to

stereotype and scapegoat than in the past.

> The leadership initiative has been a big advocate of that, because you have all different groups in that, you had individuals that had contact with some classifications of individuals that they never had contact with before. And like it or not, it's, like, you know what, if I had one bad relationship with an individual from this classification…the tendency before to say, well, maintenance has screwed me; nobody will help you down there. That's just an example obviously. But now, I think that's what the movement has been, it's not that maintenance doesn't work, I may not be able to work with this individual. This individual may not be as helpful as what I believe they could or should be. But I no longer equate that to the mass to the whole. Before, it would be a matter of, well, if I only heard this person's perspective, I would assume that's what the union thinks, where it led people to see that we've to stop [judging] folks on the classification and realize that it's about the individual.

Dr. Johnson has also worked to create openness and transparency in the college,

believing that doing so would open the college to greater collaboration. She was very

strategic and chose to open up and share budgetary information, a decision alien to TCC

staff.

> The budget has been historically very closed and people have not had access to budget information. When I first came to the college, I couldn't even get a copy of the budget out in front of the college community. And when I mandated that the budget be laid out in several different formats, in an open format for the entire college to see, and that was revolutionary. And so opening up the budget was a big one. And we've come a long way again, but we have not arrived, but we've come a long way.

Another interviewee provided a meaningful, example of how the college is more open

under Dr. Johnson's tenure. She explains that the president's office had been forbidden

territory under previous regimes and that President Johnson chose, early in her tenure, to

throw an open house in her office to prove that transparency and openness would be a

part of her leadership style.

If you do need an open door and open doors were really phenomenal, because there were individuals prior to her coming here that had really never stepped foot into the president's office. It was like a family that has the formal living room that the kids can't cross and mean it's like this friend I had. She had a room like that with white carpet and I don't know if I ever saw anybody step into that room. You stood at the line and looked in, but you never went into the room. There was that kind of mentality prior [to her coming] and a lot of people hadn't been in her office and that was one of the things she did right away. She had some open houses to say, this is everyone's, this isn't just my private territory here, this is all of your territory, and I think that set the tone right away that it's very open door, it is a two way and we need to work together for this to be successful or none of us are going to be.

Pushed for professional development as a priority

A culture premised on positivity would also be one focused on putting people first. One of the tangible indicators that a president has worked to infuse positivity into a culture is the expansion of professional development opportunities. According to a college staff member, this is not a tactic, but rather, tangible proof of the president's desire to help people develop to their full potential. "She does see things in people that they may not see in themselves and she tries to promote that and to get them to realize their potential…She has promoted a couple of people to vice presidents that she knows could really do good things for the college." One interviewee indicated that regardless of budgetary constraints, Dr. Johnson has pushed for people to find professional development opportunities based upon a belief that it would improve both the staff and the college. "There are budgetary constraints on travel and registration fees and things like that, but we are highly encouraged to pursue all avenues of professional development and it comes from the top all the way down…that's very highly encouraged." When asked about the support for professional development at the college, two individuals provided

personal examples of how they have been encouraged to take advantage of opportunities

rarely made available to people in their positions within community colleges.

> Respondent: I have had a chance to go to professional organization meetings yearly. I've had a chance to travel abroad actually based on the college's support for the new childcare center. For that I am eternally grateful.

> Respondent: I serve as president of a national health organization that when I accepted that nomination, it was for a four-year commitment and I'm currently in my second year as president, and that's a huge commitment to travel. There has never been a question about the college supporting me to the extent that would be reasonable in line with other deans…I looked at the number of trips that I had in 2007. Sixteen, twelve of which were professional. That's a high number…and was there ever a question about my going, no.

In addition to advocating for professional development, a college administrator informed

the research that the president has added a full-time staff member to ensure the college

develops new and innovative initiatives to meet emerging needs inside and outside of the

college.

> Our human resources office didn't have anybody specifically devoted to professional development and she's changed that as within the last year we've hired a fully-time staff person whose job [it] is to more consciously develop and promote professional development opportunities for everyone on campus and to align our orientation and training processes, so I think we've come a long way just since she got here.

One respondent has already seen some of the initiatives that have come from the

revamped professional development office and sees the leadership toolkit as a crucial

opportunity that can positively impact hiring in the future.

> We have what's called the leadership toolkit and there are about seven of those meetings during the course of the academic year. So about once a month we meet for four hours on a different topic. There are leadership applications, leadership tools, those kind of things, hiring process workshops have been developed by human resources so anyone on a search committee can go through as it goes through a hiring workshop for faculty and administrators and supervisors with hiring authorities.

Perhaps the most influential professional development opportunity supported by the

president is the leadership initiative. An interviewee explains the initiative is crucial for

cultivating talent and developing leaders throughout the college. "She initiated the [Theta

Leadership Initiative], four or five years ago, and it is very specifically geared toward

middle-level administrators and faculty that we want to develop and cultivate our own

leadership within the college." A respondent feels that the leadership initiative has been a

crucial addition to the college and provides solid proof that the college is serious about

developing leadership at all levels of the institution.

> That's one of those initiatives where anybody can apply, even a secretary,
> and the personal philosophy [is] that everybody is a leader in their own
> work environment and everybody has a chance to learn those leadership
> skills and to me, that is an example of one of those initiatives that goes all
> the way to the bottom. I mean, anybody can apply and for somebody who
> really wants to make changes to what they're doing in their work
> environment or even in their personal life. I think that is one of those
> professional development opportunities. There are few institutions,
> institutions that have leadership academies and to me, I think it's a really,
> really great way to recognize the talent that we have within.

Established herself as a transformational leader

Despite the fact that culture and climate changes appear to be far from complete,

there is no doubt that President Johnson has had a tremendously positive effect on the

college and pushed it towards positivity. In fact, numerous college staff provided

metaphors of her leadership to underscore just how effective she has been. An

institutional manager describes her as a visionary leader based largely on the fact she has

worked to ensure the college is preparing students for future jobs and because she is

working to develop new industries within the college's service area.

> The greater [city] area is economically challenged, you know the fat years
> when the auto industry was king and a union member could make, oh, $35

or $40 an hour and retire at age forty-six with full benefits, those days are gone. The agribusiness, which was the second largest industry in our region, farming, is also on a decline, you know the concept of passing your family farm onto your children is just not a reality anymore. So one of the things that I think [Dr. Johnson] realized early in her experience when she moved here is that a community college in our region can't be satisfied with producing graduates that can go into jobs in the community. A community college in our region has to develop the jobs and that really an economic development strategy rather than filling a needs strategy.

In addition to providing visionary leadership, he also sees the president as an agent of empowerment throughout the college. To make his point, he even talks about the bus driver who has been empowered to represent the college.

She assumes that her primary role as a leader is to encourage and empower all of us as participants in the institution to become the people we are capable of becoming. So whether you are the bus driver on campus, and we do have a bus that goes around campus, and that bus driver is a very important articulation source of many of the things that goes on campus. She has empowered him, as much as she has empowered board of trustees members, to be a spokesperson, and a recognized, respectful participant in the life of the community.

Along the same vein of being a spokesperson, an interviewee also feels the president has been an exceptional "chief public relations officer" for the college. He feels that by empowering and entrusting those in authority positions, she has freed herself to leave the campus and effectively advocate for the college.

I think she believes she has a team in place that operates this college on a day-to-day basis, keeping her informed of key decisions, of key operations, but allowing her the opportunity to play the role a president has to as a chief public relations officer and to cultivate and develop donors to support more cooperative education in the state.

A college staff member, while appreciating the attempt to create dispersed leadership, also feels the college needs a leader who takes charge. Giving her the title of "institutional glue", she feels the president has effectively held the college together throughout the transition.

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She is just the glue that holds things together. I don't want to say the captain of the ship, because that's not it. What makes a leader? I mean she will say that leadership is not top down. She focuses more on a circle type, but you have to have somebody where the decisions stop there. I mean you need somebody, I'm sorry, to have the final say and it can't just have everybody. You need somebody who is the leader of the institution who makes the decisions the best way they can with the college communities input.

While the metaphors speak to how effective college staff consider her presidency, perhaps an even greater indication is how much fear there is over her eventual retirement. Interviewees were not asked about their concerns over the president's eventual departure; rather, they volunteered this information when the researcher asked about her lasting legacy. Staff members either experienced or have been made aware of the college environment before President Johnson's arrival and are concerned the college could tip back into the authoritarian, political environment of the past. One respondent is certain the college will be wary of any potential successor and fight to preserve the empowerment she has experienced under Dr. Johnson's tenure.

We would be very, very circumspect and critical of her successor. Any hints of autocracy, I don't care who the guy or the woman is, we would not allow it, and I am really speaking for myself, to allow somebody to come in and undo what she has achieved and could it be undone - you bet. I think that it could be undone, but there would be fighting and it would be close to anarchy because the college would stop because that takes precedence.

Another interviewee agrees that the fear over President Johnson's retirement revolves around her successor. In fact, she even mentions that the college is most fearful about the individual who would take over in an interim (or permanent) capacity upon her departure.

People are really afraid of what comes next, because she's done such a good job at starting the process. If we get this [participatory leadership model] up and going, her departure will be a lot easier for people to take. The big concern right now to the union is that it she were to leave today and they put [a college administrator] in control, we'd go right back to

being an authoritarian regime and that scares the hell out of people. So the fact that people are scared about her leaving is a good thing.

Another respondent indicated that faculty are especially concerned about the president leaving and even approached her a year ago when rumors surfaced that she was considering retirement. "I know about a year ago, the rumors were very rampant that she was going to retire and there was great distress among the faculty over this and they went to her and said, we really don't want you to retire." She even ended her statement by apparently convincing herself that the president will not be leaving soon. "[Her legacy will be] making it a more open institution, an institution where there is a greater degree of trust. However, she's not going to leave tomorrow."

In review, the president has made great efforts to transform the college's culture to one typified by positive behaviors and attitudes. While still in great flux, all indications are that changes in structures, processes, and executive leadership behaviors have pushed the culture in the right direction and represent a marked improvement over the old, largely dysfunctional culture. In addition, the president has pushed professional development to the forefront of the college by not only expanding travel and collaboration opportunities, but also by hiring full-time staff members in the professional development office and creating new initiatives designed to enhance the skills of college staff. Finally, she has firmly established herself as a transformational leader working to instill positivity throughout the college. Despite the fact that changes have not been completed or full institutionalized, college staff appreciate the president's efforts and feel she is moving the college in the right direction and are fearful over her eventual retirement. This fear is largely because of a college administrator, classified as an

autocratic, who stands in the wings to guide the institution upon Dr. Johnson's eventual departure.

Empowers and Provides Support to College Staff

Distributes authority to those outside her office

An organizational manager, when asked about the president's management style, explained that she leads and does not manage. He talked about how her leadership style plays out in distributing authority to those she has trust in. "Her leadership style is not managerial…she has chosen her lieutenants and I would say the executive vice presidents, the other vice presidents, the deans, the chairs, program directors, faculty…she has chosen relationships with those people… built on trust." According to Dr. Johnson, her philosophy on executive leadership revolves around treating people well and caring for them; thus enabling them to work for the greater good of the organization. "It's my belief that if we care about people and work towards the greater good for the most people that in the end, the right thing will happen. The right thing will happen from those careful decisions made with compassion and caring for individuals and integrity." Another respondent also sees authentic care for people and asserts that it epitomizes Dr. Johnson's leadership style. He has seen this play out in the importance the president puts into conversation – at times even surpassing the importance of the decisions themselves. "She recognizes that relationships and decisions are all based on communication…and believes conversation actually contains the life of the institution. So the conversation, I think to her is equally important, and in some cases more important, than the actual decision."

Building on the concept that the president has chosen her "lieutenants", an organizational manager feels that in order to work at Theta, one must not wait around for orders. Instead, she explains that with the benefit of being left to do one's work comes the expectation that the person will be a "self-starter." "You better be a self-starter and be able to work independently…she is not a micromanager…you need to think for yourself. I mean, she certainly is there to guide you, she's there to mentor you, she's certainly there to help you, [but you need to] figure it out." According to an organizational member, the freedom to "define" success also comes with high expectations. "I don't think she is a taskmaster, but I think she holds us to a high standard and expects results. But she does it in a way, she intends to do it in a way that allows people to define their own success largely." He added that expectations are generally well understood (the what) based upon numerous conversations that occur, but she is loath to mandate the mechanisms or strategies to achieve the goals (the how).

> I mean she is not one who is going to mandate do X or so. You are going to have conversations, you know ideas and really open and collaborative discussions and she is going to rely on, in my case and in my peers' case, the senior team, to move some of those pieces forward, but she is rarely going to mandate, we are going to do this because I said so, that's just not her style.

While pushing the responsibility for making decisions to lower levels could lead to miscommunication or confusion, one interviewee feels this is where Dr. Johnson excels. "A participatory environment will not give you rigid consistency. If someone is listening to everyone, they can't maintain an absolute position on everything as it will evolve and her magic is that she allows you to see the evolution." Another potential shortcoming of this leadership style is that the president could find herself "out of the loop." Based on comments from a different respondent, however, this situation does not

occur due to the fact the president is focused on having current and relevant information at her fingertips. "She really doesn't like when she doesn't know what's going on because…she doesn't like that kind of situation at all. She would much prefer hearing about the issues so that you can deal with them immediately rather than letting things fester and get worse." Maintaining a distributed leadership approach could also leave the executive leader in a position where the ability to engage in decisive action is hampered. A long-tenured respondent explained that this is not the case and when an emergency decision needs to be made, the president responds with surprising quickness.

> In an emergency, you make a decision and you implement it. You don't stop and discuss how to evacuate the movie theatre when the fire alarm goes off. And she is perfectly capable of making direct implementations under conditions where it's necessary, I would say that's her style in an emergency situation and she is very effective. I've seen her reach decisions and implement them so quickly I was stunned, but that's the exception.

Focused on improving internal relationships

When asked about her leadership style, President Johnson spoke at length about the need for executive leaders to engage in truth-telling practices. By truth-telling, she was referring to speaking with integrity and providing insight into the big picture. To further explain, she provided an example of truth-telling when she first took the job as president of the college.

> …I'm talking about integrity in the value of telling people what the real picture is and absolutely telling the truth…going back to when I first came into the college, when presidents are interviewed…a faculty member from the back of the room asked me a question. He created a scenario where you have become the president at the college and the faculty have expressed a deep value and the Board of Trustees has made a decision that's contradictory to the wants of the faculty…I said, well, the time for discussion about issues with faculty or anyone else at the college is over because the board has made a decision and once the board has made a decision, it would be my job as president to follow this decision and go

forward with the decision to the college and to the community and with all seriousness, because if you don't mean it doesn't work. We must share that this is an excellent decision for the college. Here are the ways that we as a college can live this decision. And here are the ways that we can make this the absolute best decision for our community. The board has made the decision. It's my job as president to support that favorably.

This statement provides insight into how she looks to lead, through integrity, honesty, and openness. This form of leadership provides consistent direction and should ensure that subculture relationships are positive since groups will understand where they stand. Although an outsider to the cabinet, one respondent perceives the relationship between the president and her cabinet to be strong and feels that it positively impacts the college. She makes these judgments based upon what she interprets to be positive changes in units and divisions throughout the college.

She has a pretty strong connection with her cabinet. It's not large and there have been a lot of changes happening and a lot of things going on that have originated at the cabinet level, so I think I see them as working very well together as a team and I'm not in the cabinet meetings, so I don't necessarily know exactly what's going on. When I looked to see what kind of changes are happening for instance in the business affairs office or in student services and academic services, they look to me to be natural and positive kinds of changes and that has to come out of the work that they're able to do together as a cabinet.

In addition to healthy relationships between the president and cabinet, she also sees positivity in relationships between the president and non-executive administrators. "From what I've seen and what I've experienced at my level or at the dean's level, she is always very willing to sit down with us to meet with us to work issues out with us. I have not seen a reluctance to address an issue head on or for the needs to be addressed." Another administrator talked about the positivity and respect between the faculty and the president, a situation that has not always existed. He asserts that her efforts at improving this relationship and removing animosity have paid off and that, generally speaking,

mutual respect now exists between these two groups. "The relationship between her and the faculty is one of respect, mutual respect, and she has done a lot for the faculty and the faculty has done a lot to support her as well…she has worked very hard to overcome [the animosity]." Another interviewee provided a great example of how President Johnson has worked to create a relationship of mutual respect between herself and the faculty. He indicates that it took time and energy for the president to establish herself as trustworthy to faculty members, but she did not give up or give in.

> Faculty on the other hand were very defensive…and the previous
> president held their salaries down quite a bit and controlled them quite a
> bit and they wanted to rebel against that. And because they approached it
> as an adversarial relationship, because that's how they grew up with it, it
> took a long time for the faculty to change. [President Johnson] did a lot, to
> get back to her character, after the president of the union that did nothing
> but make life miserable for every administrator by being very antagonistic
> and adversarial, even to the point of getting into votes of no confidence,
> which they didn't actually do, but appeared to want to do against [her] and
> [she] ended up giving her a champion award to the president of the union;
> sort of like to say I know you tried to make things better and I'm not going
> to hold it personally. She made that statement essentially, kind of like I'm
> not holding anything against you, I'm forgiving you for all the shit you've
> given me over the years and now the faculty would say, yes, she's not
> going to hold anything against us even though we fought so hard and in
> such an antagonistic way.

Working to develop an internal rather than external locus of control

Change is an inevitable reality of life regardless of how well-funded or apparently buffered an institution may be. An organizational manager explains that Dr. Johnson understood this very well when coming to TCC and began to put in the structures and processes necessary to enable the college to move with, as opposed to being "run over" by, the "train" that is change.

> There was nothing developed and then to develop this whole set of
> different levels of committees and councils to help invite people to
> become part of the change and to be integrated into the process that things

are going to change and they don't stay the same. And if you don't embrace the fact that change is going to happen and jump on the train, it's going down the tracks and you know you're going to get left behind.

Another interviewee concurs that President Johnson has worked to ensure the college can respond to changes. In fact, he feels she has shown visionary leadership in working to meet new state goals for high school and college graduates noting that she has "grabbed this one by the horns."

> You know, one of the goals at the state level is [hundreds of thousands] more students in the educational system, within the next ten years. How do we accomplish that? Well, she sees and we see in working with her, that the community colleges are going to be a big player in that in terms of access and meeting that goal of serving additional students so she has been actively and we are actively trying to work with other institutions in other ways in which to cooperate to make more programs available to students to keep them in the system and to have them go on. The only way I can answer that question is that she has grabbed this one by the horns and is committed to doing it.

Based on comments by college staff, it would appear as though the primary strategy for ensuring the college can navigate changing conditions involves extensive communication and finding, developing, and empowering people to guide the college. A college manager has seen increases in the communication to the college from President Johnson when compared to the previous president and believes this is positioning the college to meet needs and changes as they appear.

> She will make sure that the entire college knows what is going on and the most recent issue with the [state higher education board] is a current example. She has kept us very well-informed about what's going on at the state level and how those activities influence our finances, how it influences the direction of the state, which is going on towards making a community college system, a statewide system of colleges.

Another institutional manager feels strongly that the president's desire to empower others has been an effective mechanism for ensuring the college can respond to changing

conditions. She provided a recent promotion as an example of how Dr. Johnson works to

ensure she has the people in place to navigate changes. She also explained that staff

changes have helped to change the status quo mentality that once dominated the college.

> I think she may navigate the college through those by finding people who have the ability to do that in their areas and then having them assist the college. [VP for government relations], with the government and legislative changes, very definitely. I don't pretend to know everything about that, but she gives [him] free reign, seeks his advice. She's very good about finding people, finding where their expertise lies, and then standing back and letting them do it… we have all new people in and they are from the outside, in different areas and are bringing in different expertise to it. So there is no more complacency, you don't hear nearly as much as you used to, that's not the way we used to do it. Now you hear, how can we do it to make things better because there's an infusion of newer, fresher ideas coming in.

Some interviewees feel the college is still reactive, but credit the president with pushing

for change and empowering people to create the changes that will eventually, in their

minds, result in a proactive institution. One interviewee feels the college has reached a

state of balance, in between proactively and reactivity, and blames the slowness of

change on the need to rectify underlying issues from the previous administration. "We're

not as reactive as we were before she came…I would say at this point, it is probably

balanced, but that we're moving toward a more proactive approach, but we had to deal

with some of the things that were left over from the past and then move forward."

Another respondent concurs that the college has just reached a point where proactivity is

an option. She feels that the increased communication and focus on good information is

positioning the college for a proactive future.

> Right now, [we're] maybe a five [out of ten], but definitely reaching for the six. We have definitely in previous years have been very reactive. Now I think we have turned around and are becoming more data driven and proactive because that's the only way you are going to survive. We've got a long way to go, but the whole mindset is changing to a point

where we have to become more proactive, we have to see what's coming and be there before it gets there.

Models congruence between her personal values and actions

As noted earlier, the president has some very strong opinions about leadership and the importance of truth-telling. Perhaps the only topic she discussed more passionately than leadership is the importance of effectively meeting the needs of students and proactively helping them to succeed. In a series of statements, President Johnson indicated that the ultimate organizational value under her presidency is serving students, and that the primary responsibility that she and the college have is to ensure that students receive the education and skills necessary to navigate the outside world.

> Everything we do is influenced by the value of our students and the investment that we have into their future, to create avenues for them to change the world, to change their lives and change the world. And so our highest value is the value that our students will contribute to society…We only have this one opportunity and one of the things that we say in our meetings at [Theta] and we say it over and over and over again is that at any given time at the college, everyone of us is the absolute most important person in a student's life at any given moment. I'm the most important person in a student's life and I don't have to be a faculty member in front of a classroom for that to be the case although I certainly have a great opportunity there….[My primary responsibility] is creating an environment where lives can be changed, creating an environment. If I were talking to the faculty I would say creating an environment where faculty are free and energized to change students lives, into creating that environment…it's the environment that counts. It's the culture. That's what counts. It shapes everything. It's creating that environment where students can change the world and can learn and grow and develop. It's touching lives so it's the environment.

Another interviewee expressed that he has seen how the president has lived up to this vision of ensuring student success. He has seen congruence between values and actions through the president's efforts to provide support systems and empower students throughout the college and feels the impact has been significant.

> I think she has done a phenomenal job of fostering leadership in the student body. You cannot go wrong in a college community when you support student excellence. There's no way to mess up when you do that and so the teachers are proud of their students, the staff is proud of their students and they're delighted that Dr. [Johnson] has recognized their [students'] potential; everybody enjoys their success.

One respondent provided a tangible example of how the president has been working to ensure student success. Noting that President Johnson was vital to the effort, she feels the title III grant will prove essential in ensuring the college more effectively serves students.

> It's [the title III grant] tied to the concept of student success. If we're going to retain students, we need to be able to look at their first-year experience and make positive kinds of changes that are going to help them overcome some of the barriers that caused them to drop out or to stop out so that grant, I think, is working to build, working to help students toward improving student success.

Another individual provided an example of how the president's espoused statements about supporting students and her actions are congruent. She talked about how the president has been working with her to ensure that fundraising efforts are geared toward increasing access to higher education for students – something the respondent has taken to heart.

> Whenever we are trying to go out and raise money, her biggest concern is that it expands accessibility for the students and that it really helps the students to be successful. She's really interested in making sure that students who don't have an opportunity to go to college or who may be first generation students, we are targeting those students and I think that's definitely in line with her values and what she says.

In summary, Dr. Johnson is deeply committed to empowering college staff and ensuring they are supported in their endeavors. Since attaining the presidency, she has focused on opening her office to staff as a symbolic gesture that she values openness, is dedicated to dispersing authority, and wants shared responsibility for organizational decision-making and direction-setting.

Understanding that fractured relationships between subcultures would undermine her efforts to increase ownership and empowerment, she also focused on mending the relationship between faculty and administrators. While previous presidents worked to marginalize and control the faculty, she has consistently worked with the union and individual faculty members to ensure they're involved in major processes. In one instance, according to an interviewee, she even presented an award to a hostile union leader as an apology for past issues and an indication that things had changed. Additionally, she understands that only when organizational members feel as though the college is able to grow and maneuver regardless of external conditions, will they feel truly empowered to affect organizational change. While still in a state of transition, she has been working to establish an internal locus of control and indications are that some staff members are starting to perceive that the college has some control over its destiny. In addition to pushing for empowerment and increased ownership in an effort to create a more dynamic and effective organization, indications are these efforts are congruent with her espoused values – a situation enhancing the perception that she is an authentic leader. In short, President Johnson has engaged in numerous behaviors demonstrating that not only does she want to support and develop college staff, but also wants to engage them as active participants in the college's growth and development.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Lesser Abundance

Delivering Partial Institutional Change

Moving slowly to create lasting change

Despite indications that President Johnson has pushed for alignment between the organization and the workgroups, some staff stated that the transition is still occurring and has been rocky at times. Explaining that vice-presidents have the authority to determine how closely aligned college values are, a respondent notes that replacing a college administrator substantially opened up one of the college's units and is an indication that workgroup values still dominate daily operations. "Some have and some haven't [bought into aligning values], although there probably is a greater, over the last, ten months since [the new administrator] came on board, there probably is a lot more openness in [that] office than ever… so again it is your workgroup [driving behavior]." An institutional member concurs that not all workgroups buy into the organizational values and even indicates that perhaps they should not mesh. "I'm not sure it should be all connected. To me it should be and you just need to underpin that [the organizational values] and support that. I don't know if…that happens all the time for me. There are some glitches. There is a disconnection at times there." Another respondent has experienced that workgroup values do, indeed, still drive some departments and divisions more than the organizational values. While working across groups and with different initiatives is encouraged at the organizational level, she received a bad evaluation due to the fact that she has been heavily involved in a number of college-wide activities.

> I have [a great reputation], [however, my manager said I], need to quit
> doing stuff for [President Johnson] and do more in [my] department. She
> does things for her own glory. So here I am trying to be collaborative, and
> I get bashed by my [manager]. He ended up taking all of that stuff out of
> there, but it's kind of funny.

While the majority of respondents indicate that the president looks at failure as unfinished progress and mistakes as learning processes, one individual believes she takes

a laissez-faire approach to some failures. He provided a recent example regarding the IT

system and how failures in the system, failures that don't occur frequently in other

colleges, are not dealt with.

> [In] our distance learning courses we have an issue with our Blackboard.
> Being up and down and closing down and it's often turned off and I
> checked with other schools, and that's not a common thing. So there's
> something we're not doing here. So we identified the fact that we need to
> do an IT audit to find out what we have where we are and to look at where
> we want to go. Well, we wanted to find out how to we get there, how we
> fix this. This was last November and we still haven't done this in
> November 2007. We continually worked with this issue last semester. The
> day the grades are to be reported in, the system goes down and an e-mail
> that we get from the director is how we apologize for what happened, but
> we're up 96% of the time… that won't help us, don't make excuses, just
> fix it.

Unsuccessfully leveraging potential partnerships

While the majority of information provided shows President Johnson is

effectively developing partnerships and increasing input from external groups, two

interviewees feel that she has not been as active or creative in establishing partnerships as

she could be. One individual believes the president's personality and "shyness" limit the

number of potential partners available to the college. This individual intimates that issues

of authenticity exist and without addressing this situation, the president will never be able

to fully leverage partners.

> I think it's one of the areas she really needs to work on. She is out and
> about, but [name] who's president of [four-year college], we were in
> college together and we hung out in [state capitol]. We were talking and
> he said she was really formal…So because of that, she hasn't been able to
> forge some of the relationships that she should've been able to forge. So,
> he said for example, he and [another college president] get along really
> well they're comfortable and [President Johnson] had them over to the
> house and it was real formal and [they were uncomfortable]. I think she's
> an anomaly. I don't know why she wants to be a president because it
> doesn't seem to fit her personality. Other than wanting to make positive
> change and that she's not out and about enough, why she wants to be a

president, and she goes to some community things, but again her conversations are probably a little more stilted.

Another respondent based his opinion on what he perceives to be less than effective partnering. This opinion stems from his recent conversations with representatives from the AFL-CIO. In talking with them, they explained that they have tried to work with Theta on multiple occasions, but nothing ever comes from the meetings. He feels that the administration moves too slowly and it difficult to partner with.

> You know, I don't know her day-to-day activities, but I would say it [level of partnering] is probably a four or a five. Its average. I think there are a lot of other things that could be done…I go to the AFL-CIO meetings and the president of the AFL-CIO spoke back in November and gave a synopsis of his trip that he took to Japan with labor leaders and the governor of [state] and other related labor leaders from colleges in [state]. One was [regional research university] and the other one was the [local four-year university]. They sent representatives to look at training needs for companies, foreign companies coming into [region of the state] to train the workforce. So I went up afterwards and [state union president], I asked had they ever worked with [Theta] and he said, we tried working with them, but nothing ever happened.

Personalizes criticism

President Johnson has continually worked to increase communication and input within the college – a behavior that not only increases positive feedback, but also questions and criticism. While few people would say they like criticism, it is an inevitable part of being the public face of an organization. While two staff members felt she generally deals well with criticism, other staff members believe she deals poorly with criticism and tends to personalize the comments. One organizational member feels her style is a magnet for positive and negative input and asserts that while appreciating the input she receives, she can show frustration when dealing with critical input. "Her management style is one of inclusion and openness, which is very positive, the flip side

of that is that at times, you might not like what you hear and I think her reaction to that, generally, is good. There are moments of frustration, but…she welcomes the input." He added that when questioned about a controversial use of college monies and efforts, she showed frustration, but that she did so within the confines of her office, not in public. "She was…annoyed at the suggestion it wasn't an appropriate expenditure, but I think that [after] the initial reaction, behind closed doors…she had an opportunity to think it through and realized there was an opportunity for a constructive conversation." Another interviewee expanded on the perception that the president takes criticism personally by explaining that people in executive positions need to have tough skin, something that in her opinion, President Johnson occasionally lacks. "I think she responds to them [criticisms] openly and perhaps takes them to heart too seriously, because she is such an empathetic person and again, defensive, no, but I think in that position you have to have a tough skin and her's can be very tender." Another respondent believes she takes criticism personally and that it impacts her judgment at times based on her commitment to the institutional staff.

> Respondent: I think Dr. Adams tends to personalize a lot and so I think it hurts her because she truly supports and believes in the people who surround her. It really takes a lot of concrete proof for her to change her opinion or judgment about those around her.

> Interviewer: Okay…well, how do you think that her taking this personally affects those who work closely with her?

> Respondent: I think it is a two-edged sword. I think it can provide, often times, a feeling of security and then often times it can lead to feelings of frustration and people saying, well, why doesn't she see that?

Another interviewee, when asked this question, decided to provide an example of how

the president personalized criticism during recent labor negotiations. She also explains

that individuals outside of the cabinet are well aware of her frustration.

> I think she's very sensitive to them [criticisms]. I think she takes them very
> personally. When we were in the process of negotiating a contract with the
> faculty, and it was a very tough negotiation, and I was actually on the
> negotiating team, and I think that Dr. [Johnson] when things are not going
> well, really took it personally. [She took it as if] it was really a slam
> against her and against her administration and I think she exhibited a
> frustration. She took it more personally than she needed to because I think
> it was just all about negotiations, which can be contentious, and you know,
> I have heard her speak from the podium at town hall meetings and she's
> alluded to the fact that people have criticized this or that. [It's] just the
> way she talks about [it] and I would say that she took things more
> personally than maybe they were directed…

Allows the cabinet to prevent positive changes

The president has spent a great deal of time and energy in creating an

environment where people are asked to provide input into decision-making and direction-

setting processes. She has even worked to develop new committee structures designed to

inform policy, however, there are perceptions that the cabinet is running the institution

based upon actions that are antithetical to her espoused values and the will of staff

throughout the institution. One respondent, when asked about the cabinet, indicated that

the group is viewed as a mystery to non-executive staff. The feeling is that the decisions

are made at that level and then pushed throughout the college.

> It's a very tight knit cabinet. I think there is a lot of communication that
> goes on among the cabinet that never gets out to the rest of the college in
> terms of what direction they want to explore, but once we start moving in
> a direction it's communicated out but an exploration of ideas is among the
> cabinet. It just seems that it's a tight knit and closed community between
> her and the cabinet.

One interviewee took it a step further and feels the cabinet operates from a hierarchical decision-making model, one contrary to the president's style and espoused vision. She hopes that efforts to establish a new organization-wide leadership model will lead to changes. "We have central command and control with president's cabinet…so hopefully if we get [a new leadership model], a lot of that will change…but I think that the behavior has to get modeled at the top before it gets into the bottom." She added that currently, the cabinet is modeling not only command and control management, but also disrespect and infighting – two behaviors that diverge from the president's leadership beliefs. The interviewee feels these behaviors must be changed before a distributed leadership model can exist at TCC.

> …She's having issues with the President's cabinet not getting along and although she can be collegial with other people, she hasn't successfully gotten them to be collegial with each other and therefore even though she values it, if people at the top of the cabinet don't respect it and don't buy it, it doesn't demonstrated and it will be very hard for it to matriculate down into the rest of the institution.

According to one college member, another issue hampering the realization of Dr. Johnson's ideal vision is that input is sought almost exclusively from the cabinet. He notes that while President Johnson is receptive to input, she does not actively seek it nor does she provide forums to gather it. "She's receptive to ideas that are brought to her…she does have town hall forums occasionally where she informs us of [college] activities…you bring up any topic you want to discuss…[but] that would be the closest she is of actively seeking new ideas." In the opinion of another respondent, Dr. Johnson may be actively seeking input from her cabinet due to some dominating personalities that, by his estimation, are both intimidating and controlling. In fact, he posits that, perhaps, the president is in a position where she may feel as though she works for her cabinet.

I think most of them will say [President Johnson] is a very, very nice person, but her leadership style is just not strong enough. And I don't know, when you have different personalities at different levels of the administration, some personalities become dominant no matter what their titles are and I think that affects her. I think the dominant personalities of some of her cabinet [almost] made her feel that she is almost *subservient* to them and it should not be that way. [emphasis added]

This individual also believes that claims of openness and collaboration are aspirational at this time. He notes that the vice-presidents still hold power and that retribution is l a reality for those who oppose the cabinet's positions.

The other people…are so afraid of making decisions that they don't make any decisions. We don't have a culture where they can do what they believe is right since it could be viewed as being too friendly with the employees and I think that is such a negative. So the culture is not necessarily as open and collaborative as it needs to be, as we say it is and we want to think it is…Collaboration is a two-way street [and] certain administrators' ideas of collaboration is if they can get me to agree with their position, they are being collaborative or give me the opportunity to respond to their position, but that's not collaboration. Collaboration is coming together to see if this works for all of us. So no. I don't think, and I think most faculty would say that it's not as open as they would like to say it is and there are probably some administrators who would say the same thing…

While the president has talked about communication and collaboration, one interviewee provided an example of where attempts at collaboration have been met with firings and demotions. Instead of working with college staff, his perception is that two individuals were removed from their positions for being "too friendly" with the faculty union.

You know, when [the former VP of HR] came in, he negotiated the end of our contract. He has the ability to sit and look at both sides of the issue and…I don't get everything and he doesn't get everything he always wants, but unfortunately there are administrators in the cabinet who see that as a weakness, that compromise is a weakness. You know, the rumor is that he's been told that by administrators, you're too friendly with the faculty here and you're in the union's pocket, and you know that's not true…[and] the last HR guy here, I think he got caught up in the politics at the cabinet level and [some cabinet members] at the time believed he was too friendly with the union and he got fired and [former VP of HR] has been demoted.

This organizational member also provided another example of mixed signals when two individuals within the college appeared to be fired or demoted based upon their comments during an open forum. Essentially, each of them raised questions to the president in an open college forum and was removed from their position shortly thereafter.

> Just look at the folks who attend these open forums, faculty don't go…they just don't work… this was about four years ago and two people, staff members got up and asked how she could justify giving the pay raise she did to certain cabinet members and one asked another probably deep question…and both of them were terminated. That's the wrong message to send here. They were both moved out of their positions and were downgraded and I don't know why. Was she embarrassed that those people would have the audacity to ask those tough questions? But the perception of the employees, not just the faculty, is that they asked the wrong questions and so were not well received.

In reality, at least one of the demotions was not directly connected to the forum, however, a respondent explained that the situation was handled poorly and allowed for the perception that retribution still exists at the executive level. "The move was kind of coincidental and had been being planned, because his skills were better utilized over there. How they handled it though, was totally inappropriate."

In addition to impacting the college's internal operations, indications are that the reputation and behavior of some cabinet members impact external constituencies and prevents the development of partnerships. A long-tenured college member was working on a college survey during the initial stages of the strategic planning process and received some very negative comments about members of the cabinet. After talking with the president, the decision was made to strike the comments based on a concern that certain cabinet members would retaliate against those individuals who could be identified.

> We had never had a college-wide survey ever…[and] when I got the data results back, there were some real stunningly negative comments there… and when I went to present at presidents cabinet and [President Johnson] and I made the decision that we were going to take out all of those comments and just give them the raw numbers because she was worried that some [cabinet members] would retaliate since they would be able to identify who the comments were from. So she's worried about some of her [cabinet].

Another respondent talked about what he termed "anti-faculty behavior" by cabinet members charged with working for the betterment of the faculty. He has seen, on multiple occasions, members of the cabinet work to create a wedge between the faculty and that administration and believes that similar behaviors occurred during a recent contract negotiation.

> We got through the contract, we got some good things in the contract, but many of the things that we got were well-deserved. Based on how administration was being compensated and what was taking place there, but yet we had cabinet members, a high-level cabinet member, who should be the faculty advocate argue against those things for faculty, which I don't understand. You know, if I'm your advocate, I want the best I can get for you and that doesn't take place here.

He also feels that members of the cabinet may be the biggest impediment to achieving transcendent leveraging in regard to partnerships. Noting that the college appears to some as the "eight hundred pound gorilla" seeking to dominate partnerships instead of developing collaborative relationships, he feels that the president's style, which is collaborative, would be more beneficial to the college.

> I think a lot of times we're not proactive. We're reactive, more reactive than proactive. I think there are some conflicts that I don't think she's identified about other institutions wanting to work with us. There are some people who don't like dealing with her cabinet and the other institutions, they don't want to work with us and look at us like we're the 800-pound gorilla trying to take over everybody. So, I think she tries to work through, and I'm sure she has some great relationships with other institutional leaders, but I think she relies too heavily on [a cabinet member] to do those things. It's something she should be more involved with.

Despite the great work initiated by President Johnson, there appear to be some

issues severely hampering the development of a fully connected and inclusive culture at

TCC. One concern is the slow pace in which changes are occurring. While some staff are

content with the gradual pace, others feel that the transition into a fully inclusive college

has taken too long. Another issue preventing the development of a fully inclusive and

connected college is the institution's inability to fully leverage partnerships. Whether

based on slow responses or the president's personality, perceptions are that some

organizations don't feel Theta can respond to their needs. While it may seem minor, the

president's perceived tendency to personalize criticism also limits the evolution of TCC

into a truly inclusive organization. The message sent by her response to criticism is likely

to stifle conversation and prevent individuals in lower levels from providing open and

honest feedback. Perhaps the most serious barrier highlighted by the interviewees,

however, revolves around the behaviors of her cabinet. Perceptions are that Dr. Johnson

allows the cabinet to operate from a command and control approach, effectively run the

institution, and engage in retributional behaviors.

Utilizes a Detached and Distant Leadership Style

Makes decisions without providing her rationale

There is little debate among interviewees as to whether or not Dr. Johnson places

people in positions designed to stretch their abilities; however, disagreement exists as to

whether position changes are logical and fair. One interviewee feels the president

provides great opportunities and is not afraid to put someone in new positions so they can

grow and help the college move forward. "She's not afraid to put you in a position, a

position outside of your comfort zone, which is stretching and she does help you become

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a better person and to give you experiences." Echoing that sentiment, an organizational

staff member feels that people must move out, or be moved out, of their comfort zone for

the betterment of the college. She believes the president has been effective at pushing and

has even experienced it herself.

While these staff members believe placing people out of their comfort zone

through promotion has benefited the college, another respondent sees the outcomes

differently and feels the biggest obstacle to effective professional development is the lack

of support and preparation. The individual notes that while opportunities for skill

enhancement and leadership preparation exist, there is little guidance and direction from

President Johnson. She also provided a recent example of how the president moving

people around has negatively impacted the college by sending mixed messages.

> I don't see her as being very assertive in that area [professional
> development]. She'll promote [the leadership initiative], but she won't tell
> people this will be good for you…a conscientious decision would be this
> could really help develop you as an individual or you really need to get
> help in these areas. So what she does instead, is she moves people
> around… I don't know if you've heard this whole thing about the person
> who was her administrative assistant. She got promoted to [high-level
> manager's] position and [high level manager] got promoted to something
> else and [former assistant] was getting paid over $100,000 a year and only
> lasted two months and then she was demoted over to the foundation office.
> She's totally out of the president's office. She [President Johnson] wouldn't
> tell [former assistant] what skills she needed to have and what things in
> her personality really she needed to work on. And I think leaders who
> want to consciously grow people have to bring that in the right way…I
> think it is just my philosophy that if you are going to grow people,
> especially given the upcoming leadership crisis, we need to make sure that
> they have the right leadership skills to make sure that they can do those
> jobs. So they have to look at personal growth and development as being
> something which is continual.

Another respondent provided an example of how someone being moved around has

negatively impacted college effectiveness. In fact, the example he provided was of the

former high-level manager mentioned above - a decision he feels has compromised the effectiveness and reliability of the IT system.

> [Former high-level manager], again, I think he's a nice guy. He was director of [college unit] and now he is vice president and I don't get it. He was [in an executive department] and now he's vice president and I have said [to him], whatever we talk about, it's not personal, don't take this personal. I want to solve the problem. You just happened to be in the hot seat, but that's expected when you take leadership roles.

Distances herself from the college and staff

Numerous interviewees raved about Dr. Johnson's trusting and empowering hands-off approach to leadership, however, others have expressed that a shortcoming of this leadership style at Theta is that most individuals never get a chance to know her or what she stands for. Nearly every interviewee indicated that even if they have had an opportunity to get to know her, most people have no idea who the president is and what she values – a situation they feel could be remedied if she just made herself more visible. One respondent explained that while the president is collaborative and will meet with people, she never initiates the conversations. She also explained that perhaps President Johnson could improve her reputation if she started "managing by walking around."

> I think she could be better at mixing it up with the people. I don't know if that's a better way of saying, I mean, I think she's collaborative, I think she listens. I think if you call her and make an appointment with her, she will find time to meet with you, but does she actively walk through the halls and really seek out information. I'm not sure. I think she seeks out information actively when she believes there is a problem, but does she just sort of, you know that terminology management by walking around. I wouldn't say that she does that, in fact, if I had any criticism of her it would be that that she needs to makes herself more available.

Another interviewee expressed her disappointment in the president choosing to remain detached because it limits the number of people who get to know her. She states that in

the decade-long tenure of Dr. Johnson, the president has only been in her office twice and

doesn't know the name of any of her staff.

> I think there are some faculty and staff that she has strong a rapport with depending on what they have been involved with, but she's not a president who I believe, gets around on campus. For example, I work in the financial aid office and she's been in my office twice. So unless my staff is involved, she doesn't have a clue who they are. Through [team-based management] or maybe the [leadership initiative], she does a lot with the [leadership initiative], she may know them, but otherwise, she doesn't know them. And it's hard because I've been at other colleges and I've seen presidents walk through offices on a regular basis and there are those who do and those who don't and she is one who chooses not to.

Another organizational member sees this approach as very negative and has tried to

convince the president to engage faculty more often so that members will understand she

does support them. She explains that, in contrast, Dr. Johnson wants to lead from "the

shadows", a situation decreasing the level of understanding.

> We tried to get her to be in the orientation video, but she wouldn't even do that…we want to see her more, we want to see her out and about, but she's not comfortable with that…I think she wants [the college] to be collegial, but to be a part of it from the shadows…I think that's where the difficulty [in knowing her values] comes in because we don't see her a whole lot. And I think if there is one issue on campus, it would be that she's not as visible as we would like her to be and because she's not visible, people don't know what she values and you don't really see what she does because you don't see her in all these things. We have [the leadership initiative] and we have all this other stuff, so she does get to know us there, but she doesn't do that with the rest of the institution...So when the [executive team members] are not [involved], it's difficult for [college staff] to really understand who she is, what she is, and how the institution works.

Another respondent feels the president's detached style is detrimental to college

operations and has created a "mystique" within the cabinet that decreases buy-in and

contradicts the openness and transparency espoused by Dr. Johnson.

> She needs to be seen on campus more and I think she needs to be within departments. If nothing else, to walk through the buildings and say hi to folks. I think that is something that not only she could do more of, but also

the others in the cabinet, because I think there is this perception that there
is a mystique to the cabinet. The mystique of the cabinet

Behaves in manners incongruent with her espoused values

Perhaps as a result of not knowing her personally, several interviewees expressed

concern that at times, there is a disconnect between the president's espoused values and

actions. One individual explains that the president has always voiced support for "good

people" at the college, a designation that led many to believe that she was referring to

individuals dedicated to treating people with care and concern. She feels that the

president's inaction with certain individuals is sending confusing signals and has led

people to question whether this is truly one of her values.

> One of the things that have really hurt her, and I've had some good
> conversations with her when she first got here, she said one of the things
> that she didn't want to do was to get rid of good people, and I think that
> the way she defines the people may be different than the way other people
> would define good people.

Another respondent, who earlier indicated she sees congruence in regards to trust and

support, also sees a disconnect with the differential treatment of people within the

college. When asked if she feels the president consistently does the right thing for the

college, she responded "Do I believe that the institution as a whole believe that she does

that consistently…no. People's perceptions are different about what people should or

shouldn't be doing. There are individuals that I think believe maybe are treated

differently." An organizational staff member feels that perhaps her friendships and focus

on caring leads her to engage in apparently incongruent behaviors instead of doing what

is right for the college.

> I think in some of the things she does, she demonstrates that [congruence
> of values and actions], but in other things, the way she handles situations,
> she does not demonstrate that. Our IT system is in a fiasco and the person

is in charge of that is a very nice person. It's nothing personal, he just does not have the ability to lead that department, that area as a chief technology officer, and I think her friendships get in the way of sometimes doing the right thing. I think that gets in the way of making the tough decision.

Taking it a step further, he notes that perhaps some individuals in the college, himself included, question whether or not she is an authentic leader because they don't perceive her to be leading by example. "One of the things that we did [in TBM] was to identify the core values of the college and I think that was important…but a lot of people still have reservations…they believe that true leaders should lead by example and they don't always see that." One respondent provides greater insight into why some people question the authenticity of her leadership and believes that much of it stems from her personality and mannerisms – both of which seem distant and guarded to some. While the individual has gotten to know her well, she feels that others who only see her reserved personality perceive her as distant rather than open and transparent.

> Everywhere she goes, people know her as the president and because of that, she's a little guarded…so I find it interesting that she is as guarded as she is, because I think authenticity is important. One of the things I was trying to do is to be authentic and I think that when it comes to leadership, people see through a phony. They're just waiting to see you fall or fail because they can sniff you out. You can tell right. It's like come on, let out the real person you really are. So I think authenticity is huge and for whatever reason, she doesn't seem authentic and that would be reflective of things that [president of another college] and other people have said, so it is more guarded, but it comes off as guarded to some and to others it comes off as inauthentic.

Refuses to provide or push the college towards a broad vision

While the president has talked about being a premiere institution and effectively serving students, one interviewee does not see the college reaching to be a premiere institution. This is perplexing to him because he fails to see competition and feels a lack of vision is preventing the college from becoming a "vanguard" institution. "Personally,

we should be the vanguard institution of [region]. There is no real competition here. It's not like we have three large community colleges within so many miles of us." Another interviewee agreed with that statement and added the president has not provided a big picture or vision for college staff to strive towards and that current operations don't necessarily lead to student success.

> Her [President Johnson's] primary responsibility will be to set a vision for direction and put it into action…I think the leaders still need to have that big idea that get people impassioned and then they can make it happen and I don't think she's done that...you know, part of me personally sees no reason why we can't be the leader in higher education in [region], so that anybody who wants any kind of degree thinks about [Theta] first. That would be, to me, the big vision. So it's about image and reputation in everything that we do, everything we do and everywhere we are, she could sell that vision and we could make amazing things happen, but because we don't have that vision of being beyond a community college and an academic institution, all we're fighting for is academic sort of stuff…We're numbers driven and what they are most concerned about is getting the number of students in the door, whether we service those students is a totally different ballgame. So I don't know that we are really articulating what we're about.

One of the largest investments at the college is perhaps the greatest metaphor for institutional drift for a number of college staff – the civil services center. The president feels and articulates to individuals inside and outside of Theta that the center represents a focus on meeting community needs and producing first responders at a local, state, and national level. She notes that the completion of the center has been delayed, but the college has found alternative funding sources and the endeavor is well worth it.

> We went to the [responders] community and we garnered huge support. Most of the center has been funded by donations. I mean hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations have gone into that center and most of it has been in equipment and materials donations…we certainly thought that when we started down that road [seeking federal funding], we would get the funding and we didn't think that the system wasn't going to provide the funding. So what we did was we figure out how we would solve that. And we did that by turning to the [responders] groups and the center is largely

funded by that and has developed more slowly because we've depended upon donations.

An organizational staff member also feels the endeavor is well worth the time and commitment and will eventually serve to meet the needs of the college. He also concurs with the president, against the criticism that has come from faculty, that it is an institutional priority and should be a source of pride for the college.

> I think what they question, fundamentally, is whether this is an appropriate priority and I think her position has been like so many things that she does is that she has talked to them about it and conveyed the viewpoint that this particular project does provide a meaningful training opportunity for first responders in our area and well beyond and has it moved as fast as it should and it is shared, no, but it is a priority and should be recognized as something the institution should be proud of.

Two interviewees, however, interpret the situation differently and find it difficult to understand how it fits into the college mission or how the time and expense can be justified. Specifically, one interviewee takes issue at the amount of time and money that has gone into building a center that isn't even being used and feels that the college could put more time and money into areas in need of greater investment.

> It's the biggest waste of money we ever did. We have [millions] invested in it right now. The expectations is to have [millions more] invested once were done and we haven't had one class there and there's no business plan, but yet, the previous financial vice president and [a cabinet member] thought we should have it [and] know that there is a need [for transportation] programs and we could get more students into that type of program. When there's a school just an hour south of here that has six hundred automotive students and we have less than two hundred and it's a proprietary school. I mean they can't compete with us on cost and quality, but we don't put money into those areas… it's just an albatross. It's not meeting fiscal responsibility…Right now, we have [tens of thousands] of students and I have [less than two hundred] full-time faculty, [Regional four-year university], granted I don't like to compare us to four year institutions, but twenty thousand students and eight hundred full-time faculty. I don't think we have our priorities in the right place. Our priorities for many years was buildings and now we have a lot of buildings

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and we have some nice buildings, but they've been a waste of time and money.

Another respondent agreed that the center has been a waste of money and feels it represents a larger problem within the college. She feels that this center is a tangible representation of the executive team's desire to make decisions and pushing them out to the community instead of reflecting on the community's needs and requests. She notes that the building, which has been sitting on campus for some time now, does not even have a bathroom.

> It's my belief that the community college be reflective of the community and meet the needs of the community and instead we have a tendency to decide internally and then to try and, going to market terms, push it out there. And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, so for example, we have this whole [civil services] center over there and it's sitting empty and not being used. They built the building and they didn't even put a bathroom in it and we can't run any classrooms over there if there is no bathroom. So, its sitting empty and we've spent millions of dollars…it's never been used. Never ever been used…

Allows implementation of initiatives to stall

Perhaps the greatest concern with the president's detached leadership style is that implementation of initiatives, programs, and plans (especially with TBM), is slow and at times, never occurs. One respondent feels that participatory approaches to leadership are beneficial, but accountability can and needs to accompany it. He also feels that implementation is crucial for college staff because it communicates values and expectations.

> Even in leadership styles, participatory styles, decisions can be made quickly. It's like there's no sense of urgency here. It's like higher education just perpetuates perpetually. If I am constantly working on a project and it never gets resolved, there is no accountability…the small things that are internal, we don't get that resolved and it's no big deal, but it is a big deal to the employees, not just the faculty but the staff, to the other unions on

campus because they watch us to see how we interact and we watch them
to see how they interact and how fast we can get issues resolved.

Another college member, who has had staff in the leadership initiative and working on

team-based management, expressed concern that implementation is such an issue and

feels the college needs to find a way to ensure that projects and plans can be

implemented. "The [leadership initiative] came out at the same time as team-based

management and you have people doing all these projects and once they were done the

implementation pieces suffer…we are done with this…[now] how do we implement

this?" Another interviewee notes that since implementation of team-based management

plans is not occurring, faculty are beginning to view the entire process as a waste of time.

"If you surveyed the faculty, [they] would believe that's a waste of time. They come

up…what should be done…how it should be done and then nothing comes of it.

Implementation of the process all takes place at the cabinet level and it's not happening."

Another interviewee adds that the president's focus on team-based management as a tool

for increasing collaboration and participation in college operations has, thus far, been

ineffective.

You know, you can only sing Kumbaya for so long and a lot of [college
staff] believe that for us to move forward, because of her leadership style
and not wanting to make those tough decisions, will be difficult. Maybe
it's time for her to go, and again, I think maybe it's just because it takes so
long for things to happen and seven years is a long time to come in and
start to change things…

Perhaps staff perceptions will change in the near future, however, as a plan is now

in place to speed up the implementation of initiatives. While one organizational member

is in favor of the change, he notes that many faculty are skeptical and will believe

changes are coming when they actually see them.

I think most of the time it's the downward. The downward cycle [of hierarchical decision-making]. It's my hope that the pluralistic leadership could improve or better yet, change that. I don't necessarily believe the buy-in is as high as it should be or could be right now and I see it, I have thirteen members on my executive board from all areas of the college and they don't buy it, I mean some of them do, but not all of them buy it. But some of them just say it will never change. To really effectuate change there has to be changes in the leadership.

Despite these concerns, the college is moving forward in developing the new leadership model, however, perhaps unsurprisingly, implementation has been a concern. As a result, the college has granted a sabbatical to a faculty member to get the process up and running.

In conclusion, the president's detached leadership style appears to create issues as well as solutions for the college. While she empowers people to make decisions and take responsibility through a "non-managerial" approach to management, she appears to take an approach that is too detached from daily operations and has left the impression, to some college members, that she does not like to make decisions. By depending so heavily upon others to lead day-to-day operations without the benefit of a well-understood vision, the college is unable to proactively deal with changes and remains at the mercy of external pressures. Also, according to some of the interviewees, the president is personable and has been able to develop strong relationships with non-executive administrators and faculty; however, it appears as though the president's absence from everyday college functions has led those who aren't involved in major college initiatives to view her as a mystery. Not knowing the president has led to the perception that she is sending mixed messages as people question if organizational decisions and directions are really linked to student success, why people who appear to be ineffectual are kept while others who appear to disagree with the cabinet are demoted or fired, whether the

president is authentic or not, and why there is a mystique surrounding the cabinet and the president. Finally, the president's hand-off approach has led to issues with implementation as the cabinet appears to stifle plans and initiatives and people who are supposed to have a say in organizational decisions are shut out. In short, people are left confused as to where the college is heading, what values actually guide the college, and who their executive leader is.

Chapter VIII

Cross-Case Analysis of the Data

Introduction

Whereas the previous four results chapters provided information within the context of the individual cases, this chapter applies the lessons learned to the greater study. Instead of simply jumping into a discussion of the final selective codes, however, the researcher decided to more fully flesh out the concept of interviewee perceptions since the majority of information came from non-executive staff – people typically not connecting with the president on a daily basis and who depend upon perceptions to make judgments. The sections dealing with the power of organizational member perceptions are split into two sections; the first provides a brief synopsis of the literature on the importance of leader prototypicality and stereotypicality in determining leadership effectiveness and the second provides a connection between the literature and presidential behaviors. Next, the chapter provides the overarching selective codes for the study:

- Presidents within community colleges moving towards greater abundance consciously and consistently engage in positivity and optimism

- Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance are treat the development of human potential as an organizational priority

- Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance consciously work to ensure congruence between the organization and the environment

- Presidents within colleges moving towards greater abundance relish the opportunity to act as organizational anchor and sensemaker

As in the individual case site chapters, these overarching codes are categorized into two groups: one presenting behaviors associated with institutional movement towards greater abundance and the other presenting behaviors associated with institutional movement towards lesser abundance. While categorized within the four study propositions, the researcher chose to retain the selective codes from the individual case chapters and use them as axial codes in this cross case analysis in order to provide great insight into the behaviors discovered during the study while maintaining individual college context and perceptions of executive leader effectiveness.

Effectiveness and the Power of Perception

Executive leaders are expected to manage and change culture and their effectiveness would be measured by whether organizational change occurred or not. Horst (1989, p. 20) indicates that culture change is an exercise in "pain management" and that effective leaders will be rewarded with a successful change initiative while ineffective leaders will face retrenchment into previous values and assumptions. Based on the expectations of organizations, the authors note that change efforts are more likely to be successful when the process is participatory (Hammond, 1992; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1998), an environment of productive dissonance is afforded (Horst, 1989; Lundberg, 1985; Pappas, 1989; Turk, 1989), and organizational context is considered and central to change efforts (Adams & Ingersoll, 1985; Maynard-Moody et al., 1986; Wilkins & Bristow, 1987). In fact, research conducted by Reger, Mullane, Gustafson, and DeMarie (1994) established that institutional context is key, as change efforts ill fitted to organizational needs will always fail. In other words,

effectiveness is not just a tangible, quantifiable measure, but rather, is subject to the perceptions of organizational members.

Perception is at the heart of whether leaders are viewed as effective or not, but what are the underlying assumptions that lead individuals to assess whether a leader is effective? Hogg (1996) explains that the very notion of leadership (an attribute assigned to managers) is based on how the individual processes and utilizes information from their environment to determine what it means to lead and to follow. This processing of information is based on a clustering of behaviors believed to effectively guide followers and provide direction for an organization. Hogg, Hains, and Mason (1998) add that this process is reflective of leader categorization theory, whereby individuals categorize behaviors, attitudes, and actions into leader and follower behaviors. Moreover, this process is influenced by the degree to which leaders are viewed to possess the stereotypical qualities assigned to leaders – a concept identified in the literature as *stereotypicality*. Individuals within organizations formulate leader behavior schemas to assist them in predicting and interpreting the actions of executive leaders. These behaviors are often based on stereotypical beliefs about the role of a leader within the given context and these stereotypical beliefs are powerful and heavily influence followers' perceptions of leader effectiveness.

While stereotypicality is important to the perception of effective leadership, it does not fully explain how effectiveness is perceived. Thompson (2000) found that many of the stereotypical leader behaviors specific to the great man (trait) theories are no longer perceived as reflective of effective leadership and that leaders are often perceived as more effective when their behaviors match the expectations of the group they lead – a

concept known as leadership ***prototypicality***. Dickson, Resick, and Hanges (2006) conducted research to determine if prototypical effective leadership varies by organizational value system and found perceptions of leadership and prototypes were shared across organizations with similar value systems while differing significantly from organizations with different systems. In their study, they found that bureaucratic organizations perceived autocratic leaders to be effective while more externally focused organizations perceived transformational and human resource focused leaders to be more effective. Additionally, Hains, Hogg, and Duck (1997) discovered that group salience significantly enhanced the effectiveness ratings of prototypical leaders while lowering the effectiveness ratings of non-prototypical leaders since perceptions of effectiveness and acceptance of the management approach were premised upon the contextually explicit in-group expectations. Pierro, Cicero, Bonaiuto, van Knippenberg, and Kruglanski (2005) found that prototypicality becomes even more important under situations of organizational uncertainty and ambiguity since people look to their subculture for sensemaking and follow leaders engaging in management behaviors congruent with subcultural expectations. The research on stereotypicality and prototypicality indicates that individuals seek to follow leaders meeting their expectations and rate these leaders as more effective. Depending on the level of group salience, individuals move from expecting, seeking, and rating generally accepted leadership behaviors and attitudes as effective to expecting, seeking, and rating group prototypical behaviors as effective.

While group prototypicality is a major factor in determining whether organizational members will perceive a leader as effective, the literature on perceptions of leadership effectiveness has identified a number of behaviors and abilities that

typically lead to perceptions of effectiveness. Balkundi and Kilduff (2005) found that organizational members are more likely to rate leaders as effective when they are able to work within, develop, and nurture diverse and inter-organizational networks. Bourgeois III (1985) conducted a study to find what leader behaviors are perceived as effective under conditions of organizational distress and found that members were more likely to rate leaders as effective when they were able to provide goal congruence between individuals throughout the organization. Other literature indicates that individuals seek out leaders dedicated to the needs of the organization (Tsui, Ashford, St. Clair, & Xin, 1995) and who are willing to engage in self-sacrificing behaviors for the good of the organization (DeCremer & van Knippenberg, 2004; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2004). Perceptions of consistently exerting extra effort and fully explaining decisions were seen as proof that the leader values individuals in the organization and were positively associated with higher ratings of effectiveness while self sacrifice was viewed as an indication of effectiveness when coupled with high confidence in low prototypicality settings.

In addition to the behaviors listed above, there are abilities associated with effective leadership within the literature. George (2000) proposed that since leadership and followership is emotionally based, leaders showing a high level of emotional intelligence would be viewed as more effective. She found that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the development of shared goals, development of a learning culture, and the initiation of excitement, enthusiasm, optimism, confidence, trust, and flexibility. Running community colleges is becoming an increasingly political endeavor, and Treadway, Hochwarter, Ferris, Kacmar, Douglas, Ammeter, and Buckley (2004)

proposed that political skill is an ability central to the effective leader. What they found was high levels of political savvy were correlated with perceptions of effective leadership and led to increased levels of support and trust. In addition to an increased need for political savvy, the increasingly dynamic and turbulent environments community colleges find themselves in demand more flexible and creative leaders. Denison, Hooijberg, and Quinn (1995) found that managers able to navigate and utilize a diverse set of leadership roles and styles were perceived as effective and felt that leaders in the future must have this ability.

Perception, Effectiveness, and Presidential Behaviors

This brief synopsis of the impact of perceptions of effectiveness is an ideal bridge into a discussion of the presidential behaviors associated with both institutional movement towards and away from abundance. Since community colleges are professional bureaucracies, there are no standard perceptions of effective presidential behaviors as the administrative and professional subcultures are often at odds over definitions of effective and appropriate behaviors. The concept of leadership prototypicality addresses this issue, as leaders perceived as effective will engage in behaviors congruent with in-group values. In other words, presidential behaviors perceived as effective will possess some measure of congruence with the values guiding members of the various subcultures – particularly the professional subculture. This concept is crucial because moving towards abundance is predicated upon transcendently leveraging intangible resources within the college, and this resource can only be leveraged if organizational members experience ownership at the organizational level. More than anything, it will be the perception of effectiveness by a critical mass of

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individuals in the various subcultures that lead college staff to buy-in and grant access to full efforts and tacit knowledge. This is one of the main reasons this study depended primarily on the perceptions of those working under the president and more heavily on those working outside of the executive team. As non-executive team members, these individuals rely more heavily on their inferences and perceptions of leadership behaviors since they do not report directly to the president and, based on the sheer size of the colleges, are the individuals most responsible for the daily operations of the college. Whether teaching students, managing the college's finances, initiating and delivering on workforce contracts, maintaining the facilities, or ensuring that files are maintained, phone calls are answered, and schedules are kept, colleges cannot operate without these individuals and cannot reach greater abundance without substantial buy-in and the perception of ownership.

Their perceptions of effectiveness, largely based upon current institutional context and past history, is crucial in understanding whether presidential behaviors will be perceived as effective; therefore leading to buy-in and the ability for the college to transcendently leverage this crucial resource. Due to the unique histories, contexts, and leadership styles of the presidents within the four case sites, they were presented with full detail in the previous chapters to allow for differential interpretations of effectiveness, as perceived by college staff. This chapter, however, will provide overarching selective codes of leadership behaviors, based upon the underlying assumptions of the abundance model detailed in chapter two. While Iota Community College was the only college identified as abundant, the majority of the selective codes across the four colleges provided insight into the specific behaviors associated with moving a community college

towards greater abundance. In other words, each of the colleges precluded from reaching abundance provided useful information on the behaviors associated with a move towards abundance. Additionally, useful information was gathered about the leadership behaviors preventing these three colleges from classification as an abundant college. All three presidents are highly regarded leaders, some of whom have even received national recognition; however, there are behaviors incongruent with the assumption of the abundance model and limit the ability of the colleges to transcendently leverage its tangible, intangible, and leadership resources. The following section will provide a summary of the presidential behaviors, categorized by the four overarching propositions and across the four case sites, responsible for either influencing or inhibiting movement towards greater abundance.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Greater Abundance

Consciously and Consistently Engage in Positivity and Optimism

Enabled the development of an ethical and collegial climate

While all of the colleges studied provided interesting and useful information, Gamma Community College was by far the outlier of the group. The dedication to and respect for maintaining a rigid hierarchical structure stands in stark contrast to the participatory approach espoused by the other three colleges. However, this hierarchical approach is generally perceived by the individuals interviewed, including those outside of the executive team, as effective and a catalyst for the institution's success. One of President Smith's primary goals was to transform the climate of the college – a successful endeavor based upon many of the comments provided by interviewees. Prior to his arrival, the college was largely burned out from the previous president and according to

interviewees, the college had "lost its humanity." President Smith was hired to reestablish the college's humanity and did so by engaging the institution in ethical and humanistic behaviors. First, he understood that he must be viewed as an authentic leader, something attainable only when there is trust. From the outset, he looked to establish trusting relationships, realizing it would take time and consistency between words and actions.

President Smith continues to appreciate his position as role model for the college and in order to move the culture from distrust and anger to civility; he understood that people must see congruence between his words and actions. One respondent has been constantly impressed with how ethically Dr. Smith behaves and how he has provided a living, breathing example of how to live out ethics in everyday work life. "Dr. Smith is a person of very high ethical standards and he believes very strongly in personal responsibility and he thinks there is a right way to handle the situations and you should do so at every opportunity and he would like all of us to show that philosophy." Based on a comment from another interviewee, the president has always been seen as an authentic leader, allowing college members to see and internalize the values of civility and care he speaks of with consistency. Nearly every interviewee talked about the expectations, how they were based upon Dr. Smith's behaviors, and how they provided tangible suggestions for behaving in civil and caring manners regardless of position, job duties, or level within the hierarchy. An administrator not only talked about the expectations and high ethical standards of the president, but also about how these behaviors have been institutionalized and plays out in interactions between individuals throughout the college. "I think the culture provides for everybody being supported and people are respectful of each other and…it's not just that I'm giving you the word that you want to hear…they truly enjoy

being here and I think people generally are very accepting of each other." This sentiment was supported by quotes from a benefits consultant who felt the college has "some kind of magic" allowing it to keep people at the college for a career. This statement lends credence to the fact that the college is maintaining a healthy and person-centered climate.

Dr. Smith understands that strong internal partnerships are essential to successful organizational change and as a result, he worked, from his first day at the college, to end the conflict between the faculty and administrative subcultures. An administrator explained that "from the very beginning he was very much focused on forming a partnership with the president of the faculty association." This action has paid dividends over the years, as not only has the relationship between faculty and senior administration been improved, but faculty members have been influential in transforming the climate into one of civility and respect. Dr. Smith believes that faculty members have bought into the organizational values of respect, thereby creating a climate of respect, citing recent negotiations as an example. Even after the president arrived, labor negotiations were often long and drawn out due to hostility and animosity from both sides. However, the climate has softened over time and even contract negotiations have reached a level of calmness and civility. An organizational member agrees that the current climate is civil and credits the change to the president and the trust faculty members have in his leadership and college direction. "I know that the majority of the faculty have a lot of respect for him and they look at him as a leader and people are confident in that he is going to make the decisions for the college and these will have the college and the faculty's best interests at heart."

According to Dr. Smith, ensuring that a climate of civility and respect exists requires meeting people's needs and ensuring that they are cared for in a respectful manner. This principle is premised on the ability to both focus on the person and the situation while treating the two independently. One of his guiding philosophies, echoed by both him and other college staff, is that disagreement is part of working together, but disagreements must never become personal nor should an employee lash out against a co-worker. One of the more difficult situations a president will deal with is receiving criticism, however, an administrator explained the president is upfront, deals with the content rather than the attack and "you know, I still haven't seen him lose his temper." An administrative assistant, who has also seen him in difficult situations explained, "Interestingly enough…I have not seen him get defensive and I've seen him approach them in ways that try to explain to the person why the decision has been made." A college staff member provided another useful example when talking about how the president dealt with an angry and belligerent father. Angry that his daughter would not be able to complete her clinicals and graduate after the current semester, the father began yelling at everyone in the room – including the president. He simply informed the father that disrespect was not allowed and that if he didn't settle down, the meeting would end. Regardless of the situation, Dr. Smith has modeled respect and civility and it has filtered its way throughout the college and altered the climate.

A final area where the president has modeled behaviors designed to increase the level of respect and civility is in regards to mistakes. An administrator notes that that the president looks beyond mistakes, not to "hammer people over the head" as President Smith likes to say, and towards the next steps in reaching a solution. "He is not one of

those presidents who is going to focus on mistakes. He is going to focus on what you're intending to do and if that didn't happen, what did happen and what did we learn from it." Another respondent provided an example of respect and civility when mistakes were egregious or the fit between the employees and their positions was so poor that they needed to be removed. The president was still concerned about the people and wanted to ensure their needs were met, they were respected, and were able to maintain their dignity. The president has not only promoted a philosophy of respect, but has lived it out in his actions and that congruence has ensured that organizational members emulate the behaviors and has played a part in transforming the climate from one of hostility and bitterness to one of civility and respect.

Developed the college's ability to amplify its impact

Iota Community College is not located in an affluent area and has seen its main source of jobs, those in the manufacturing sector, cut by 2/3 over the last twenty years. ICC is the only public higher education provider in the county and has aggressively taken on the role of regional workforce engine by expanding retraining efforts, meeting existing and emerging workforce needs, and growing new industries. At the same time, ICC has increased its ability to meet the educational needs of traditional and non-traditional students alike. The college has successfully delivered upon its missions by developing organizational hopefulness, optimism, and a dedication that goes beyond meeting the traditional higher education needs of its service area. This broader vision and greater sense of purpose, based on the comments of an administrator, starts at the president, but has found its way into the DNA of the college. Labeled as an abundant approach, he feels the vision stems from a mutual gains approach to operations where everyone benefits

from the college's operations and hopefulness and optimism create an environment where the impossible becomes possible. "He's tried to put the focus on the positive, you know, that there's a sense of confidence, a sense of optimism, and that's been a real push the last few years and he makes lots of references to the abundance model…[he wants] the college to work within [it]." The president functions within the abundance model and this has led an institutional staff member to describe Dr. Harrison as an abundant leader. That is, President Harrison operates beyond the traditional boundaries of what a president does and works to ensure the college reaches its potential. Rather than focusing on the present and the local, this individual feels that the president is looking at the college's potential from a global and future-oriented perspective with the goal of ensuring access to education for county residents.

By establishing the college as the gateway for education within the county, one interviewee suggests that the president has worked to ensure that the county can adapt to changing external conditions based on the understanding that increasing the number of educated citizens is essential to future regional growth. "He would like to see the college be at the forefront of moving the county forward economically and…[it will require] higher education in order to make that happen…so, we need to up the amount of people in the county with a college education [to move forward]." This focus on improving the county as a whole, according to another respondent, is proof that the college has taken on the personality of the president and his "ethical and caring" nature. She feels that, at its core, the college is focused on doing whatever is necessary to improve the quality of life for all residents, a commitment that plays out in the college's operations.

While ICC has adequate financial resources and is able to avoid financial crises, the college does not possess copious finances. Rather, delivering on the greater vision of the college, which is a reality more than an aspiration, is achieved by relying on transcendently leveraging human and organizational resources. A respondent indicates that the president always has his eye out for individuals with substantial skills and drive. In elaborating on this concept, she provides herself as an example of the president looking for individuals with the personality and skill set to assist the college in realizing its potential.

> I came on as a part-time employee to coordinate the [college] program, and jobs and family services, and it was a small job and very part-time and I think that he [President Harrison] and the division dean and the vice president for academic affairs identified some skills and abilities that I had and they brought me forward into a temporary full-time position and then three years later, my job was open to a national search for a year and they invited me into the formal process…he watches for good talent.

According to a campus administrator, the president not only looks for talented individuals, but also pushes them to the limits of their abilities based on his belief that they will deliver and in turn, help the college "overachieve." She explains he takes the "break all the rules approach" and instead of focusing on the weaknesses of certain organizational members, he instead spends his energy and effort on the "high performers." In addition to getting the most out of the college staff, President Harrison focuses heavily on developing partnerships to increase the college's reach, decrease costs and outlays, and increase the number of boundary spanning networks available to the county and region. When asked about how active the college is in partnering, one interviewee answered, "It's huge. I've never seen anything like it…none of the schools that I've ever dealt with actively had partnerships like this… I didn't even know schools

did things like this [build buildings on campus based on partnerships]." As a result of the president's vigorous efforts to establish partnerships benefiting the college and the county, a college member has dubbed the president "king of partnerships…I truly believe that and as I watch him at some of the events, he is always looking for another opportunity to bring someone in to supplement what we do here and to expand our services…and he is the best at doing it, bar none." When interviewees were asked what partnership established by the president has been the most important, nearly all felt it is the four-year center located on the campus of ICC. With no other public higher education institution in the county, an administrator notes that students were not attaining four-year degrees, a prerequisite for bringing in new economy and knowledge driven jobs and industries. He also adds that locating the building directly behind the two-year academic building provides the message that attaining a four-year degree is a college priority. Partnerships, however, are not always established because the president reaches out. As an organizational member explained, representatives from the state's higher education board have been reaching out to the college based on the college's stellar reputation of exceeding expectations.

In addition to developing partnerships, Dr. Harrison has pushed the college to become a partnership incubator by establishing networks of partners able to meet the needs of a globalized economy. He takes the responsibility seriously and looks at these opportunities as long-term relationships rather than business transactions. "We try to be very strategic with our partnership development, recognizing that partnerships tend to endure over long periods of time, and once you have developed that partnership you have the opportunity to parlay those relationships into further partnership[s]." One respondent

provided information on two activities initiated by the president to create new partners

for networks for county and college – both of which are related to supporting current and

attracting new entrepreneurs into the county. The college has constructed a building on

campus designed to provide space and connections for entrepreneurs and has established

an innovation fund designed to provide seed money for new endeavors. These initiatives

were created for the purpose of developing jobs in the county and providing the training

and education necessary for employees in emerging fields.

The president has instilled his positive and optimistic beliefs about the college's

potential throughout the organization and members have bought into the greater vision of

working to improve the lives of individuals throughout the region. While not imbued with

abundant monetary resources, the president has engaged in behaviors designed to get

more out of the college than traditional leveraging would allow. By finding and

developing highly skilled and internally motivated individuals and transforming the

college from a partner into a network hub and incubator, the college is able to

transcendently leverage opportunities towards greater service to stakeholders. By doing

so, ICC has reached the point where the county would be far worse off without the

college.

Attempting to establish positivity as a cultural value

Theta Community College is in a transitory state between fully embracing and

internalizing the value changes proposed by President Johnson and holding on to the

hierarchical values embedded deep within the culture. Interviewees noted that changes

were necessary and no one presented the situation as clearly as one of the college

administrators. "We were ready to self-destruct before, so we very much needed someone

to come in and help us to grow…she changed the culture, the values, but also the behaviors internally as well." Another respondent provided his own decision to join the college last year as testament to the fact that the college has experienced dramatic cultural change under President Johnson. During interviews and campus visits, he saw no evidence of the campus culture he had been warned about. Not only did the previous culture embrace dictatorial leadership, but according to a long-tenured interviewee, there was also a climate of fear and retribution that led to statusquoism and stifled creativity. "In the old culture you didn't do anything until you got a direct order and then you did exactly what you were told to do, no more, no less."

Even before Dr. Johnson began her tenure at the college, organizational members realized the culture would go through major changes upon her arrival. A college staff member talked about feeling that the culture would be changed for the better based on the fact that President Johnson talked openly, was blatantly honest, and spoke of putting people first – all of which were absent under previous administrations. President Johnson understood that the culture was one that valued hierarchy and opening up the college to non-executive staff would have to be a priority. She began working, from the beginning of her tenure, to dismantle the hierarchical structures by pushing for participation and collaboration, getting input from staff throughout the college, and increasing transparency. One of the respondents has seen the impact of her efforts and notes that, slowly, the college is starting to value collaboration and trust is increasing. He has witnessed individuals and units tearing down their "silos", silos put up to both protect themselves from retribution and to limit information sharing. "[Theta] seems to be really

enveloping the whole collaborative atmosphere and slowly but surely, they're starting to break down some of the silos on-campus and getting more lateral information flow."

According to interviewees, perhaps the greatest area of change during President Johnson's tenure involves the improving relationship between administration and faculty. One college administrator has seen a decrease in the animosity between administrators and faculty during contract negotiations and explained that both sides are now considering a new approach to bargaining, one based on openness and trust known as mutual gains. Five years ago, nobody on Theta's campus could imagine a win-win approach to negations, but President Johnson and the faculty union are actively pushing the mutual gains approach. An organizational member has personally experienced the benefits of improved relations between the president's office and college faculty and provided her story as an example. She had accepted a position at another community college based upon her level of dissatisfaction at Theta; however, she decided to stay when asked by the president to assist with the development of new, inclusive initiatives. Comments from two other staff indicate that Theta's leadership initiative, a leadership development tool spearheaded by the president, has been a catalyst for culture change as it has provided tangible proof that leadership opportunities are being created for individuals located throughout the hierarchy. An administrator stated, "She initiated the [Theta Leadership Initiative], four or five years ago, and it is very specifically geared toward middle level administrators and faculty that we want to develop and cultivate our own leadership within the college." Another respondent has been impressed not only with Dr. Johnson's foresight in bringing this opportunity to the college, but also in the breadth of representation within the initiative.

In addition to pushing leadership throughout the college, President Johnson has worked to increase the level and flow of communication throughout the college. In the past, communication was purposefully stifled, but under her tenure, communication has become a catalyst for positive change within the culture. "Opening communication at [Theta] meant valuing individual points of view without fear of retribution…you could express your perspectives and your points of view …you could literally open that door to the communications across the college." One interviewee provided a recent example of how President Johnson is working to ensure better communication. He explained that the college was not dealing effectively with faculty grievances as they were arriving at the provost's office after already being filed. There were no discussions or opportunities for intervention or resolution. To resolve this, the president pushed for a reorganization of the HR office so that it reports to the vice president of finance instead of the president. Another respondent believes that, although not its primary purpose, the leadership initiative has also been an effective communication tool used by the president. In the past, individuals rarely worked with people outside of their units, so institutional stereotyping was prevalent and she credits the initiative with decreasing the level of distrust and bitterness.

Another tactic President Johnson has used to develop more positive values within the culture is increasing openness and transparency. Upon her arrival, the president noticed that she was having difficulty providing the budget to the college and viewed the situation as an opportunity to provide tangible proof that openness and transparency are values that she wants guiding TCC. An administrator provided another example of how the president communicated that under her leadership; the college would be more open

and transparent. She was impressed by the use of open houses to welcome non-executive staff into her office, a behavior diametrically opposed to those of previous administrations. "She had some open houses to say, this is everyone's, this isn't just my private territory here…and I think that set the tone right away that it's very open door…[and] we need to work together for this to be successful or none of us are going to be."

Finally, the president worked to instill more positivity into the college by pushing for professional development as an institutional priority. While available to college staff in the past, the president reaffirmed her commitment to institutional members by allowing them to take advantage of opportunities that were previously unavailable. Two individuals presented personal examples of the tremendous opportunities that they were encouraged to take based on the potential for personal and professional growth. One of the individuals was able to travel to Italy to learn about child development and the other takes more than a dozen trips a year for professional reasons and neither believes they would have had these opportunities under previous administrations. In addition to allowing individuals to take advantage of external opportunities, Dr. Johnson has pushed for an increase in internal development as well. A campus administrator reported that under her tenure, President Johnson has revamped the professional development department and hired a full-time staff member to oversee the office. This has resulted in a range of formal and informal development opportunities available to any and all staff at the college.

Summary

Information from three of the four cases provided support for the fact that colleges moving towards greater abundance have presidents who are consciously and consistently engaging in behaviors classified as positive and optimistic. In the case of Gamma Community College, the previous administration left the college with a climate of distrust and hostility. Despite the positive gains from a hard-charging change agent, the college was burnt out and in need of a president who would come in and, in the words of numerous interviewees, act like a father figure. Organizational members needed guidance on how to treat each other and work together across units, departments, and divisions. From the outset, the president modeled civil and respectful behaviors, regardless of the situations, in an effort to help the climate develop into one valuing people and opinions. Over time, he even developed expectations credited with providing concrete markers for instilling civility into the daily operations of all staff.

In the case of Iota Community College, the president has worked to drive optimism throughout the college as well as the county and region. By pushing for a broader institutional mission, he has provided a vision that drives people to push themselves beyond their perceived limits in an effort to transcend the typical impact of a community college. Focusing on quality of life enhancement, the president has worked to find and develop highly skilled and driven people and has transformed ICC into a network hub and incubator, not just a partnering institution. The result of this transition is an institution able to assist an entire region in successfully adjusting from a manufacturing economy to one increasingly populated by knowledge and sustainability based industries.

In the case of Theta Community College, President Johnson has worked to transform a culture that valued opacity, "siloing", and knowledge hording, to one that increasingly values people, openness, and communication. From the beginning of her tenure, she has provided opportunities and created initiatives designed to increase communication, encourage openness and trust, and care for the well-being of college staff. While changes have not been fully realized, her push for positivity has effectively transformed the institution and interviewees agree that the culture is healthier and the institution is headed in the right direction.

Treat the Development of Human Potential as an Organizational Priority

Prioritizes finding and developing good people

President Davis arrived at Alpha Community College with a different leadership style than previous administrations. He believes in providing opportunities for decision-making and direction-setting to all college staff, concepts foreign to the staff at ACC. Authority. The shift from an autocratic to more democratic leadership style was difficult for many organizational members, as they had to reinterpret institutional expectations, values, and their roles, and some individuals made the adjustments easier than others. While seeking to adjust the culture of ACC, President Davis realized that the college needed people who were not only high skilled, but also committed to his new vision of the college. "The most important thing I do is to hire really, really good people. People who believe in the mission of the college, who are hard working, experienced… [and when] we agree on some sort of plan…I really give them space and I insist that they work as a team." Teamwork is important to Dr. Davis and since he believes in the goodness and talent of people, he places his full trust in the executive staff. While noting the

college had plenty of "good people" when he arrived, he explained that the executive team did not contain a single individual able to adjust to the new dispersed leadership model. The cabinet members did not embrace his new style of leadership and were, in fact, obstacles to the president's vision of the college. Faculty members also play an important role in culture change and the president needed to get buy-in from a critical mass for the deep institutional change he envisioned to occur. This task was made more difficult because some faculty had been at the college since its inception and previous presidents were described as automatons. This history made it difficult for some faculty to adjust their interactions with and expectations of administrators. One administrator noted that faculty retirements have allowed new faculty members committed to a new vision to enter the college. "We have a new crop of faculty coming on…and things are changing because…some of the newer people…being frank, they're willing to jump on [to new changes or initiatives]." Another respondent also pointed to retirements within the staff and administrator ranks as catalysts for change. "There's a lot of new blood at the college and I think a lot of the old views and old ways of doing things have gone and the ones who are still here are no longer in the majority and life has changed…Everybody is just interested in making things work here." Through intentionally changing the cabinet as well as retirements at other levels, the college now, in the opinion of Dr. Davis, has a critical mass of "good people" whose perspectives and attitudes fit with the vision.

After ensuring the right people were in the college, President Davis focused on providing sufficient development opportunities to ensure people are able to grow and develop, both personally and professionally. While Alpha has struggled financially over the last decade, the president explained that he has never considered eliminating travel

opportunities for college staff. He also feels that rather than mandating that people take advantage of opportunities, he wants a culture where individuals push and challenge themselves to avail themselves of learning opportunities. An administrator explains this climate of intentional development and continuous improvement represents an evolutionary shift from the previous culture as in the past, no one traveled outside of the county. In addition to ensuring a climate of continuous improvement, President Davis focused on increasing opportunities for professional development on campus. He did so by developing a full-fledged professional development office with a full-time administrator, who reported directly to him, and a full-time administrative assistant. He provided the office with a substantial budget and also makes additional funds available to supplement organization-wide initiatives.

In addition to providing opportunities for professional development, the president also focused on, depending upon who is asked, pushing people to the reach their personal and professional potential. An organizational member has experienced stretching during Dr. Davis' tenure and believes the president consciously pushes people beyond their perceived capacities and abilities. "I think we all experience that there is a sense of being stretched and there's a lot being asked of us…and I think it is part of the style and I have to think it's a conscious thing." Another interviewee feels the president pushes people by putting more on their plates and advocating for leadership and development opportunities. She also feels the pushing occurs because President Davis is astute and sees the potential others don't. On the other hand, others, including the president himself, do not interpret his enthusiasm for and focus on personal and professional development as pushing. President Davis believes people stretch because they work in a climate of

continuous improvement and have internal motivation to improve themselves professionally. "I really don't think that I do [push], except by example…I hire really good people and they're incredibly self-motivated, I don't have to push them…they're just hard driving, I mean it…I just get out of their way." An administrator agrees that development occurs as a natural reaction to Dr. Davis' continual encouragement for people to realize their potential. A college administrator expanded on the concept of encouraging by explaining that the president has high expectations for the college and its staff. He feels that the expectations are what push people based on a philosophy that reaching for "low fruit" (easily obtainable outcomes) is unacceptable. Another interviewee provided additional information on the concept of high expectations. He believes President Davis is very conscious about setting expectations for continuous improvement and providing various avenues for people to achieve greater personal and professional development.

In summary, regardless of whether staff classify it as pushing or not, they feel stretched and understand that expectations for continuous improvement, starting with staff and encompassing the entire college, is a central organizational value.

Pushing for high expectations and responsibility to students and the college

Before Dr. Smith's arrival at Gamma Community College, the college was seen as high achieving based upon the efforts of their hard driving, change-agent president. Based on comments by interviewees, however, the focus appeared to be on change, not on students, ethics, or values. President Smith continued the focus on high achievement, but according to two individuals, his focus was and continues to be, students and personal accountability. One interviewee, when asked about how Dr. Smith would describe the

ideal culture, proclaimed "If he went to any student on this campus and asked them is the college doing everything it can to meet your needs to be successful and whoever he went to and every student said yes, then I think we would be there." Another respondent, while also expressing that the president wants students to be served effectively, explained that Dr. Smith wants college staff taking accountability and responsibility for their actions. "He would want one that, it is one where everybody would take full responsibility for their duties and their actions and their jobs and that everybody would have a very full understanding of the students' needs and requirements." In short, the president wants the students' needs met and college staff to live up to his high standards of personal accountability and responsibility.

President Smith spoke passionately about developing a high-performing college, one guided by individuals motivated toward excellence – something he realizes will only be accomplished by individuals stretching and consistently improving. "I talk about it [high performance]…it is not just about getting the job done. We must get the job done well…it's not enough to get the job done, one must get the job done well and I talk about excellence as a part of that." Getting the job done well requires exceptional effort and energy from individuals throughout the college, a concept expanded upon by one of the college's administrators. She explained that people in the college are pushed by Dr. Smith's expectations for excellence and find an ethical way to ensure that goals are achieved and excellence is attained. "We talk about the [Gamma] Way and that is to bite off more than you feel like you can chew…yet we end up by hook or by hook…I've never seen anything he has done even remotely illegal, but we do, you know, we find a way to get it done." While a president could mandate and aggressively push people to

reach for excellence, a college member explains that Dr. Smith consciously encourages people to stretch and strive for higher goals. He feels this method has been effective in pushing college staff, and therefore the college, towards the realization of excellence. He pushes for a high achieving environment, according to another interviewee, because he wants both people and the college to succeed. While not directly pushing people, the faculty member notes that college staff understand the importance of growth based upon the president's constant focus on the need for continued development. "He consciously would like faculty and staff to succeed at the highest levels that they can. I think that is important to him. He talks about it at just about every in-service and so I know he verbalizes [it]." A Gamma staff member believes that more than his words, Dr. Smith's personal efforts to reach toward excellence inspires people to reach for excellence within their own lives and positions. "He does inspire excellence from people because he will go above and beyond and I think that does engender loyalty and people are willing to produce." Another respondent also views the president as an inspiration to the college and feels that by continually reaching toward excellence, he has crafted a "business atmosphere" where competition exists – competition to see which units and divisions can achieve excellence.

In addition to reaching for excellence, the president has firmly established the importance of ethics and personal responsibility and two individuals spoke about how they feel accountable to and responsible for the college's direction. One interviewee views the committees created under President Smith as a catalyst for helping non-executive administrative staff take responsibility for their actions and over their divisions.

An administrator discussed the level of responsibility and accountability he feels at the college. Attributing this to the atmosphere created by Dr. Smith, he explains that while in previous non-academic vice-presidencies, he was responsible for more staff and a larger budget, but never felt the sense of ownership and accountability that he feels at GCC. He bases this increased sense of ownership and responsibility on Dr. Smith's continual calls for accountability and effective service to students.

Professional development plays heavily into the environment of higher expectations and personal responsibility and an administrator indicates that during her career, she has never experienced the depth and breadth of opportunities available to her at GCC. "I feel that in all the positions that I have had over the years, that I've probably had many more opportunities to develop and more professional development opportunities here than anywhere else." Focusing on one of the initiatives started during his tenure, the president spoke proudly about the institution of six-month sabbaticals for non-academic staff. These sabbaticals, like those available to faculty, provide staff with full pay while engaging in activities designed to ensure personal growth for staff and, as a result, increased performance for the college. One of the respondents talked about another initiative started by the president, one in which a research university with a doctoral program in higher education leadership provided on-campus coursework to a cohort of administrators. In conjunction with the opportunity for sabbaticals, he explained this unique opportunity has helped numerous individuals start and finish advanced degrees.

Treats college staff as the preeminent institutional resource

The underlying assumptions behind the abundance framework is that tangible, intangible, and leadership resources need to be transcendently leveraged in order for a

college to reach its potential. However, indications are that effectively leveraging human capital is the key to unlocking abundance. Iota Community College, as guided by President Harrison, has internalized this concept and, according to an administrator, has effectively created an environment where individuals throughout the college feel valued. "You feel that he values every individual from a maintenance worker to the vice presidents. [President Harrison] truly instills that we are all here for one purpose and we're part of a team and we're all equal even thought we have different jobs and responsibilities." In addition to feeling valued, individuals throughout the college feel empowered to pursue activities and initiatives in the best interest of the college. An institutional staff member provided an example of how President Harrison empowered and supported him in an effort to improve the long-term health of the college in spite of objections from his immediate supervisor.

> …I was elected to chair the staff counsel and that's a position with a lot of responsibility and there is a lot of work to it and…[it] was taking twenty and sometimes almost thirty hours of work a week and…So I talked to Dr. [Harrison] about it and he told me how important the role was for the good of the college and he just kept encouraging me…But my director gave me the worst review that I ever and [said] we need you more over here doing the job you were hired to do…So I took a bullet for the team…The work that I'd done for the staff counsel helped and it pushed the institution forward and my director came back to me and was happy about it and he even adjusted my review...

Interviewees also mentioned that the president is constantly seeking input outside of the executive team on major decisions and a campus administrator shared a personal example of how her input played a role in making a major organizational decision. In fact, she feels the majority of decisions made by the president are college decisions based upon the tremendous amount of input Dr. Harrison gathers. In addition to reaching out to individuals, ICC depends upon the campus' input bodies to determine direction and make

decisions and the most important decision-making body identified by respondents is the

institutional council (IC). This group consists of the executive team, faculty senate

president, staff council president, and student government president, meets weekly, and

operates on a consensus model rather than a majority rules approach. Not only does the

president seek out representative input and depend upon the activities of the [IC], but he

was the driving force behind the development of the staff council. According to an

administrator,

> [Until the mid 1990s], the staff counsel did not exist and since there was
> no staff counsel, it was really him saying to the staff that if you want to
> organize as a group they would be analogous to the faculty senate and
> ensure your representative in the decision-making process, we would
> welcome it, and so he actually worked with them for that to happen.

Gathering diverse input has been a priority throughout his tenure and as a result,

he reorganized the entire college's organizational structure, including positions, reporting

lines, and titles, shortly after assuming the presidency. In addition to increasing the

effectiveness and efficiency of communication, the flattened structure and smaller

administration requires staff and faculty to stay involved in decision-making and

direction-setting to ensure the college operates effectively. Perhaps the greatest example

of diverse input is reflected in the college's visioning processes. President Harrison has

tweaked the makeup of visioning committees over the years and in the recently

completed process, input came not only from internal and external stakeholders, but

teams responsible for gathering and interpreting the information. He explains that in

order to serve the college's stakeholders, external stakeholders must have an equal say in

where the college is heading.

In regards to pushing for professional development, ICC was unique in the fact

that interviewees provided numerous examples of informal professional development

available to all college staff. A college manager, when asked about professional

development opportunities made available to her, talked about the importance of

mentoring and other informal development opportunities. "I see the administration here

and other people as leaders and as mentors. Whenever you have questions or discomfort,

you can have a chat session, just an informal talk..." Another respondent answered in a

similar fashion and explained that he often seeks out advice and opinions from executive

team members because he feels he can grow and develop by learning how these

individuals have reached their level of success. Of all the examples provided in this

study, none provided greater insight into how empowerment encourages college members

to grant access to their tacit knowledge, personal interests, and best efforts than the one

provided by one of the campus administrators at Iota Community College. She believes

that any activity, if it has merit and can lead to increased organizational effectiveness,

will be supported.

> [A colleague and I] have an interest in horses…[so we are trying to
> establish a] horse sense for leaders program and it's fascinating…because
> they so mirror your ability to communicate and so we are looking at a
> couple of trainers and people who are doing similar work to see if it's a
> good fit with our culture here. So that is an extension of my personal
> interests and it's tangentially related to what I do…[and] I definitely think
> that this will be encouraged, so far we have not been discouraged and I
> think it's powerful enough content [to warrant consideration].

Based upon the tremendous impact the college has had on its county and region, it

should come as no surprise that people have been stretched beyond their perceived limits.

When asked if he consciously pushes people beyond their perceived limits, Dr. Harrison

responded that he has high expectations and wants to inspire people to reach his elevated

expectations. "What I try to do is to inspire them to give their best effort toward fulfillment of the mission and vision and if they are inspired and have given their best effort…we will have accomplished the most that we can accomplish with the resources that we have." One of the interviewees believes that Dr. Harrison is unaware that people are being pushed. Rather, he believes in the college's overarching vision, is willing to put in the required effort to see it realized, and expects others to follow his example – a mental and emotional state identified in the POS literature as flow. A campus manager concurs that it is his "leadership by example" that has inspired her to reach higher and work beyond her perceived limits. "He makes it known that it is very important to him as a leader and just as a part of that philosophy, to help people to push themselves. I don't see pushes as a negative… [but] as more of a lift up from behind and move yourself forward [rather] than pushing back." An administrator also feels that people are stretched based upon the behaviors modeled by the president and explained that the president is always considering new ways of serving the community. In accordance with the moniker "the idea man", a college manager feels that both the president and staff are inspired by Dr. Harrison's ever increasing list of ideas. A college member feels that people are energized to see new ideas through to fruition because of the president's endless supply of energy and excitement over the possibilities. "There is always a new initiative or a new project and…he doesn't want to hear that your plate is full. It's, we need to meet the needs of our community and the community's needs are changing …he's so vibrant and excited…[and] it just reverberates."

Summary

As seen in this selective code, three presidents were identified as pushing for the development of human potential as a priority and there were similarities and differences across the colleges. At Alpha Community College, President Davis has focused on both finding and developing "good people", described as individuals with a solid work ethic and dedication to the college's vision. To ensure that the college has the right people, the president removed his entire cabinet and took advantage of retirements in other administrative positions and in the faculty ranks. Additionally, he has pushed for increased professional opportunities through increased travel, creation of a climate where individuals seek external leadership opportunities, and establishment of a fully funded professional development office.

At Gamma Community College, Dr. Smith has worked to develop an atmosphere of high expectations and responsibility. With a focus on excellence, including one of his few mandates, that jobs don't just get done, but that they "get done well", individuals throughout the institution have embraced the values of integrity, responsibility, and accountability. Additionally, interviewees from different subcultures explained that, based upon the integrity and work ethic modeled by the president, they have been encouraged to give their best efforts towards the development of a more effective college. Finally, the president has instituted professional development opportunities that include staff sabbaticals and partnering with a research university.

At Iota Community College, staff members at all levels indicated that they feel valued, empowered to take ownership of the college, and inspired to reach beyond their perceived limits. In fact, individuals consistently spoke of the energy level and work ethic of Dr. Harrison and pointed to that as their inspiration for finding new and different ways

to serve the community. Additionally, the president has created two representative committees and flattened the hierarchy to ensure that every unit on campus has input into he college's major decisions and processes. He also implemented consensus modeling to ensure input is implemented and people see how their input, suggestions, and questions directly impact the college and its operations. Finally, informal professional development is viewed by college staff as important and something that, regardless of schedules, can be undertaken. While the specific presidential behaviors and activities varied, all indicate that these executive leaders are dedicated to the personal and professional development of college staff based upon their understanding that college growth is predicated on the growth of college staff.

Work to Ensure Congruence Between the Organization and the External Environment

Works at ensuring shared organizational direction

Ensuring congruence between the college and its external environment is a daunting task within increasingly dynamic higher education environments; however, President Davis has attempted to ensure Alpha Community College is able to do so by creating shared organizational direction. By doing so, the college is able to adapt to changes by having organizational members focused on moving in the same direction – the one they helped craft. Dr. Davis stated that upon his arrival, the college was separated into silos and people's understanding of the college was limited to their workgroups. While some individuals still operate primarily at the workgroup level, the college culture has been adjusted so people are encouraged to operate from organizational values rather than just workgroup values. A college manager also spoke of the organizational value of student success and sees alignment between her workgroup and the college in working to

meet that goal. "I think first and foremost, we try to be a student-centered institution and I think people use that phrase a lot, but I think that the staff that work here are encouraged to keep that in mind." Even one of the respondents who feels that alignment between workgroup and organizational values within large organizations is rare, has seen alignment between behaviors and espoused values regarding student success.

Value shifts don't simply occur; rather, they are dependent upon catalysts forcing individuals to address and reconsider the appropriateness and applicability of values. One of the interviewees, when asked about why she felt that organizational and workgroup values are aligned, explained that Dr. Davis has worked to create structures and committees ensuring everyone's voice is *heard and influences* college direction. "Within any of these processes or these opportunities, everyone has been invited…so I think what that says is that we're inviting them and are inviting you to participate and to get your ideas and so your voice can be heard." The most pervasive catalyst for increasing not only participation, but also ownership over college direction and decisions is team-based management, an initiative instituted by President Davis. ACC is a college with a divisive history typified by terms like silo, dictator, and lobbing verbal grenades, however, team-based management has created occasions for individuals to work together and over time, has increased trust in other college staff, the president, and in a shared organizational direction. According to one of the college administrators, team-based management is the major catalyst allowing the college to live out a shared organizational vision, one focused on collaboration and continuous improvement. She also spoke of the effort's scope, noting that more than half of the organizational members have participated in team-based management teams, an indication that college staff see the importance and have

participated in this voluntary initiative. "We are talking [about nearly three hundred] people…and so that is not a little thing and that's out of five hundred staff…so that's pretty broad…there are a lot of different people [involved] so that attention is not always paid to the same people." President Davis has served on these teams, however, an outsider would be unable to distinguish who the president is since he works to limit his presidential influence. He stated, "I [am] just one person there. I [have] no bigger vote than anyone else." Beyond team-based management, a college administrator explained that diverse representation is built into all of the major decision-making committees and has ensured that organizational decisions reflect organizational values, not just presidential or executive team values.

Another vehicle for ensuring congruence between organizational and workgroup values, as well as moving towards shared direction, appears to be the college's restructured hiring process. A college member implied that by involving different groups and people from different levels of management, decision-making has been pushed throughout the organization and people have bought into the changes. She notes the level of congruence is visible to individuals going through the interview process and even appeals to those denied employment at the college.

Another mechanism for ensuring the college establishes and lives out a shared organizational direction has been the push to become internally driven. While President Davis understands the impact of external conditions on the college, he has worked to develop a proactive atmosphere within the college. A campus manager has seen a tremendous shift under Dr. Davis' presidency and believes the college is working to determine stakeholder needs before or as they emerge instead of reacting after the fact.

"We're moving closer to being internally driven…my sense is…[there's] a lot of predicting what changes are going to be. My sense is that most of the changes [are] more proactive in planning for what's coming through." A major part of being proactive is engaging in innovative and creative endeavors that hold some degree of risk. The president has sent out a clear message about risk, proactivity, and innovation from day one and based upon interviewee perceptions that his modeling has been effective; individuals have gained insight and bought into the shared understanding of the values guiding the college. Rather than being risk-aversive, one respondent explained that the president is a definite risk taker who has established risk-taking as an acceptable and expected organizational practice. She stated, "I think he is actually more of a risk taker than most of the people here and that if anything, he gets reined in sometimes."

Encouraging people to take risks and push the organization towards proactivity act as catalysts for enhanced performance, however, a climate that encourages retribution or humiliation will prevent individuals from opening themselves to ridicule. When asked about the president's philosophy on mistakes, one of the respondents explained that Dr. Davis views them as part of organizational learning; a philosophy that he has seen filter down to the executive staff as seen through his direct supervisor. In addition to filtering through the executive team, a college staff member explained that she has taken the philosophy that mistakes are part of a learning process into her divisions. Quipping that mistakes in a college don't equate to mistakes during "brain surgery", she has attempted to empower her staff in the same way President Davis has worked to empower the college.

> My experience with him is that if you make a mistake, it's not a big deal.
> What I say to my staff is we don't do brain surgery here - nobody dies if

we make mistakes. I guess he has a similar perspective from my dealings with him. I believe he wants you to be informed so that you don't make unnecessary mistakes, but you can't move forward without making some mistakes, and I think he is okay with mistakes.

Working to ensure the flexibility and adaptability of the college

Ensuring congruence between the internal and external environments is a dynamic process, made more so by the increasingly turbulent environments experienced by community colleges. Colleges must maintain a high degree of nimbleness to that ensure decisions and directions can be continually reassessed for the purpose of remaining proactive. One of the changes initiated by Dr. Harrison during his time at Iota Community College was to develop a culture driven by consensus and evidence. He felt that by collecting and utilizing good data, the college could make decisions that ensure the institution is meeting the emerging needs of stakeholders. In fact, one of his first actions at ICC was to initiate a climate study, something he has continued throughout his presidency. One of the respondents provided some insight into how the survey is used to ensure the college is meeting the needs of all college staff. He explained that when the scores are high (the healthier the climate), people are more likely to remain engaged and provide their best efforts.

In addition to pushing for a data-driven culture, the president has pushed for one based upon consensus, not majority rules. One of the interviewees explained the rationale behind consensus modeling as well as how it has increased engagement at ICC. Engagement is crucial because when organizational members are engaged in moving the college forward, the institution becomes more flexible and adaptable.

> We will take some difficult issues and before we make any really hard decisions, we make sure that we have everybody at the table…everybody in the campus represented by the groups there and that they make up all of the aspects of the college and we go through the pros and the cons, the

good and the bad, and the long term effects until we come up with the consensus that will work for the good of the college.

Perhaps the most important decision-making committee on campus is the institutional council (IC). With members from all subcultures represented, college staff are provided with the opportunity to ensure college direction and decisions are in line with the desires of individuals located outside the executive team. One of the administrators explained that with consensus modeling, decision-making takes more time, but the resulting decisions reflect consensus and limits criticism and questions. Another interviewee concurred and feels that by providing opportunities for representative input – opportunities that result in actually decision and directions changes, college staff embrace the shared mission and proudly claim ownership over college direction.

Another important strategy utilized by Dr. Harrison in navigating the college through external changes is increasing the quality and quantity of communication across the college. An administrator spoke of a weekly meeting of the executive team designed to operate as a think tank where the team contemplates major issues that will impact the college. After issues are discussed, they are then sent out to individuals throughout the college to talk about strategies and approaches for ensuring the college effectively deals with the issues.

> We sit down every [week] and we are always looking at how do you think something might impact you…[and] he never takes lightly any idea that someone might have or a phone call that he might get or an e-mail whenever somebody who's external to the organization or internal who might say, have you thought about this opportunity?

A number of interviewees also feel that the president focuses on constant communication with individuals inside and outside the college as a method for ensuring congruence between college operations and environmental shifts. One of the respondents talked about

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how the president meets with local, state, and national representatives to ensure that the college has the resources and support necessary to move forward. "He is right there…[ensuring] the powers to be know what's going on…[he's in] [state capitol] and he's been in Washington…he's putting himself in those positions to make sure that people know what they need to know so that we can keep moving forward."

Another strategy instituted by Dr. Harrison to ensure that the college remains flexible and adaptable is continual assessment of college processes and structures. Maintaining a highly skilled and driven workforce is essential to ICC's success, so the college restructured its interviewing process to ensure that new staff fit the college's needs. An administrator sees fit as one of the most crucial concerns with new staff and explains the process has been reconstructed in an effort to ensure exceptional fit – both for the college and potential hires. "We've spent a lot of time in the last six years really rethinking our HR system to ensure they were hiring for the right fit for the positions and if you hire for the right fit, then I think you will be more successful and I think he [President Harrison] believes this is critical." Another interviewee also feels fit is the most crucial factor in deciding on new hires; an intangible measure deemed even more important than talent. "[We've been forced] to think about the type of people that you hire…it's not always the most talented person…[it's one who] has a reasonable amount of talent, [the] personality, and the intangible skills that will fit in with the culture and help us achieve those goals." According to a college staff member, changing the structure of screening committees has increased the college's success in hiring for fit. She also talked about how all letters of appointment come from the president; a tacit indication he supports the decision.

Depending upon levels and reporting lines, colleges can either have relatively open and boundryless communication or communication can go through a highly regulated chain of command. One of the respondents, when talking about the civility on campus, digressed and talked about how the structure of the college is horizontal and not downward; a situation that she feels creates a true "bottom-up" influence and aids ICC in the fight against "top-down" management. "The civility of the feelings comes down or as the president likes to say, they come across. There is more of a horizontal structure here and I wouldn't be allowed to do what I do without that because he his just so hands off." An administrator provided insight into this comment by explaining that the president fundamentally altered the organizational structure of the college by flattening the hierarchy, all in an effort to ensure clear communication and short reporting lines. Another interviewee feels that in addition to becoming more nimble, institutional relationships have improved due to greater contact between staff across the limited organizational levels. "You need to understand we have a matrix organization. We are very flat. It was always his desire that there not be more than one level of administration between him and the faculty and staff. So the literal organization of the college creates good relationships."

Finally, the president believes in the need for risk-taking and accepts the mistakes and failures inevitably arising from engaging in taking risks. President Harrison actively engages in selective risk-taking and has worked to model these behaviors for individuals throughout the college. He does so based on his belief that maintaining an entrepreneurial spirit is critical for ensuring the college is continually exploring new ways to engage stakeholders and adapt to changing conditions.

We try to communicate that risk has to be part of the entrepreneurial spirit and that's part of how we do our work…we place a high value on how to do things differently to produce different kinds of results and your question about whether that's diffused throughout the institution, definitely, we've worked hard to try to get people to recognize that its often the people that are closest to the operation or the activity that have the greatest acuity on what could be done differently to improve the results that we get.

The desire to connect risk taking with continuous improvement has been successful, according to one respondent, who believes that the goal of continuous improvement at ICC is to build upon the organizational strengths that will ensure better service to students, the community, and the county. A college administrator has personally experienced the president's philosophy on continuous improvement and risk-taking. Providing her first entrée in dealing with programmatic accreditation standards as an example, she talked about how President Harrison has supported her and helped to keep her positive despite numerous setbacks.

This thing [working towards national accreditation] is a process of continual improvement and that's probably the way he sees it that there never is failure because you are always improving and there never really is an endpoint…This is a tough set of standards as we're finding out and he's given me a lot of support and he hasn't been frustrated with the fact that we didn't get it right away. He is able to be very supportive and very permissive and it's a way for us to be able to take our own initiative.

Working to create a more inclusive and connected college

Theta Community College, under its previous presidents, was a hierarchical institution where the president was the last, and often only, decision and input source. Perhaps this has been the greatest change under President Johnson as, according to a college administrator, the president has pushed for a much more inclusive and collaborative environment. "She often talks about…a circle. You know, when you refer to up or down, she'll correct you and tell you she sees it as more collaborative …her ideal

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[would be] that people are collaborating across departments…and resolving issues at the lowest possible levels." One of the interviewees concurs that the broader approach to leadership is at the heart of President Johnson's desire for the college. "Her goal is to have a culture that people can come together to do a common job for the betterment of the institution, that the hats are taken off…there is no hierarchy…we all become leaders in our own individual areas, which makes us a leader of the college." According to an institutional member, in an effort to ensure individuals throughout the college are more connected to the organizational direction, vision, and decision-making processes, the president has increased the number of councils and committees responsible for providing input. "We've got a number of councils or committees at the highest levels of the college…we've got our [strategic direction-setting councils], and we have the cabinet, and…she's working to articulate a more seamless discussion between those various groups."

While the college is still moving towards an idealized culture, one of the interviewees notes "…[The president] sought to push decision-making to the people most closely associated with the places where decisions need to be made in the organization and I think we have made great progress in that regard, but [we] still have room to improve." A college manager, when asked about where decision-making occurs, explained that even though she is not a vice-president, she has the authority to make decisions that are legally binding and impact the entire college. Another respondent provided a similar example, one in which the college had to respond to state and national authorities' concerns about private lending. She explains that she was given the authority

to respond and the president stayed out of the matter after sending the request to her office.

From day one, Dr. Johnson has been focused on increasing the amount of representative input from college staff located throughout the organization and feels that by doing so, workgroup values are more likely to align, over time, with organizational values. A college administrator agrees with the president that one reason alignment of values is occurring is the degree of input sought from groups throughout the college. "Those core values grew out responses…that came out in the [institutional development committee] and other committees so they were generated that way…[and] those were the core values that the institution, that the people in the institution wanted to see happen." Alignment of workgroup and organizational values is an indication that true culture change has occurred, a process taking both time and effort. The general opinion of interviewees is that the process of culture change is not complete, however, they see tangible proof that changes have started and that alignment is occurring. One of the administrators feels that a tipping point has been reached in regards to value alignment and that people are starting to abandon the silo approach due to a realization that neither their personal interests nor the college's best interests are served by focusing only on workgroup values. This respondent also added that "one of the things I have noticed here is that we have our core values and our mission statement and they are everywhere and people talk about them all the time and we sort of infuse our core values into everything."

Creating an atmosphere of inclusivity is impossible if people are singled out and mistakes and failure become opportunities for public humiliation. A college manager explains that in the past, mistakes and failures were opportunities for people to be singled

out and "[under the] previous administration…if you made a mistake, you could be fired on the spot." While part of Theta's history, President Johnson has approached mistakes and failures from a continuous learning perspective in hopes that individuals feel free to try new concepts and ideas designed to improve student success. In fact, she dislikes the word failure because she feels that looking at situations as failures is a very negative approach to what can be a learning opportunity. A college member concurs and provided a recent example involving the college's shortcomings in ensuring student success. "She provided the environment in which…[we could] move forward with these ideas that will help us to become a more effective institution in student learning assessment…what she did what was she tried to use the difficulties to allow us to grow and change." A long-tenured college staff member has seen a decrease in retribution as a result of the new approach to mistakes and feels that the culture has been changed as a result. "There is the ability now not be afraid that there would be retaliation and I believe it's helped to stop some of the finger-pointing…it's like okay. Let's accept this, lets admit this, [and] we can now discuss and learn from it." Additionally, numerous individuals pointed to the use of forgiveness cards and the goof award as tangible indicators that mistakes are part of a learning college and that Dr. Johnson wants people to embrace risk-taking.

In addition to increasing inclusivity and humor within the college, the president has worked throughout her tenure to increase connections between the college and external stakeholder groups. According to a respondent, the president can frequently be found out in the community working with and on different boards and interacting with power players. While partnerships is a standard term when looking at connections with outside organizations and individuals, one of the interviewees remarked that the president

would be offended by the term based upon its transactional implications. He explained

that she is continually looking for collaborative relationships independent of specific

situations or transactions. A college manager has worked extensively with the president

on building external "collaborative relationships" and feels this is one of her many

strengths as president. He spoke of how she has made Theta Community College the

driving force behind the development of a regional higher education consortium. A new

partnership, or collaborative relationship, mentioned by multiple college staff is a new

extension center located in the downtown section of the city. The center is located in the

city's one-stop unemployment center and the clientele, while meeting the criteria of many

community college students, are typically individuals who, according to the interviewee,

would never even consider taking a class at the college. A college manager views this

endeavor as providing a gateway to education and feels the college is truly connecting to

the local community through this latest endeavor. "I believe we're providing access to

learning opportunities to citizens of [region and state], who would never ever step foot on

this campus or a four-year university. It just is forbidden territory to them, but when you

go there, it speaks volumes."

Summary

Three of the presidents engaged in behaviors, guided by the CCAM assumptions,

associated with ensuring congruence between the college and its environment. President

Davis has worked to ensure congruence at Alpha Community College by focusing on

developing a shared sense of purpose and organizational direction. His first presidential

actions were designed to develop shared organizational direction and focused on

gathering input from individuals throughout the institution. He understood that college

staff would be slow to accept his inclusive approach to management, so he utilized

decision-making groups, team-based management, and appreciative inquiry to fully

engage college staff and build a feeling of ownership. He also modeled risk-taking

behaviors so that individuals would feel comfortable providing access to their creativity

and innovation.

Dr Harrison has pushed for congruence between the college and its environment

by developing flexibility and adaptability at Iota Community College. From the very

beginning, President Harrison has pushed for a data and evidence driven culture based on

the knowledge that possessing accurate and relevant information would enable the

college to stay abreast of environmental shifts. He has also pushed for consensus-

modeling rather than majority rules so that college staff will embrace changes to the

institutional vision and direction. Another presidential action was to increase the quality

and quantity of communication by developing an executive think-tank, delivering

consistent messages, and increasing interactions with external stakeholders and

powerbrokers. Dr. Harrison also initiated restructuring efforts to ensure the college

remains nimble. Early in his tenure, he eliminated or merged administrative positions to

create a flat, horizontal organization with only three hierarchical levels; a decision

designed to increase communication and push authority outside of the president's office

and executive team. Additionally, he recently guided HR through a reconceptualization

of the interview process based upon a desire to improve person-organization fit. Finally,

he has modeled entrepreneurship and risk-taking by establishing numerous unique

college partnerships, approaching mistakes and setbacks as learning opportunities, and

encouraging and empowering people and units to stretch.

President Johnson has worked towards ensuring congruence between Theta Community College and its environment by creating a more inclusive and connected college. Her first step was providing an inclusive approach to leadership – leadership that has been described as circular. This leadership approach is premised on collaboration, dispersed authority, and opportunities for pervasive decision-making. Dr. Johnson has moved the college forward by creating numerous committees and councils, with all college staff represented, with formalized reporting structures and decision-making responsibilities. She has also pushed for healthier responses to mistakes, setbacks, and failures and while there have been questions as to whether retribution still occurs (to be addressed later), generally speaking, her focus on modeling forgiveness, humor, and approaching setbacks as opportunities for growth has mediated the climate of fear existing before her tenure. Additionally, she has worked to expand external partnerships, referred to as collaborative relationships, driven efforts to establish a regional higher education consortium, developed specialized student funding for low-performing high schools, and created a downtown campus in an unemployment one-stop. Indications are that these efforts have created a more inclusive and connected college as workgroup and organizational values are more aligned now than at any point in her tenure. While each of the presidents have engaged in different behaviors, all have successfully ensured some degree of congruence between the college and environment through the behaviors listed.

Embrace the Opportunity to act as Organizational Anchor and Sensemaker

Engages the college in strategic change

Alpha Community College is an institution where the president is revered and the college takes on the personality of the executive leader. Dr. Davis grasped this

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understanding early in his tenure and was determined to provide the type of leadership that would create a healthy and vibrant college. "The culture when I arrived was based upon the president's style, which I would call a command and control leader. He didn't like people to do anything unless he told them to do it and they had to do it in a way that satisfied him or he would literally yell at them." Based on comments from the president and others, healthy and vibrant would be the last two words used to describe the culture when he arrived. A college administrator explained "[We were] obviously open for business, [but we were] operating at less than maximum efficiency" and when asked if the old culture needed adjustment, he responded "Oh God yes…there were a lot of things broken with the college." In taking stock of the necessary changes, Dr. Davis realized that individuals within the college were quick to point fingers, place blame, and verbally attack each other. Despite these circumstances, President Davis is a man who believes that people are good and when provided with guidance and supportive environments, will behave and engage in ethical and positive behaviors. It was his opinion that the atmosphere of anger had turned the college into an institution that didn't reflect the internal values of the college staff. "Everyone was angry at someone because people were doing sub par jobs. I think it was all institutionally caused because the people here were all very good and that was an interesting thing because there were always good people here." Part of changing the environment rested upon his shoulders and he worked to ensure the both he and his executive team would model positive and caring behaviors. "[It was] my belief [that] my actions could be read by people. [So, it was important they saw] that we [the executive team] cared about the college, we cared about students, and we were trying to do things right." During an exchange with administrators early in his

presidency, he reiterated the behaviors he wanted to see guiding the college; behaviors he himself would engage in as well. He also realized the unlearning behaviors would take time. "We need[ed] to learn to work together and to support each other and work on common goals and it took years for people to even understand that let alone act upon it."

Dr. Davis understood that the first step in creating a more positive culture was to establish himself as a trusted role model. He felt that if he could get individuals throughout the college to trust him, they would begin to trust in his vision of positivity and in each other. One of the first tactics used by the president to begin building trust and momentum towards increasing trust was initiating a strategic planning exercise that would involve college members in shaping the direction of ACC. While the strategic planning process was useful and provided evidence that the president was a man of his word, one-time efforts are incapable of addressing and changing deep values and institutionalized behaviors. According to one of the interviewees, President Davis continues to meet the basic sensemaking needs of college staff through daily actions and initiatives. "He is working on the day-to-day awareness that people have…and how that can be applied to improvement and banking that over time, they will help to affect the cultural shift. I would say that the cultural shift has already begun." A long-tenured respondent indicates that not only has the president made changes relevant to the daily lives of college staff, but has also provided tangible, yet aspirational goals people can strive towards. "[The president] is striving to make sure that we are on top [and instilling] pride [in] ourselves by saying we are the best community college in [state]…We're trying to get there and we have a goal of being number one." An administrator feels the most effective mechanism used by Dr. Davis has been to push input and decision-making into

the daily lives of college staff, an approach accomplished through the development and expansion of team-based management. Another tactic used by President Davis to instill positivity into the culture was focusing on the development of college strengths rather than fixing weaknesses. True to the Positive Psychology, POS, and POB movements, he understood that by spending time on strengths, the college could achieve greater performance. An organizational staff member reiterated this point and feels that the use of appreciative inquiry has pushed this strengths-based approach to leadership throughout the college. He also provided a recent example of how the president continually reaffirms the need for positivity and the development of known and potential strengths.

> He [President Davis] made the connections people needed to see and feel…[and that] we have some strengths and we can grow them…let's get together and talk about the strengths and talk and plan specifically about how they can lead us toward improved success, improved community relations, and other areas…and [during a recent meeting, President Davis] was the first person to say…we have to identify the strengths and grow from them. You see him pushing that in subtle and not so subtle ways.

Described as strategic and a man of integrity by members of his cabinet and non-executive staff alike, President Davis has worked to increase input, participation, and opportunities for growth based on personal values as well as an innate understanding that college growth is premised on individual growth. Providing opportunities for people to engage in decision-making, direction-setting, and leadership opportunities have all worked to change the culture at Alpha, however, college staff also explain that eliminating the sacredness of decisions made by the president has empowered staff to question actions viewed as detrimental to student or institutional success. One of the respondents insists that Dr. Davis is open to criticism and questioning and "[while he] has his own ideas and his own opinions…is a very good listener and you can change his

mind." Another interviewee spoke of a situation where the president was unaware of the impact his absence was having on staff and when confronted, immediately came up with a plan to ensure that he would now be absent in the future.

The president has modeled the changes he wants on campus by providing his best efforts and driving new initiatives throughout the organization and indications are that he has been successful. A college manager believes "we are at the beginning point of some very positive changes and I think there have been some catalysts that have occurred over the last year… and its been about getting us into a period of change…[and] I think most of the college community is hopeful." Hopeful was a word absent from the Alpha vocabulary under the previous administrations, but a concept prevalent in the current culture. Reflecting on the changes at the college, President Davis is genuinely pleased, although he still sees areas and opportunities for improvement.

President provides clear, consistent, and authentic leadership

President Harrison's tenure at Iota Community College has been long and distinguished and as a result, people have had an opportunity to take stock of his management style, interpret his internal values, and determine the level of congruence between his values and behaviors. Supporting the president's assertion that he believes in leadership, not management, a college administrator noted that Dr. Harrison approaches leadership from a bottom-up approach and infuses decision-making and direction-setting throughout the organization. "From the very first moment I began working with him, I begin realizing that he was very bottom-up and he was trying to get individuals involved in the vision and direction." Another interviewee shares this sentiment and labeled the president as a macro-manager based upon his desire for inclusivity in major institutional

efforts. Utilizing a diffused approach to management is often viewed as positive; however, engaging in detached leadership often inhibits individuals from working towards a common understanding. According to an institutional manager, President Harrison is, indeed, hands-off; however, he is fully connected to and supportive of college staff as well. She elaborated on her statement by comparing him to a shepherd and explaining that he guides while allowing members to largely chose their own paths. , she used the metaphor of a shepherd to explain his leadership style. Other staff members also interpret his leadership style as both hands-off and supportive with one college member emphasizing that Dr. Harrison "tends to put people first, and I think he's honest and ethical in his dealings with people and I think you take that into account and however he was managing people he tends to be fair. He would not knowingly abuse anybody." Another respondent has experienced his person-centered approach to leadership and views him as highly connected to staff and their activities at the college. "In the hallway, he addresses everybody and he is friendly and he is outgoing and he remembers everybody's name and if there are social activities on campus, he is buzzing around them. He recalls things about your family and things are going on." Yet another interviewee took the concept of person-centered even further by implying that the president has an androgynous leadership style in which paternalism is absent and women are treated equally. She feels that this style, which she has never experienced before, encourages and empowers women to step up as equal participants in every situation.

Another descriptor used to explain the nature of the president's behaviors is authenticity. Numerous staff at Iota, including one of the interviewees, note that this is one of President Harrison's strong suits and as a result, college staff trust him to do what

he says. "I have gotten to trust them over the five years that I have been here and now I see it is real and I think its his way of being; both publicly and personally. He is the same. He doesn't change. He is himself…he is very authentic." A college staff member has experienced his authenticity through his continued commitment to meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders. "He is very focused and very deliberate. You can count on him to do what he says he is going to do…He is also honest and is very good and phenomenally aware of the needs and works to address certain topics and to address certain issues." One of the administrators provided a tangible example of how the president not only behaves in an authentic manner, but actively encourages others to do the same. He talked about a memo that circulates around the college from time to time; a reminder that the actions of all college staff should be ethical and reflect positively upon the college. Another example of Dr. Harrison's authenticity, according to numerous interviewees, is his dedication to mutual gains and consensus modeling. A college staff member provided a recent example of how the mutual gains approach played out in the life of a student. The student was being removed from the nursing program based upon failing grades, however, the president met with the student and all appropriate parties on two occasions to ensure the student's need for understanding was met. While the decision was not changed despite two meetings, the president spent an immense amount of time with the student to ensure that the processes were fair, equitable, and that the student's concerns were addressed.

As part of his leadership style, President Harrison feels that he must remain connected to the college and its staff. An administrator explains that one ways President Harrison ensures that people truly know him is to walk the college and connect with

members. A college manager indicates that the president enjoys this part of his job and that once he meets a person, he never forgets their name. By establishing a first name relationship with organizational members, he is effectively removing the mystique and aura of the position and, according to one of the respondents, making the statement that any member of the college staff should feel comfortable in approaching him. Recalling her personal experiences with the president, one of the interviewees expressed her amazement the president knew her name after such a short time and believes that knowing everyone's name has contributed to the sense of community and focused effort she has observed on campus. "It is impressive to me that he knew who I was after a very short time and that he knows even some of the adjuncts and that he knows everybody and I think that has a lot to do with the sense of community here." The researcher asked one of the interviewees how the sense of community is maintained despite the president's many absences from campus. She expressed that in addition to staying connected through e-mail, his presence and influence are always felt – an indication that the president's values have truly permeated the college through consistent and clear leadership.

In addition to establishing a true college community, President Harrison's leadership provides inspiration to college staff. When asked about whether he pushes people to the limits of their abilities, he responded that he never pushes. Instead, he wants people to see him and the behaviors he models and feels that by supporting and encouraging them, he can inspire the staff to reach higher and move the college forward.

> I have a lot of belief in people and the ability of people and if you set the agenda, you know, you really don't have to drive people to do really good work, I mean, its really more about them being inspired to do really good work. They'll do more on their own than you could possibly drive them to do, so it's a matter of helping them to see what the vision is and there's no better way for them to see the vision then for them to help create it.

One of the respondents has observed him for nearly his entire presidency and sees how people are inspired and motivated to achieve. She believes that people willingly push themselves because they believe in the president and the college's vision and that "…[Dr. Harrison] certainly brings people along to see the different picture [and] motivates others and inspires others." A college member sees the president pushing the college beyond the traditional boundaries; however, he also sees it as people willing to follow based upon being inspired and wanting to do better for the president. "…you see what he does and you want to be pushed…you want to be better for him and you'll never compete with Dr. [Harrison]…[but] we push ourselves to go further."

Perhaps the greatest indication that people understand and believe in the mission of the college is the indication that workgroup values and organizational values are intertwined at Iota Community College. A college administrator stated that values are congruent because everyone participates in their construction and continued adjustments. "We have a mission and a value statement that was not created in isolation and is adjusted continuously with everyone." An institutional manager adds that communication and representative input have been driving forces behind value alignment and sees a natural connection because the workgroup values influence organizational values and vice versa. Building on the sentiment that institution-wide involvement creates a situation where organizational and workgroup values are aligned, a college member points to the representation of the entire college on every major decision. She explained that based upon the diverse representation opportunities, institutional members are empowered to provide input, change college direction, and impact college decisions. An administrator, who stated that generally speaking, institutions can't reach a state where organizational

and workgroup values are aligned, notes that the level of congruence at Iota Community College is higher than any other institution he has worked at. As proof, he noted that he often hears discussions where one individual proposes an innovative program or changes to a well-established process and someone else asks how the changes will impact students.

Summary

Two of the presidents in this study engaged in behaviors illustrating their willingness to act as an institutional sensemaker. President Davis, realizing the influence of the executive leader at Alpha Community College, established himself as a proactive and strategic change agent from the start of his presidency. Based upon his personality, and effective modeling of behaviors contrary to accepted norms, Dr. Davis worked to build college staff members' trust in him, in each other, and in college direction. He espoused and modeled a person-centered approach to management focused on increasing collaboration and caring for individual needs and elimination of retributional behavior. Throughout his presidency, his actions and values have remained consistent and as a result, interviewees describe him as a man of integrity and high ethical standards. In addition to modeling behaviors, he has initiated multiple catalysts for increasing trust. Early in his presidency, he initiated a participatory strategic planning process, one in which he participated as an equal member, that involved staff from across the institution. Later in his presidency, he initiated other participatory mechanisms like team-based management and appreciative inquiry. Perhaps the most important catalysts, however, were his decisions to open himself to criticism and engage the college in strengths-based approach to operations. Under previous administrations, the words and decisions of the

president were sacred, but under President Davis, no opinion or decision is above question. Additionally, he has pushed for finding and developing organizational strengths rather than spending the majority of identifying and fixing shortcomings. As a result, the creativity and innovation lying dormant under previous administrations was unleashed and college staff have poured their energy into serving students and enhancing organizational performance.

Dr. Harrison has embraced the role of sensemaker and anchor at Iota Community College through his focus on providing clear, consistent, and transparent leadership. From the start, he has modeled inclusive, yet supportive leadership designed to create an environment where people take ownership over their units and the colleges. While empowering people to make decisions and take responsibility, however, he has remained connected to college and is always available to provide guidance and support. He has consistently worked to remain visible and connected to the college as he is known to drop in on administration, faculty, and staff meetings, walk the campus as often as possible, and has develop personal relationships with hundreds of college staff. As a result, interviewees view Dr. Harrison as consistent and authentic, explaining that there is congruence between the person-centered values he espouses and his actions. Respondents also spoke of the president's use of mutual gains or a consensus modeling approach to college operations. While it would be more efficient to operate from a majority rules approach, Dr. Harrison is committed to creating consensus regardless of the amount of processing and input required. These actions have permeated the college and interviewees indicated that even when off campus, which is common for the "king of partnerships", President Harrison's presence and influence is felt throughout the campus. Additionally,

people explained that the president's work ethic and drive inspires them to reach beyond their perceived limits and towards exceeding student and community needs. While engaging in different leadership styles and tactics, both presidents have embraced their role as sensemaker and the colleges appear to mirror the values driving these institutional leaders.

Presidential Behaviors Associated with Institutional Movement towards Lesser Abundance

Neglect to Fully Develop Human Potential[5]

Neglects to fully develop or utilize good people

President Davis has worked to instill positivity, optimism, and hope into the culture of Alpha Community College and there are numerous indications that he looks for ways to enhance the skills and lives of college staff. However, information from interviewees also shows that, at times, organizational members are not fully developed or cared for. One respondent explained that "…what I see sometimes is that when those goals aren't met…I do think there is a bit of letting it slide and working around somebody since we've got other issues to worry about right now. We can't focus on making the person the best they can be right now." Another interviewee concurs that development of people is often a secondary concern and occurs only when development is directly aligned with the individual's responsibilities and duties. She feels that college managers need to focus on helping people "become their sterling selves" instead of just focusing on how much work they accomplish.

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[5] While the four cross case selective codes associated with institutional movement towards greater abundance were based on all four overarching study propositions, presidential behaviors associated with institutional movement towards lesser abundance were only found for the final three propositions. While not part of the study's initial purpose, results indicating that certain behaviors are associated with movement towards lesser abundance are useful in better understanding abundance and have been included.

Additionally, interviewees explained that Dr. Davis is not focused on getting people to stretch and develop, noting that the college's culture embraces a passive approach to development. A college member stated "I don't think anybody pushes anybody to the limit of their abilities and I think that's part of the culture" and a mid-level manager added "I don't necessarily think that he is pushing everybody to be the best that they can be where they would be accountable or to get everybody productive." One of the institutional staff members concurs that development is not occurring, but feels that President Davis would like to see people develop and grow. Her concern is that he depends upon others to follow his example instead of pushing and possibly creating conflict.

> Philosophically, yes. I would say that his ideas and concepts trickle down and push people and departments…Whether or not they are actually contributing all of their capabilities, I have [my] doubts. I see a lot of waste here, and I don't mean that in a bad way, it is in that there are a lot of people here that are not up to their skill level

Another issue preventing the full development of college staff, according to some interviewees, is the presence of unequal opportunities for participation in direction-setting. While Dr. Davis has developed numerous opportunities for participation and all indications are that he wants representative input, there are also signs that a substantial number of staff are unable to take advantage of these opportunities. One of the interviewees has been perplexed at the fact that some of her colleagues and superiors prevent, rather than encourage, their subordinates to participate in the larger scale projects and initiatives. Another interviewee has worked with numerous classified and support staff at the college and watched as individuals are discouraged from participation in TBM or AI. A college member believes that the distrust held by staff members is

largely based on perception, but does understand why numerous staff members won't take advantage of opportunities like team-based management. "I know that [some staff] may not feel comfortable…because they don't have the protection of not getting in trouble…I don't believe they would…but I know there is a fear out there [and that]…they wouldn't want to get involved if [their managers] don't buy into it."

Partly as a result of allowing administrators to act as gatekeepers, two interviewees indicate that President Davis' vision of truly participatory college remains an ideal. While one of the college staff members feels the President has crafted numerous opportunities for representative input, especially with the team-based management plans, he also notes that the college fights a top-down mentality when making major organizational decisions. "Sometimes we're a little too top-down when major decisions are made, but generally outside of those, I do think we are encouraged to collaborate." Another interviewee feels that non-executive staff are excluded from major decisions as Dr. Davis depends upon his cabinet for major organizational efforts. To support her position, she presented a recent situation where the college's reputation was tarnished and believes that speaking and working with other staff within the college could have resulted in less contentious negotiations. She feels that the major decisions surrounding the purchase of a new facility were limited to the executive staff and that involving more staff with different skills and experiences would have provided the college with a better strategy for engaging the community in the discussions.

Occasionally neglects the well-being of organizational members

Based on comments from interviewees, the researcher's experience at the state of the county meeting, and document analyses, it is apparent that ICC is an institution that

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has truly overachieved when compared to colleges of similar size, resources, and environmental conditions. Not only has the college adapted to changing conditions, but it has truly been a catalyst for change and transformation within the region. Tremendous impact, like that seen from ICC, can only occur when people are empowered, motivated, and dedicated to a powerful vision. Even with a powerful and compelling vision, however, some staff will never embrace the larger role encouraged by the president, executive team, and numerous managers across the college. One of the institutional members explained that while the college provides every opportunity for people to take ownership over Iota's direction, some people are simply not interested. "We all inherit people though, and so you try and develop them and at some point, we recognize and understand that they may not have the potential for what your expectations may be. They may not have the same expectations of themselves as we do." When asked how the college deals with members focused solely on their specific duties and getting a paycheck, she explained that it is the administrator's job to make a place for all contributors, regardless of what their contributions are. She added, however, that the college is not necessarily good at dealing with lower performing members and has the tendency to work around these individuals in the interest of the greater vision.

As a result of being a hard-driving college, people work very hard and there are concerns that the president, himself a hard-driving, energetic person, is not providing ample opportunities for rest or recuperation. In fact, there are concerns from multiple interviewees that the college as a whole may be on the verge of burnout. One respondent, while realizing that Dr. Harrison has a great deal of energy and internal motivation, is concerned for his health and "worr[ies] about him falling over from exhaustion, because

the man works very, very hard." She also feels that if he slowed at times, other individuals in the college who admire and emulate him, would understand that they too could slow down and recuperate. None of the respondents could provide specific initiatives designed to decrease the chance of burnout and one interviewee noted that this situation needs to be dealt with. "I am not aware that it [burnout] has been addressed and I do think it is potentially a problem… Everybody's trying to do more with less resources and that is one of the reasons why people have bags under their eyes down here."

Summary

Generally speaking, both Drs Davis and Harrison are viewed as leaders focused on meeting the needs and caring for college staff, however, there were some behaviors that contradict these beliefs. Dr. Davis leads the college by distributing leadership and authority outside of the executive team and has worked specifically to empower those reporting to him with the expectation that the same level of empowerment would flow through the college. However, respondents indicated that some managers in the college act as gatekeepers and discourage classified and support staff from taking advantage of professional development opportunities. Additionally, he has not adequately dealt with the retribution concerns of staff as some of the members do not participate in professional development opportunities out of fear – fear that they may be reprimanded or fired based on their statements or actions. Another negative consequence of Dr. Davis' leadership style is that numerous managers are not focused on helping staff realize "their sterling self." Although President Davis is working to establish a climate where individuals take advantage of professional opportunities out of personal drive and desire, some individuals

viewed as "weaker" are worked around to ensure that the college meets its institutional goals.

Dr. Harrison is generally viewed as a tremendous leader focused on meeting the needs of students, the community, the county, and institutional members, however, respondents provided examples of some behaviors that prevent development of college staff. ICC is a dynamic college moving in multiple directions based upon the numerous ideas and tremendous energy emanating from President Harrison and maintaining the internal drive necessary to sustain the college's impact on the region requires hard-driving, motivated staff. The college, and specifically the president, leans heavily on self-starters and members driven by the larger vision, however, there are indications that workers who are steady and those seen as low performing are, on occasion, worked around in order to maintain the torrid pace crucial to achieving the college's goals. In addition to working around individuals, there are also concerns that leaning so heavily on a relatively small staff will result in burnout. While few individuals feel that Dr. Harrison ever tires, there are concerns for other staff since organizational members are inspired to try and maintain his pace. With few structures in place to deal with exhaustion, respondents are looking to Dr. Harrison to model the behaviors that will allow for institutional members to be cared for. In short, both presidents behave, generally, in ways that support and nurture college staff, however, they both engage in some behaviors that concern the respondents.

Impede the College's Ability to Achieve Congruence between the Internal and External Environment

Focuses too much time and energy inside the college

While President Davis has primed Alpha Community College to meet emerging stakeholder needs through the development of a shared organizational vision, indications are that he provides the vast majority of his energy internally. Described by one respondent as an internal president, he explains that "He loves the college and he loves it internally. He's out there in the community, but I think he would rather be, I think he relishes more the internal components more than the external." Perhaps the best comment illustrating the president's focus as well as the benefits of his leadership came from a long-tenured college staff member. "What he most relishes are the opportunities to get people working together in a constructive manner; to make improvements and changes to the college and the learning environment…It's like he wants to be a *facilitator of cooperative effort*" (emphasis added). There are concerns that based upon this desire to operate almost exclusively as an internal president, the college is unable to effectively position itself to take advantage of emerging or develop new opportunities for the region.

There are myriad positive impacts of President Davis' approach including the effective modeling of participatory leadership, however, numerous college staff don't actually feel his direct presence on the campus. One respondent spoke at length about how she is unable to see his direct influence or impact on the college. While this may be one of President Davis' goals, some college staff view this minimal influence as the absence of a broader institutional vision. "I don't see his hand *in* enough things. I don't see him influencing things enough…it doesn't feel like if that's happening, it's because of his connection or intervention or participation" (emphasis added). Another staff member concurs that the college is not getting the direct impact and focused leadership that would allow it to proactively addressing difficult external conditions. When looking across the

college, he sees too much going on and feels the college could accomplish more with directed efforts and effective use of energy.

> Well, I think the college needs the direction. It's the leadership that allows for, the leadership that provides a strategic vision, you know, maybe that is the word, to provide us with a vision to provide us with the ability to accomplish that…but I've just seen us sometimes as an institution try to do too many things.

In addition to confusion over the broad vision and influence, there are indications that by spending so much of his energy on internal issues, the college's ability to meet external needs and develop creative and innovative opportunities for the county and service area is hampered. Interviewees report that President Davis spends substantial time outside the college, but they question how these efforts directly impact the college and create opportunities for the county and region. Based on comments from college staff, the president is active within the local community, involved in numerous local boards, and spends a great deal of time off campus grounds, however, they also note that the college has not established creative or innovative partnerships. One individual blames the lack of external connections and partnerships on the limited opportunities for workforce development. "It's not like we are a community college outside the city of Detroit where you have the auto industry… there's no dominating industry or activity here…there are a lot of things here to focus on in our service area. It's a very tricky place for someone to maneuver." As a long-time resident of the area, he also has extensive knowledge of and experience with the residents of the region and feels their parochial philosophies are also limiting opportunities for development. "Here the chambers just don't like to work with each other and the municipalities don't like to work with each other, so it's a real challenge… So it sounds like a soft answer…but its such a fractured region politically and chamberwise…" The president has come to understand and accept the difficulties of

expanding existing and developing new industries, a behavior that models tacit acceptance of current environmental struggles instead of working to influence them.

There is no doubt that Alpha Community College and its region have been negatively impacted by downsizing, outsourcing, and the parochial mindset that permeates the region. Community colleges across the country have been impacted by outsourcing, rightsizing, and downsizing and each region of the country has unique and difficult local circumstances that require creative navigation. The issue, coming from an abundance approach, is the degree of acceptance regarding the inevitability of circumstances. The ability to transcendently leverage resources is premised on an institutional drive that operates outside of "rational" expectations and limitations and aggressively pursues creative, "irrational", and boundary spanning approaches to growth. One of the respondents, in an earlier statement, provided insight into the passive approach utilized by the college to create external partners. When asked how potential partnerships are developed, the individual explained, "I think it really depends on the area of the college. In my area of the college, you know, partners are really driven by workforce development initiatives of [state] and those [are] the things we want to focus on." The workforce development division is crucial in driving partner building for the college and the passive approach taken by the unit likely limits the college's ability to draw in new partners.

Respondents have labeled Dr. Davis as an internal president explaining that he exerts the majority of his energy internally. Additionally, there are indications that The he doesn't particularly enjoy the external demands of the job. One interviewee indicates that while the president understands his symbolic duty to represent the college in public

settings, it is something he does begrudgingly at times.

> …he recognizes that both his symbolic and practical day to day functions, so you know he is available and on hand to those events where you need the presidential aura, they're not his favorite things, they're absolutely not his favorite things, but he recognizes the importance of them and is there to be the symbolic face of the college when he needs to be.

Other college staff expanded on this concept by explaining that is out of his comfort zone when dealing with larger groups. One interviewee feels the president is completely out of his element when dealing with large groups and greatly prefers small, intimate conversations. "He is a quiet and personal and private man and he can be very charming in front of a large group for a few moments at a time, I've never seen him speak in front of a large group for more than five or ten minutes, but I think he gets uncomfortable after that." Not only does President Davis appear to dislike "performing" in front of large groups, but he also explained how working with external groups has a transactional quality, something antithetical to his leadership style. While one of the respondents explained that he would take a primarily internal over external president, he also noted that President Davis has not been as proficient in developing workforce development opportunities as nearby community colleges, pointing to the fact that a neighboring community college, with similar external constraints, has successfully developed new and innovative partners.

One of the respondents feels that a major reason the college has not fully leveraged opportunities for partnership development is due to President Davis' aversion to initiating conflict. Providing her division as an example, she talked about how difficult circumstances are never an acceptable excuse and feels that the president needs to push the manager of a college division she feels is underpreforming – something he has been loathe to do. "I can't just sit back and say, gee, what was there before isn't just walking

through the door…when one part of the college isn't accountable for what they need to do, all of the rest of us end up sharing that because we lose budget opportunities…that way."

Created an environment negatively impacted by a focus on hierarchy

President Smith has worked to reinvigorate Gamma Community College based upon his initial observations that the previous president failed to care for the organizational members. His primary sensemaking tactic was to establish rigid reporting lines and clearly defined roles and indications are that his focus on ensuring an efficient chain of command, a term used by almost all interviewees, has produced some positive consequences. For example, one long-tenured interviewee has experienced a more calm and settled atmosphere since Dr. Smith arrived. She firmly believes that he has effectively cleared the debris left by the previous president providing a culture where people feel cared for. Another individual indicated the college has a familial feel based upon the president and his leadership style. He explains the college has been transformed from a dysfunctional to a fully functional family under his watch. "There are some people on campus who fondly refer to him as daddy and there is a paternalistic aura that he gives off that it is very much more of a family than it was prior to him. I mean, if it was a family before, it was the bickering brothers and sisters." One of the respondents agrees that there are benefits to the strict hierarchy at Gamma and feels the college is protected from inappropriate practices based upon the scrutiny and system of checks and balances that come along with the hierarchical structure. Finally, a college member summed up the impact of the president by explaining that he was the right person at the right time. "He is just the right guy at the right place at the right time. Would this style be successful

anywhere? I really don't know…there are times when organizations are looking for a hard charging change agent, but a quick change agent…[that's not] Dr. [Smith's] style." It appears that some respondents feel that his style was needed and that he was, the right guy at the right time.

While the hierarchical structure has increased sensemaking, there are also indications that operating the college from a strict chain of command approach is preventing the college from adapting to changing external conditions. A direct impact of an enforced hierarchy is that the rigid structure, at times, inhibits people in lower levels from having open and honest discussions with their superiors – a situation that limits their input into organizational changes. An institutional member informed the researcher, "He [President Smith] is available to me", but "I am respectful to the hierarchy." One of the respondents further explained the separation of power and how it impacts relationships with those located higher up in the chain of command. "I mean it's not necessarily that you have the one-on-one relations and you won't come up and say, let's do this because there is the stigma that he is the president." Another interviewee explained that the focus on the chain of command has created a situation where flawed data arrives in the president's office. According to her, the situation has deteriorated to the point where the president if forced to seek information from external sources. Another negative impact of the hierarchy identified by the aforementioned interviewee is how communication, in general, has been hampered. She has experienced that when she or other non-executive staff meet with the president away from other cabinet members, conversations are open as individuals are freed to discuss issues honestly – something that can not happen when a superior is present.

Focusing on respecting and maintaining the hierarchy appears to limit effective data flow and communication, two situations likely to impede institutional creativity, innovation, and effectiveness. The emergence of a knowledge economy requires that college remain flexible and adaptable to change and that all resources are leveraged. Leveraging the skills and abilities of staff requires that decisions "bubble up" from the lowest levels of the organization, however, the hierarchical structure of GCC ensures that decisions go through highly structured channels and are approved by vice-presidents before proceeding to the president. A respondent reaffirmed that the president distributes decision-making authority, but noted that authority rests with his executive team. While not castigating the president's cabinet, he feels they hold too much power and would like to see the president step up and provide guidance to the college.

The primary structures for providing input into decisions and direction-setting for non-executive staff at Gamma Community College are the committee of administrators (CA) and the executive advisory committee (EC). While two interviewees explained that these forums ensure that the input and creativity of all staff is provided to the college, numerous interviews indicated that the forums are not effective mechanisms for providing input and, in fact, stifle creativity and innovation. When one respondent was asked if official forums exist for questioning decisions or directions, he could only recall one time when non-executive staff were specifically asked to question the college's direction. "I can only remember one time, and this is pretty early in Dr. [Smith's] tenure, that we had any open forums like that and a lot of it was discussion about the policies and about the two people that I talked about who eventually left the college." Another college member concurred that the representative forums are not equipped, nor designed for,

questioning or providing suggestions. Instead, they are, more than anything, opportunities for President Smith and the cabinet to share information and decisions. This is disheartening to one interviewee since the goal of the EC was to establish a formal group, absent of cabinet members, responsible for providing input and questioning decision and directions. He feels that the current format is "very much an emasculated version of what we originally had envisioned." An institutional member added that in addition to rarely obtaining input at these gatherings, ideas presenting at these structured meetings are generally ignored. He feels that in actuality, organizational power at GCC rests in "the hands of the few."

Based upon the researcher's observation of an executive team meeting as well as comments from interviewees, it is clear that the primary decision-making group at Gamma is the executive team. In keeping with the need to respect the chain of command, one of the respondents explained that input from non-executives is filtered through the hierarchy and makes its way to the president through the vice-presidents and specifically within this group's weekly meeting. Another individual feels that while people are asked to provide input and suggestions, an underlying agenda is already in place and people are involved so they feel they are "part of the process" rather than their involvement actually impacting direction.

In addition to impacting the college's ability to remain innovative, creative, and adaptable, the chain of command approach also limits the institution's ability to proactively respond to external changes. Establishing partner networks is a crucial part of expanding opportunities to serve the local community, increase revenue sources, and decrease costs, however, local partner development is not President Smith's primary

responsibility. A respondent explained that the president is responsible for the college's "big picture" and as such, is charged with developing partnerships with the community CEOs instead of individual companies and their CEOs.

> Working with the community is where he deals with more of that big picture, whereas the individual companies are really dealt with either at the vice president or dean level…but he's not so much involved in those kinds of entertaining CEOs where people like that are within the local businesses. He's working more with the CEOs who run the communities within our district.

Another interviewee firmly believes that the president's job is to work at the national and state level and to allow the individuals working within the college to establish connections with local groups. "I think he makes other people responsible for the partnerships here and he is very supportive of them when they come. You know, with local businesses and areas like workforce development." One individual talked about the support the president shows for the development of partnerships by organizational members; a sentiment expanded on by an academic department chair. She believes that working with local groups is outside the scope of the presidency and he should be the most powerful supporter of the individuals actually establishing the partnerships.

While the preceding statements are logical, the president's decision to exclude himself from connecting with community businesses may be preventing the college from establishing innovative and boundary-spanning networks at the local level. Additionally, Dr. Smith is likely sending the unintentional message that GCC is not focused on establishing partner networks at the local level. Regardless, the college is not, under its current reporting structure, developing the kind of innovative partnerships necessary to develop networks. Another consequence of the president's absence from local partner development is that some respondents were unable to name any major partnerships and

the majority was unaware of any partnerships established by the president. Many respondents are aware that Dr. Smith is away from the college on many occasions, but few had any sense of what occurs as a result of the meetings. One respondent explained, "I don't know all about it, but as far as locally, I'm not as knowledgeable of what he has done. I assume he has had good contact with the community, but I'm not sure what has come from that other than opening some off-campus sites." In short, GCC does not appear to have any innovative partnerships as the only college partners identified by interviewees were the local rotaries, the county K-12 system, national advocacy groups, and existing businesses, and other local higher education providers.

Approaches external pressures with caution

Gamma Community College, while experiencing internal health and vitality, operates as though external conditions are the sole driver of college operations. As with other community colleges, GCC has experienced turbulent and difficult times recently and one of the biggest issues has been the sheer growth of the student population. One of the respondents indicated that enrollment increased by nearly 30% in a four year period, a situation that has "taxed the staff and the facilities and all of the doing community surveys and bringing in consultants, and then doing a referendum to bring in money." In addition to the difficulty in meeting student needs, partnering, according to one of the interviewees, has become more difficult as the nature of the higher education system in the state has been transformed. Despite these changes and the need for innovative approaches to meeting the needs of students and the community, indications are that Dr Smith relies on conservative approaches to navigating the college through the changing environments

When asked how the college navigates changing conditions, President Smith

talked about the use of communication to ensure that college staff remain well-informed.

"[Change is navigated by]…getting people to understand the gist of what it is all about…

keeping people well-informed when things start coming down and letting people

understand why we do certain things in the way that we are doing them."

Communication, according to interviewees, goes through the hierarchy and works its way

down, but not back up. One of the respondents, however, feels that the vice-presidents do

an excellent job of communicating the president's message down to the lowest levels of

the college. Another respondent added that the president communicates with external

groups to gather data on national trends and moves cautiously based upon the

information. An institutional member added that the executive team pours over data and

communicates to the college how the information will impact the college. "We talk about

the planning assumptions for the college…we always do an environmental scan and

figure out where planning assumptions are to be for the next year…planning assumptions

are read by the executive team and are shared with the greater college."

Another mechanism utilized by the president, according to college staff, is

conservative budgeting. One individual spoke of the president's knowledge of the budget,

his ability to monitor and control spending, and his focus on ensuring wiggle room down

the line. She feels that GCC, by establish a financial buffer, will be able to meet student

needs regardless of funding changes in the future. A college manager concurs that the

president's fiscal conservatism is positioning the college for future success since he is

ensuring that college's salaries won't hamper the budget in coming years. "Down the

road, some of the colleges with the highest salaries…will probably be at some point in

time having difficulty with that…so he's not only looking at what's happening today, but also looking at what could be happening in five, ten, and fifteen years."

While some interviewees, when asked whether the college was proactive or reactive in dealing with external pressures indicated the college was proactive, the majority explained that external pressures negatively impacting the college. One staff member believes that, generally speaking, external pressures have a greater impact on the college based on their pervasiveness. "I would say the pressures from outside are stronger, because generally those are about meeting the needs and providing services…and the external forces are deeper reaching than the internal." One respondent indicated that the difficult external conditions are preventing the college from engaging in innovative endeavors and feels that "honing in" on the core issues must remain the institution's priority. When asked if the president pushes individuals or units to stretch, she also explained that the difficult external conditions are preventing the college from stretching. A college manager indicates that some college staff have taken it upon themselves to move the college in a more proactive direction. She, along with others, feel the futuring, strategic planning, and visioning processes are ill-equipped to keep up with the county's growth and believe this is why the college is reactive. To more effectively provide information to the powerbrokers in the college, she is part of a group that has started an internal research committee. Interestingly enough, their group has a similar charter to the executive group responsible for examining scanning information and communicating the information down the hierarchy.

In addition to taking a reactive approach to dealing with change, respondents provided evidence that President Smith embraces cautious risk-taking. While one

individual explains that the president's approach to risk is "calculate it and take it", responses from other organizational members point towards a conservative rather than calculated approach. When asked about risk-taking, nearly every interviewee pointed to the college's recent referendum as the preeminent example. This is interesting and provides great insight into the nature of risk-taking at GCC as earlier information indicated the college has a healthy tax-base and great community support – both of which would indicate that attempting to pass a referendum does not equate to risk-taking. One of the respondents explained that while the president is generally a cautious man, pushing for the referendum was risky because it would open the college up to greater scrutiny by the community. "He is a cautious man, but the risk-taking is there because I would say the referendum that got passed was a risk…and there is some risk because you're under a microscope when you do something like that…you might fail and have to do it again…" One individual felt that pursuing the referendum was a risk for the college because failure was a possibility and failure would prevent the college from growing. She also believes that community colleges, in general, and GCC specifically, are generally not in a position to take risks.

Finally, the college, under President Smith's tenure, appears to have taken a conservative approach to budgeting;, relying almost exclusively on traditional, public sources of funding. With the student population growth over the past five years, the college is in a position where more administrators, faculty, and staff are needed and state monies are not adequate to increase the number of full time staff. This situation, common in community colleges across the country, has impacted Gamma in profound ways. One interviewee talked about how the college has pursued a strategy of growth to increase

funding from the state (based on FTE funding formulas) and how the President has been

the primary advocate of this strategy. Growing the student population, however, has

substantially impacted the number of full-time faculty available to teach. While gathering

information, the researcher discovered that the part-time to full-time faculty ratio is now

greater than 5:1, a ratio higher than the typical 2:1 ratio in most community colleges..

When asked why the college has had such a tremendous shift in regards to full-time and

part-time faculty in the past five years, one of the interviewees indicated that the

incredible enrollment growth has forced the college to cut costs across the board.

The sheer number of adjuncts in comparison the relatively small number of full-time

faculty concerns one administrator as she wonders if the college is able to effectively

meet the needs of students. She also states that the college should look at ways to better

integrate the adjuncts into the culture of the college.

> The fact we have that many adjuncts [nine hundred], that is probably an
> issue, and…it does concern me that they may not be a part of the students
> [lives] and I think there needs to be more of an emphasis on the adjuncts
> and whether that comes from the dean or the department level, it definitely
> needs to be done.

Summary

While not the desired outcome, two of the presidents engaged in behaviors that,

based upon assumptions within the Community College Abundance Model, have

decreased the likelihood that their institutions achieve congruence with the external

environment. While Dr. Davis engaged in behaviors responsible for creating shared

organizational direction at Alpha Community College, he also exerted the majority of his

energy internally and the college has been unable to impact the external environment.

Also, his desire to distribute leadership hs left some staff uncertain about his influence on

the college's daily activities. Another concern expressed by respondents is that the president dislikes conflict, and this has led some to question is authenticity as individuals behaving contrary to his espoused values are not removed from their positions. Externally, respondent believe the president is uncomfortable in large settings, doesn't like to participate in transactional activities, and would much rather engage in small conversations. While active with external groups, questions are raised about whether his best energies are being used to develop partnerships for the college and the college's service area. Finally, the president's approach to partnering indicates that he accepts that the college cannot significantly impact the external environment.

Dr. Smith is the other internal president within this study and Gamma Community College, based upon his behaviors, is also in a position where it institutional direction is guided primarily by external conditions. A strict hierarchy guides college operations and as a result, staff perceive that representative input is ignored, communication is mainly top-down, and the president is forced to obtain data from external sources. Also, the college's ability to establish local partnerships is hampered by the strict focus on defined responsibilities. Dr. Smith only works on higher-level partnerships and leaves local partnering to his cabinet and non-executive staff. This was the only institution where interviewees could not identify a single sustained creative or innovative partnership initiated by the president and many were uncertain about the results of his numerous meetings. Another set of presidential behaviors responsible for preventing the college from achieving congruence with the external environment is the president's decision to move cautiously and conservatively when responding to external pressures. Regardless of difficult external conditions, information from a college staff member indicates that

Gamma Community College has a supportive community and strong tax base from which to draw resources. Despite this abundant resource, the primary mechanisms utilized by President Smith to navigate the college through changes have been fiscal conservation and hierarchical communication. While fiscal conservation can be a powerful strategic tactic, when used as a primary mechanism for navigating change, the college is prevented from aggressively seeking out new funding opportunities or partnerships. Also, using hierarchical communication creates an environment where discussions about challenges and opportunities are conducted in closed settings, thereby preventing input from other college staff. Conservatism is also prevalent when examining risk-taking behaviors in the college and institutional staff perceive that the president, and thereby the college, is generally risk aversive. The cautious and conservative nature of Dr. Smith's has resulted in the creation of college at the mercy of external conditions. While both presidents are highly regarded and have dramatically improved the internal climate and culture of their institutions, the behaviors listed above limit their institution's ability to effectively adapt to changing external environments.

Reject the Role of Organizational Anchor or Sensemaker

Utilizes a detached and distant leadership style

While some interviewees at Theta Community College provided positive statements about the president's leadership style, one respondent shared his impression that her leadership style resembles a laissez-faire approach. He feels that while her "heart is in the right place", she has struggled at times to make the right decisions and is not "a real strong leader." He qualified this assertion, that Dr. Johnson is good but not strong, by explaining that she doesn't like to make tough decisions. To reiterate this statement, he

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provided two examples, one dealing with IT system issues and the other with the civil

services center

> …she has already told us that she doesn't like to make those tough
> decisions, so if you don't want to make the tough decisions, all you can do
> is articulate down the line how you want to see the college being run. If
> we think about the IT system, it is the one system that impacts everybody
> on campus and to not have it where it should be is a major issue… I think
> she shies away from them [tough decisions]…She's not a person that I
> believe likes any kind of conflict or what would be viewed as conflict. The
> question comes up, questioning how the decision was made to put
> $10,000,000 million into the [civil services center]. She would shy away
> from that, she wouldn't have an answer. I think she shies away from tough
> questions.

Despite general statements about how relationships have been improved under Dr.

Johnson's tenure, nearly every interviewee feels she is a mystery to the vast majority of

college staff. One interviewee asserts that the president needs to make a concerted effort

to reach out to people, not just to be open when people reach out to her. Another

respondent, who has gotten to know and like President Johnson, has been disappointed

that other college staff, especially those in her department, have never had the

opportunity to get to know her. In fact, during her tenure at the college, Dr. Johnson has

only been to her office twice and the only name she knows in the financial aid office is

the director. One college member has tried to convince Dr. Johnson to make herself more

available to college staff because she feels the majority of organizational members don't

really know her or what she values. This person feels that President Johnson has great

intentions and a good heart, but that her desire to "lead from the shadows" prevents

college staff from understanding what values guide her or if these values are congruent

with the current college direction.

Remaining a mystery to the general college population has led to a feeling that she is sending mixed messages about values and direction. While some interviewees provided examples of how the president's espoused values are congruent with her actions, others raised questions about the president's authenticity. One respondent notes the president has always voiced support for "good people" at the college, a designation many have interpreted as people who buy into her espoused vision of treating people with care and concern. However, a college manager indicates that Dr. Johnson's inaction in removing people with behaviors whom interviewees feel contradict this vision has raised questions about whether this is actually an institutional value or not. Another institutional member doesn't see congruence in regards to her call for treating people fairly. She has seen differential treatment of people within the college; treatment that has differed without conversation or clear rationale. When asked if she feels the president is focused on doing the right thing, she responded "Do I believe that the institution as a whole believe that she does that consistently…no. People's perceptions are different about what people should or shouldn't be doing. There are individuals that I think believe maybe are treated differently." Another interviewee perceives the differential treatment as a result of friendships Dr. Johnson has with certain administrators – a result that communicates the college's best interests occasionally comes second. "Our IT system is in a fiasco and the person is in charge of that is a very nice person…he just does not have the ability to lead that department…and I think her friendships get in the way of sometimes doing the right thing." He expands on this sentiment by questioning whether the president is an authentic leader since they rarely see her leading by example. "One of the things that we did [in team-based management] was to identify the core values of the college and I think that

was important…but a lot of people still have reservations…they believe that true leaders should lead by example and they don't always see that."

Another negative consequence of Dr. Johnson's leadership style is its impact on the implementation of campus initiatives. One of the interviewees appreciates the participatory values under girding Dr. Johnson's leadership philosophy, however, he sees the lack of accountability as an obstacle to implementation. He notes the lethargy in implementation sends a signal to college staff that initiatives like team-based management, the primary vehicle for increased participation in decision-making and direction-setting, are of little use to the college. One individual, who has had staff involved in the leadership initiative and team-based management, expresses concern that implementation is such an issue and feels the college needs to find a way to improve the process. One staff member notes that since implementation of team-based management plans is not occurring, faculty are beginning to view the activity as a waste of time. "If you surveyed the faculty, [they] would believe that's a waste of time…nothing comes of it. Implementation of the process all takes place at the cabinet level and it's not happening." He adds that the president's focus on team-based management as a tool for increasing collaboration and participation in college operations has, thus far, been viewed by numerous staff and faculty as ineffective and a symbol of the executive team's power over college decisions.

Neglected to deliver true institutional change

Dr. Johnson explained that she has been working, from her first day as president, to create a participatory and open culture. This task was made more difficult by the preceding president who believed in a traditional bureaucratic model and limited

decision-making and direction-setting to the highest levels of the organization. Based on the previous presidency, college staff were initially skeptical of her claims and vision of the college and have watched her closely to see if her actions would reflect the values she espouses. One area where interviewees have noticed incongruence is in regard to open communication. While she has worked to improve relationships and encourage cross-workgroup initiatives, she, based upon comments from respondents, fails to embrace open communication when receiving questions or critiques. While noting that the president appreciates all input, one individual shared that "there are moments of frustration", but that she works to ensure that she only show frustration "behind closed doors." While the president works to display frustration behind closed doors, two individuals indicated that the she displayed a great deal of frustration during recent contract negotiations – a situation that led some administrators, faculty, and staff to question how serious she is about open communication on campus.

> I think that Dr. [Johnson] when things are not going well, really took it personally…She took it more personally than she needed…and I have heard her speak from the podium at town hall meetings and she's alluded to the fact that people have criticized this or that. [It's] just the way she talks about [it]…I would say that she took things more personally than maybe they were directed

In addition to sending mixed messages about open communication, several respondents expressed concern over the behaviors of her cabinet. Two words used to describe the cabinet were mystery and mystique – referring to the fact that individuals don't really know what values are suppose to guide the college. One college member explained that "there is a lot of communication that goes on among the cabinet that never gets out to the rest of the college in terms of what direction they want to explore…It just seems that it's a tight knit and closed community between her and the cabinet." Not only

is the cabinet tight-knit and closed off, but indications are that the behaviors coming from the cabinet are contradictory to the values espoused by the president. Another interviewee explained that although Dr. Johnson talks about representative leadership, "We have central command and control with president's cabinet…[but the hope is that] a lot of that will change…but I think that the behavior has to get modeled at the top before it gets into the bottom." Another respondent explained that while the president talks about respect and collaboration, her cabinet models disrespect for each other based upon the amount of infighting. One individual also sees a disconnect between the president's call for collaboration and the lack of collaboration he sees from the cabinet.

> …Collaboration is a two-way street. Certain administrators' ideas of collaboration is if they can get me to agree with their position, they are being collaborative…but that's not collaboration. Collaboration is coming together to see if this works for all of us. So no…[the culture] is not as open as [the cabinet] would like to say it is.

As a final example of how the president allows the cabinet to prevent deep cultural change, one of the respondents talked about a recent incident in which the college was attempting to collect information for the purpose of college planning. After receiving the results, both she and the president noticed some negative comments about certain administrators and President Johnson decided that some of the comments needed to be removed for the protection of staff. She feared that if the information got back to the administrators, the staff responsible would either be fired or face another form of retribution.

In summation, Dr. Johnson engages in behaviors indicating that she has not embraced the role of organizational sensemaker. Some staff members interpret her dispersed authority philosophy as "laissez-faire" management since she is unconnected to

the college's daily activities and allows the cabinet to decide organizational vision and direction. While indications are that relationships between her and the various subcultures are much improved over previous administrations, interviewees noted she has only established relationships with college members participating in the major college groups. Responses also show that individuals don't feel as if they know her, her values, or her vision for the college. This lack of knowledge has led to the perception that she sends out mixed signals and the sensemaking needs of organizational members remain unmet. Interviewees pointed to her proclivity to retain ineffective and inappropriately positioned staff members, treat people differently, and engage in inconsistent decision-making as examples of the incongruence between her espoused values and her actions as president. There are also indications that initiatives routinely stall at the cabinet level, the impact of participatory mechanisms is limited, and college staff is grown tired of waiting for deep, pervasive, and lasting change. Dr. Johnson is allowing the cabinet to run the daily operations and several respondents spoke of "bad behavior" that contradict the president's espoused values. There were indications that the cabinet engages in infighting, retributional behaviors, and operates from a "command and control" perspective instead of a participatory management approach. Several respondents also spoke of the perception that decisions are made at the cabinet level and shared with the institution as a courtesy. One respondent feels that the cabinet is allowed to engage in these negative behaviors because while Dr. Johnson is "nice" and a "good leader", she is "not a strong leader" and is affected by dominating personalities on her cabinet. In short, by remaining distant and allowing the cabinet to engage in behaviors contrary to her

espoused values, President Johnson is not embracing her role as organizational

sensemaker and has abdicated that role to her cabinet instead.

Chapter IX

Discussion of the Study

Introduction

This dissertation broke new ground by focusing on a strengths-based model of

leadership and the presidential behaviors associated with movement along an abundance

continuum. As such, the discussion section is robust and contains numerous sections

designed to bring closure to the study while providing guidance for future research

efforts. The chapter begins with a summary of the findings and includes an overarching

discussion about the results, exploration into why only one college achieved the

classification of abundance, information on how perceptions of presidential behaviors

impacted the culture and climate of the colleges, and a synopsis of the studies emergent

themes. The chapter then provides an in depth discussion of the importance of Gamma

Community College, the outlier of the study, honing in on the important lessons about the

limitations and applications of the CCAM. Next, the chapter explores some of the

limitations of the study including the prevalence of long-tenured presidents, the fact that

study presidents took over colleges in need of dramatic change, and the decision not to

establish a direct connection between the model and enhanced organizational

performance. In an effort to deal with some of the limitations described, the researcher

provides suggestions for future studies including a focus on less-seasoned presidents,

longitudinal studies of long-tenured presidents employing abundance principles, in-depth

single case studies, and studies of presidents unfamiliar with the abundance approach (like GCC). The chapter then ends with a reflection on the lessons learned, reiteration of the need for a new approach to improving organizational performance, and a discussion about the potential impact of the model on leadership development programs and graduate education.

Summary of the Findings

Based upon theoretical and experiential knowledge, the researcher believed that two of the institutions in this study would be classified as colleges of abundance and the other two would be classified as colleges of choice. Results from the concrete indicators of abundance and interview data, however, revealed that only Iota Community College could correctly be classified as abundant. In regards to the indicators survey, the other three colleges possessed some indicators of abundance, but were unable to successfully meet all six indicators developed. While this is an exploratory study and the concrete indicators of abundance will continue to evolve, information gathered from the interviews lends support to the conclusion that only one college in this study, based upon the assumptions of the CCAM, could rightfully be classified as abundant. In reality, with the model's focus on human development, transcendent leveraging, and continuous improvement as factors for movement towards greater abundance, all of which can only be obtained from insider information, the researcher was unable to truly ascertain which region to classify the colleges beforehand. Based on insider information, however, only Dr. Harrison has been able to guide his institution to transcendent leveraging of institutional resources and beyond the leadership push-pull effect (described later).

President Harrison has been able to successfully balance the college's paradoxical needs for an internal sensemaker and external advocate – a talent that enables him to effectively balance the internal and external demands of a community college presidency. He has obtained the title "king of partnerships" based upon his networking and partnering prowess, but his presence and influence is felt on campus even when out in the community. Dr. Johnson (TCC), by most accounts, is successfully establishing the "collaborative relationships" that benefit her college and the region, but perceptions from college staff are that she holds little influence over daily operations, is unknown to most staff, and prefers to "lead from the shadows." The other two presidents, Dr. Smith (GCC) and Dr. Davis (ACC) resembled, and were described as, internal presidents by college staff – statements strengthened by the concrete indicator results. Dr. Smith has improved the health of the culture and the college has been transformed into a respectful and civil institution, but his focus on hierarchy and decision to utilize conservative approaches when dealing with external pressures has positioned GCC as a reactionary institution. Similarly, Dr. Davis has worked to transform ACC into an institution with distributed and pervasive leadership, empowered staff, and shared vision, but his desire to "avoid the spotlight" and acceptance of limited business and industry opportunities is preventing the college from becoming the workforce engine needed by Alpha County.

Initially, the researcher was going to gather information aimed at contrasting the leadership behaviors of presidents within two colleges classified as abundant and two classified as choice. The concrete indicators, however, showed that only one of the institutions met the criteria for abundance. Despite the inability to contrast behaviors of two presidents leading colleges classified as abundant against two classified as choice, a

great deal of useful information was gathered during this exploration into presidential behaviors. In fact, the study provided great insight into the impact of presidential behaviors on movement towards both greater and lesser abundance. The interview data was very useful and provided insight into how the presidential behaviors are perceived throughout the organization, how these perceptions guide follower behavior and beliefs, and how presidents simultaneously engage in actions that both push their institutions towards and away from greater abundance – a phenomenon classified in this study as the ***abundance push-pull effect***. For example, each of the presidents expressed a desire to push leadership throughout the college; a decision that, if truly implemented, increases the likelihood a college is transcendently leveraging its leadership resources (Cameron & Lavine, 2003). The interpretation and implementation of pushing leadership throughout the college, however, varied greatly. Dr. Smith pushes leadership through the hierarchy and has established an executive level decision-making body; Dr. Johnson continually speaks about leadership as a circle and has established committees, however, her absence and the overwhelming influence from cabinet members labeled as autocrats has created perceptions that the cabinet drives college direction and decisions; and Dr. Harrison has flattened the hierarchy at ICC to increase communication and collaboration, a decision that has resulted in staff member empowerment and ownership over directions and decisions. Information from interviews was essential in understanding how ICC achieved classification as an abundant college as well as why the other colleges were classified as colleges of choice.

The results show that reaching a classification of abundance is a complex and difficult endeavor requiring that staff view the president as authentic, equal parts internal

and external leader, and intricately connected to the college. Dr. Harrison was described as amazing, consistent, transparent, honest, full of energy, "a machine", "the idea man", the "king of partnerships", and an androgynous leader. The only negatives comments were that he works too hard, has developed a climate that values outcomes more than development at times, and that burnout is a potential concern. Interestingly, interviewees even placed a positive spin on these "non-abundant" findings by speaking of their pride in Iota's role in the economic renaissance of the County, the tremendous professional and personal growth opportunities, and the increased quality of life for Iota County residents. In fact, based upon the assumptions of the CCAM, this study has uncovered what may be the archetypal abundant institution and abundant president. I use the term archetypal despite the fact that no community college or president will ever be identical; however, the case study of ICC illustrates that a successful journey to greater abundance is greatly influenced by the executive leader. Iota was the only college successfully able to transcendently leverage tangible, intangible, and leadership resources and establish the college as a true learning institution focused on continuous improvement – both of which are keys to reaching a state of abundance.

For the sake of clarification, reaching classification as an abundant college is not the same as reaching a utopian state where the college is no longer improves. On the contrary, reaching classification as an abundant college indicates that the institution is fully aware of its shortcomings and engaged in continuous improvement processes to continually enhance the institution's impact on the service area and region. Reaching abundance is based on transforming a college mindset to one of continuous improvement where statusquoism is vehemently rejected. Although Iota Community College has

amplified its impacts to illogical levels, the president, executive team, and non-executive staff are all continually working to find ways to improve existing operations, grow new opportunities, and find new pathways for community success. ICC, perhaps more than any other college in this study, has embraced the continuous improvement philosophy illustrated by the concept of transcendent leveraging and the institution will remain abundant only as long as the organizational mindset is one where all decisions are questioned, mission and direction are shared, and statusquoism is rejected.

Despite the fact that the other three colleges could not be classified as abundant, they have experienced improvements to their cultures and climates under the current administration. Drs. Davis (ACC), Smith (GCC), and Johnson (TCC) were all hired to improve the atmosphere of their institutions and each replaced a president responsible for leaving a great deal of cultural debris. In each case, respondents emphatically stated the current president has provided great healing and health to the college. Each of these college saw tremendous improvement to their internal environments through calculated and strategic presidential behaviors, however, there were also presidential behaviors associated with movement towards lesser abundance. First, reaching abundance requires tremendous energy towards shared direction over an extended period of time. Even though Dr. Johnson has been working to create an abundant college, the direction does not appear to be shared based upon her desire to remain "in the shadows" and the fact she allows her cabinet members to send contradictory messages. Secondly, a college must be primed to reach the classification of abundance; something dependent upon hopefulness and an institutional drive that transcends external pressures. While Dr. Davis has largely established shared leadership and a college focused on continuous improvement, his

behaviors model tacit acceptance of external difficulties rather than a drive to transform the environment and college staff echo the same acceptance of existing difficulties. Finally, reaching the classification of abundance is dependent upon a president focused on engaging the college in the changes necessary to grow, develop, and fully leverage its tangible, intangible, and leadership resources. Dr. Smith, through kind and authentic leadership, has transformed GCC into a civil and friendly institution, but he was brought in to replace a hard driving change agent. His leadership style and behaviors are not conducive to the type of behaviors necessary to transcendently leverage the organization's resources. These colleges have assisted in illustrating the difficulty of reaching abundance as the presidents are identified as exceptional, viewed favorably by organizational members, and known nationally as powerful community college presidents. Nevertheless, all the presidents in the study engaged in behaviors associated with movement towards and away from greater abundance and only ICC was able to escape the abundance push-pull effect. By utilizing information from all four colleges in respect to the presidential behaviors associated with a move towards and away from greater abundance, the researcher has uncovered a great deal of information on how presidential behaviors influence college direction.

Proactivity and internal drive are associated with institutional movement towards abundance

As discussed in the literature section, recent years have seen dramatic changes in the economic structure of the United States, understandings of the higher education industry, and the taxpayer mentality. These changes have introduced greater levels of turbulence and uncertainty into the environments in which community college operate and prepare students – environments that reward organizations characterized as nimble,

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flexible, and proactive in meeting changes. The CCAM represents years of experience and analysis of cutting edge research focused on enabling community colleges to drive change rather than simply react to it. Transcendent leveraging is built upon the concepts of hope, internal drive, and proactivity, so it should come as no surprise that presidential behaviors described as proactive were associated with movement towards greater abundance.

Alpha Community College, under its preceding president, was out of touch with changing external conditions and operated from a traditional, yet outdated "command and control" leadership model. From the outset of his presidency, Dr. Davis worked proactively to change the institution's view of itself as well as its reputation within the community. He engaged the college in a dispersed form of leadership designed to prepare the college to take advantage of the knowledge and skills held by organizational members. Almost immediately, people developed new strategies and ideas within their workgroups and as opportunities arose, began looking for ways to take ownership over the decisions and directions of the college. President Davis effectively broke a psychological damn and the result was a flood of innovation and creativity where people started to share their skills and knowledge and he was able to initiate a new strategic planning process, utilize team-based management, and engages the college in appreciative inquiry. Now, the college has dozens of certified appreciative inquiry and diversity trainers traveling across multiple states to train other institutions. The president explained that he believe that people are fundamentally good and he worked to help the organization member embrace the positivity lying beneath the anger, yelling, and strife created by low expectations and suffocating executive leadership.

Iota Community College is another institution where proactivity and aggressiveness has pushed the college towards abundance and classification as an abundant community college. Based upon information gathered in this study, Dr. Harrison is a visionary leader and was an early adopter in regard to dispersed leadership as the predominant community college managerial approach was bureaucratic when he accepted the position of president at ICC. He was also pushing for web-based distance learning pre-2000, a time when distance learning meant telelearning for most colleges. In order to speed up communications and enhance the nimbleness of the college, he flattened the hierarchy, merged administrative positions, and has employed less than thirty administrators to run a college responsible for educating more than fourteen thousand students per term. Dr. Harrison, affectionately known as the "king of partnerships", has never waited for partners to approach the college as he believes the college must develop and expand partnership throughout the service area. As a result, the college has a four-year college site (representing opportunities for bachelors, master's, and other advanced degrees from multiple colleges and universities), a community library, and entrepreneurial center on campus; has spearheaded multiple regional development consortiums responsible for replacing tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs, significantly increasing the number of green industries, and drawing thousands of entrepreneurs to the county; and has established itself as the regional partner hub and network incubator. By proactively reengineering structures, operations, and processes while simultaneously driving the college to aggressively pursue partnering and networking opportunities, President Harrison has transformed the college into an organization that drives change instead of being held hostage by it.

Conservative and reactive behaviors are associated with institutional movement towards lesser abundance

Results from this study suggest that not only are internal drive and proactivity catalysts for a movement towards abundance, but also that reactivity and conservation act as obstacles to reaching greater abundance. Organizational passivity in dealing with external changes leaves the college unable to effectively develop congruence between the institution and its external environment and leads to an absence of hope, optimism, and resilience – all characteristics within POB found to quantifiably enhance organizational performance. Reactivity can, and in the case of one college in this study did, result in the development of a climate where tacit acceptance of external conditions dominates the organizational mindset and impacts how college staff members view challenges and difficulties.

Dr. Smith has dedicated himself to transforming the culture at Gamma Community College and has, by all accounts, created a culture that values order and a climate typified by respect, civility, and caring. Comments from interviewees indicate that the college needed someone to reinstall positive values and repair the damage from a hard-driving change agent and that President Smith is respected and admired based upon his success in leading the college's healthy transformation. While the internal environment is more civil and familial, as described by college staff, he has also established a college that approaches external pressures cautiously. Dr. Smith constantly talks about how difficult the external situations are on GCC, he and his cabinet discuss environmental scans and engage in one-way communicate to non-executive staff, and the president has developed a culture that is generally risk-aversive. Based on responses from interviewees, there are no unique partnerships providing exceptional value to

stakeholders, partnering, in general, is handled outside of the president's office, the

primary mechanism for navigating change is fiscal conservation, and individuals within

the college listed attempting to pass a referendum, a common and necessary practice in

community colleges, as the riskiest institutional endeavor in recent memory.

Additionally, the college has grown substantially over the years and statements from the

president and senior executives show that the college depends primarily on greater

student numbers to increase revenue; an approach that has lead to substantial increases in

part-time and decreases in full-time faculty. By reacting instead of seeking ways to

proactively address difficulties in the external environments, relying almost exclusively

on traditional revenue sources, and limiting risk-taking, Gamma Community College

finds itself as an institution largely at the mercy of external forces.

Achieving classification as an abundant college is premised on overcoming the push-pull effect

While further research into the abundance model and its impact on community

college may reveal additional abundant presidential behaviors, results from this study

provide a great deal of insight into movement along the continuum. One of the most

important findings is the existence of an abundance push-pull effect across the categories

– a scenario where presidents to simultaneously engage in behaviors associated with a

move towards abundance and away from abundance. Indications are that the push-pull

effect can exist across selective codes (engaging in positivity and optimism while

rejecting the role of sensemaker) or within a single selective code (i.e. engaging in

behaviors that both push for and away from congruence with the external environment); a

situation negating the positive influence of abundant behaviors. Only one college in this

study, Iota Community College, escaped the push-pull effect in spite of two behaviors

identified as moving the college towards lesser abundance and was able to reach a state of abundance while Alpha, Gamma, and Theta Community Colleges were all impacted by it[6].

Theta Community College, like other colleges in this study, has experienced tremendous positive change based upon the board's decision to bring in a president with a leadership style antithetical to the previous president. Dr. Johnson has worked for nearly a decade on opening up the leadership of the college, improving relationships between subcultures, and providing exceptional opportunities for growth and development. In fact, results from the study demonstrate that President Johnson engages in positivity and optimism through her attempts to develop a culture focused on positivity. One of her first actions was to model openness based on the fact the college was viewed, both inside and outside the organization, as a closed and dictatorial institution. She engaged in symbolic activities like creating open-houses within her office, providing the college budget to all college staff, and establishing committees with input and decision-making responsibilities. President Johnson has also worked to eliminate the fear of retribution by instilling humor and playfulness into the college and even created an award ceremony that honors mistakes. Finally, she has pushed for extensive professional development activities and when she spots talent, she promotes and moves people into the positions she feels will benefit the person and the college. While all of these actions are positive and associated with the creation of a positive culture, she also utilizes a detached leadership style and the accompanying behaviors have prevented her from being

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[6] Interviews from ICC did indicate that respondents were concerned that people were occasionally worked around instead of developed and that burnout is a potential problem, but neither of these findings was associated, according to interviewees, the observation, or document analysis, with an inability to reach the classification of an abundant college. This is an important finding as no president will behave in accordance with the abundance principles at all times.

perceived as the college's sensemaker and organizational anchor. While relationships have been positively impacted on a larger scale, nearly every interviewee expressed concern that the president does not walk the campus, prefers to "lead from the shadows", and neglects opportunities to interact with staff. By remaining distant from daily operations, her hands-off and empowering approach to leadership is perceived by some as laissez-faire and disconnected. Dr. Johnson's authenticity has been questioned due to perceptions that demotions and firings are unfair and retributional, behaviors from her cabinet contradict her espoused values, and that individuals behaving in manners contrary to her espoused values remain employed. Indications are that by acting almost exclusively as an external president, college members don't see her influence or feel her impact on the college.

Dr Smith has engaged in behaviors demonstrating his focus on positivity and optimism through his dedication to developing a civil and positive climate at Gamma Community College. President Smith is frequently referred to as "dad" based on member perceptions that he has created a functional and healthy family instead of the "family of bickering brothers and sisters" at the college before his arrival. The president has pushed for respect by halting meetings when individuals show disrespect, working to create peace between warring subcultures, and establishing order and understanding across the organization. Additionally, maintains a continuous improvement perspective when dealing with mistakes and addresses these situations by helping staff initiate the actions necessary to alleviate the issues. The culture has dramatically improved and, in fact, consultants have expressed the opinion that GCC has a special "magic" that allows the organization to maintain high retention rates. Despite the positive and civil environment,

Dr. Smith employs certain behaviors that, based upon assumptions within the CCAM, fail to treat the development of human potential as an institutional priority. While the president has expanded professional development opportunities, interviewees spoke of an institution where selected groups are empowered with decision-making responsibilities – an indirect effect of the college's focus on maintaining a rigid hierarchy. In fact, respondent perceptions are that the executive team is responsible for making decisions, adjusting direction, and controlling information flow to the president – a situation negatively impacting the quality of data. There are concerns across subcultures and workgroups that input derived from non-executive staff is not utilized, participatory mechanisms exist to increase feelings of involvement rather than to affect change, and implementation of change is a top-down process. Without feeling ownership or empowerment, Gamma Community College will never have full access to the plethora of tacit knowledge, abilities, and skills existing throughout the college.

While GCC and TCC provided examples of the abundance push-pull across behavioral categories, Alpha Community College has experienced the push-pull effect within the same category as respondents identified based presidential behaviors that both create and prevent congruence between the college and its environments. President Davis has engaged in behaviors designed to establish shared organizational direction, a catalyst for ensuring an organization's ability to remain adaptable to external changes. He has modeled positive behaviors to college staff in an effort to increase their trust in him, each other, and the college in general. As a result of increased trust and engagement in college direction, interviewees explained that workgroup and organizational values are greatly aligned and people are working to move the college forward within both daily routines

and broad scale projects (i.e. visioning). In fact, the use of team-building management

has increased communication and interaction between individuals from different

workgroups, provided a tangible mechanism for working towards workgroup and

institutional solutions, and resulted in participation from more than 60% of the college

staff. The use of team-building management, strategic hiring, strategic planning, and

appreciative inquiry have worked to unleash innovation and creativity while also

establishing empowerment and ownership throughout the organization. However,

President Davis has also engaged in behaviors that prevent congruence between the

college and its external environments by exerting the majority of his energy on internal

matters. As one of the two internal presidents within this study, Dr. Davis is focused

primarily on the internal concerns of the college. While this focus has led to a positive

and vibrant culture, it also appears to be preventing Alpha from proactively creating

innovative and boundary-spanning external opportunities. ACC is dealing with difficult

external conditions, but interviewees pointed to neighboring colleges, dealing with

similar conditions, able to find and create unique partnering opportunities that benefit

both the colleges and their service areas. College staff indicated that the president dislikes

engaging in transactional conversations and greatly prefers small, informal settings, a

situation likely preventing him from nurturing a climate able to aggressively seek out

innovative partnering and networking opportunities. Additionally, interviewees explained

that the president focuses on positivity to such a degree that he refuses to push the

workforce development office to seek new opportunities, apparently based upon a desire

to avoid conflict. By refusing to challenge people and units to be creative and aggressive

in finding new external opportunities, the college is, by default, taking a reactionary

approach to external conditions. By providing his best energies internally and promoting

acceptance of the difficult external situations, President Davis has created an environment

where the innovation, creativity, and drive of college staff, while being developed and

utilized inside the institution, are not being used to create new opportunities that could

transcend environmental constraints.

Colleges take on the personalities of their presidents

Results from this study indicate that over time, community colleges take on the

personalities of their presidents. One example of this is how Iota Community College has

taken on the personality of Dr. Harrison. As a result of engaging in behaviors focused on

pushing positivity and optimism throughout the college, he has established ICC as an

institution with tremendous impact on its students, external constituents, county, and

region. This philosophy began with the President's belief that he, as president of a

community college in a distressed area, had a responsibility to help the college and

county transcend its environmental constraints. His belief was that by acting as an agent

of and for change as well as driver of hope and optimism to the entire county, he could

inspire college staff to give more of themselves towards achievement of a greater mission

and that the college, in turn, could become the catalyst for county and region-wide

educational and economic recovery. Organizational members bought into his philosophy

and have been inspired by his work ethic, integrity, and concern for people, have

experienced the powerful impact the college has on the entire region, and are focused on

becoming better employees, colleagues, and citizens. Organizational members have, by

embracing the notion that they have a "higher calling", accomplished feats that defy logic

and rational thinking – just like the president who staff members refer to as a "machine" for his ability to seemingly do the impossible.

Gamma Community College has also taken on the personality of its president, Dr. Smith. Again, Dr. Smith has lead tremendously positive change within the institution and the college now reflects his unwavering dedication to respect, civility, and dignity. Respondents used family metaphors many times, both to describe President Smith and the college's culture, going so far as to call him dad and the college a functional family. Another area, however, where the college has taken on his personality is the focus on structure and hierarchy. Results from the case study indicate that valuing the chain of command has permeated the college and is likely preventing the institution from effectively adapting to changing external conditions. President Smith believes that a rigid hierarchy is a good mechanism for ensuring order and respect based on the ability to maintain strict authority and reporting lines. College staff have bought into his vision of a respectful hierarchy as individuals only report to their direct superiors, don't ask questions that may appear disrespectful or disagreeable, respect the integrity of the hierarchy during informal conversations with the president, and stay focused on their clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Some indirect effects of the hierarchy, however, include stifled communication, faulty data, limited creativity and innovation, and the creation of a bureaucratic machine unable to adeptly maneuver its way through changing external conditions. In both situations, the college has taken on the personality of its president; however, in only one of these situations has the personality alteration resulted in an institutional classification as an abundant institution.

Perceptions of presidential behavior drive organizational member beliefs about effectiveness more than strategies and initiatives

Two presidents within this study talked extensively about working to overcome dictatorial and closed cultures established under previous administration through participatory leadership approaches. Drs. Davis and Johnson both introduced focused on dispersed decision-making, representative input, and shared visioning to their colleges; however, the perception of college staff within these two institutions differs greatly. Alpha Community College has experienced a cultural renaissance as a result of President Davis' establishment of multiple avenues and mechanisms for gathering input into college direction and decision-making processes. He made the difficult decision to remove his entire cabinet shortly after he arrived because they refused to buy into his vision of dispersed leadership and hire/promote individuals who shared his philosophy. As a result, the cabinet works to ensure smooth operations and college staff believe the vice-presidents and the president are collaborating and allowing non-executives to participate in major organizational decisions. Additionally, interviewees mentioned team-based management as a tool that allows them to suggest changes and tackle both small and institutional problems – a perception attributable to the fact that President Davis generally accepts and pushes for implementation of solutions with minimal delay. Organizational members in Alpha Community College feel empowered to make suggestions, question decisions, and impact college direction and believe they hold ownership in the college's direction based on the dispersed, yet supportive leadership style of President Davis. Dr. Johnson has also pushed for inclusive and dispersed leadership at Theta Community College, but college staff members largely interpret it as detached and one individual even labeled it laissez-faire. President Johnson was the only

primarily external president within the study and her desire to empower people throughout the college appears to be aspirational based upon perceptions that she and the "mystical" cabinet are sending mixed signals. College staff praised the fact the president's door is open, but also stated she does proactively reach out to staff. There are indications that President Johnson only seeks connection with college staff when working on initiatives, when a problem arises, or during college-wide meetings. While she may desire representative input, remaining segregated from non-executive staff has led to perceptions that input is sought only when situations are critical and that the cabinet is responsible for making major college decisions. Additionally, several issues with the cabinet were identified in the study. Specifically, statements from interviewees indicated that there is a great deal of infighting within the cabinet and that the president's espoused values don't mesh with the behaviors of certain cabinet members. In fact, one cabinet member was mentioned, by name and or position on multiple occasions, as the individual most resistant to Dr. Johnson's desire for dispersed leadership. Amazingly, some interviewees commented that organizational members believe that this individual, not Dr. Johnson, is actually running the college. Like Dr. Davis at ACC, one of the primary tools used by Dr. Johnson to push decision-making to non-executives is team-based management; however, the results at TCC are quite different. Several staff explained that the cabinet has smothered initiatives championed by non-executive members and that few team-building management plans are ever implemented. In fact, indications are that numerous organizational members, especially faculty, see team-building management as a waste of time. Although both presidents embrace participatory, empowering management approaches, results from the data suggest that college staff at ACC and TCC

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have different perceptions of the approaches. At ACC, the perceptions are positive and the approach has increased feelings of ownership and empowerment while at TCC, individuals are unsure of the larger vision guiding their work or the validity of the values espoused by the executive leader.

Leader authenticity guides perceptions of presidential behavior

The word authenticity has become a corporate buzzword over recent years, due in large part to the inauthentic behaviors from CEOs and senior management at companies like Enron, Arthur Anderson and WorldCom. Obviously the term reflects ethics and morality, but truly, what is authentic leadership? While definitions vary, authenticity is understood as a personal attribute and can be defined as knowing whom one is (owning experiences, thoughts, emotions, etc.) and acting in accordance with one's true self (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Harter, 2002). Based upon the fact that executive leaders are always modeling actions, a president who follows a set of positive values, behaves in well-understood and consistent manners, and treats others with respect (the golden rule approach), creates an environment where followers will mirror these actions. In addition to priming a culture for positive change, authentic leadership is a crucial trait for presidents in community colleges because it "best depicts the type of positive leadership needed in changing times, where the environment is dramatically changing, where the rules that have guided how we operate no longer work, and where the best leaders will be transparent with their intentions, having a seamless link between their espoused values, actions, and behaviors" (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

In his more than ten years at Gamma Community College, Dr. Smith has led tremendous positive internal changes and has transformed the college, in the words of

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one interviewee, from an institution full of "bickering brothers and sisters" to one characterized by civility, respect, and genuine concern for college staff. A common belief shared by interviewees, and likely a catalyst for the positive changes, is that President Smith is viewed as a man of high integrity and authenticity. Respondents feel that he is genuine and that his actions reflect care and concern for students, staff, and the college – something seen in the list of expectations he has for himself and the college. The confidence expressed in his leadership of the college appears to be inspired by the fact that college staff understand the institution's greater vision, their place within the organization, and the college's place within its environments.

Dr. Harrison, like Dr. Smith, was viewed as an authentic leader and person of integrity and honesty. Although he, like Drs. Davis and Johnson, has struggled at times to remove individuals from their positions, he is the only one of the three whose integrity was not in question. This perception is likely a result of the unbending focus on providing clear, consistent, and transparent leadership that has resulted in innumerable examples of authentic behavior. In fact, interviewees expressed many times that he embodies integrity and high ethical standards, is a man of his word and never fails to deliver, and is genuine and true to himself. Organizational members also reiterated the role of mutual gains/consensus modeling in proving his authenticity. The president consistently espouses, and based upon comments by college staff has lived up to, putting people first, valuing all opinions, and integrating all voices into organizational decisions and direction. While this approach is rarely efficient, it has been effective at ICC in putting well-understood values into action, establishing shared directions, and limiting the need for formal groups charged with questioning decisions and direction. Whether through

institutional council meetings, strategic planning processes, or dealing with student issues, college staff trust the president to act in accordance with his espoused values and the college vision. Individuals also spoke of his authenticity in regards to failures, mistakes, and setbacks, noting that he uses these situations as learning opportunities rather than opportunities to belittle or embarrass staff. Interviewees expressed that his greatest concern is that stakeholder needs are met and that a lesson was learned from the experience. Consensus modeling and Dr. Harrison's approach to dealing with mistakes and setbacks, by themselves, are not proof the he is an authentic leader. Rather, these are skills and tactics that can be taught and learned and based upon findings from this study, presidents perceived as authentic utilize the skills and abilities demonstrated by these executive leaders as long as the tactics appear to be an evolution of a well-understood leadership style. Engaging in new behaviors deemed to contradict previous behaviors will inevitably impact the sensemaking of organizational members and could actually prevent college staff from perceiving the leader as authentic. Additionally, if the presidents are not perceived as authentic, they can use all the unique, innovative, and cutting-edge tactics they desire, but will not see positive benefits since staff will depend upon their workgroups or subcultures to meet their sensemaking needs.

Gamma Community College

While addressed in the previous sections, Gamma Community College was clearly the outlier in this study. GCC's president, Dr. Smith, operates from a traditional, bureaucratic approach to management instead of the more pervasive leadership models (dispersed or participatory leadership) pushed by theorists, researchers, and numerous college leaders. This case not only served as a great resource in further developing the

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CCAM and understandings of abundant presidential behaviors, but also reiterated the importance of person-organization fit, authenticity, and timing.

When President Smith arrived at the college, organizational members were burnt out, full of anger, and without an understanding of the college's true mission. A hard-charging change agent had created numerous positive changes and moved the college forward, but, according to respondents, failed to care for the organization. Infighting, bickering, and exhaustion were all terms used to describe the climate upon Dr. Smith's arrival and he realized that remediating the culture, reestablishing civility and respect, and, in the words of multiple respondents, "calming the place down", were institutional priorities. By relying on his character, demonstrating his personal beliefs, and ensuring congruence between his declarations and actions, Dr. Smith provided the sensemaking necessary for organizational members to heal and work towards a new organizational vision. He was, by all accounts, exactly the kind of change agent needed by the college in its weakened state. Individuals throughout the college have bought into the new vision and missions of the college based upon the president's consistent message and behaviors as well as the use of a rigid hierarchy that ensures individuals comprehend how the college works and what their roles and responsibilities are within the greater system.

This focus on chain of command (a term used frequently by respondents), however, lies in opposition to one of the foundational assumptions within the CCAM – that being the need to identify, develop, and empower leaders throughout the college (transcendently leveraging leadership resources). Responses from the interviewees, as well as information from the concrete indicators of abundance, indicate that the lack of empowered leaders throughout the college has led to stifled creativity and innovation

since staff members limit contributions and efforts to their well-defined roles. Other indirect impacts of the chain of command are that it slows the development and implementation of new initiatives, limits access to tacit knowledge (although a volunteer group is looking for ways to assist in future planning), and hampers two-way communication since individuals are encouraged to speak in manners perceived as respectful to senior management. While these findings indicate that GCC is not transcendently leveraging its leadership resources, there were some behaviors associated with respecting the chain of command that, based upon staff perceptions, were associated with leveraging human capital (intangible resources). Respondents spoke of how the hierarchical management structure has ensured that sensemaking needs are met, order, respect, and civility have become organizational mores; and fighting between subcultures is a remnant of the past. In reality, these findings are indicative of a college primed to transcendently leverage its intangible resources (i.e. human capital, culture, climate, etc); a feature found in college pushing towards and reaching the classification of an abundant college.

The GCC case proved to be a critical addition to this study as it not only offered extensive information about and examples of the abundance push-pull effect, but also provided definitive evidence that the CCAM is not a tool appropriate for every executive leader or college. Some critical assumptions within the model are that dispersed leadership approaches, establishing organizational hope and optimism, and proactively moving colleges toward greater congruence with their environments are all associated with institutional movement towards greater abundance. Put simply, these assumptions contradict the guiding principles of a more traditional, highly structured form of

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leadership – the kind of leadership used so effectively by President Smith in transforming GCC's culture and climate. Even if Dr. Smith were to try and use the CCAM as a leadership tool, it would likely prove ineffective based upon its inherent contradictions to the leadership he has provided for more than a decade. He has established himself as a sensemaker and authentic leader described as honest, a man of integrity, and a person of the highest character. Engaging in behaviors antithetical to his traditional approach would not only cast doubts on his authenticity, but could impact the ability of individuals throughout the college to make sense of their environment.

The CCAM, while useful, is not a tool that should be wielded by every president or in all colleges. Tools are effective when used appropriately and by those skilled enough to handle them and can prove destructive if used inappropriately or carelessly. The people at GCC, the college's greatest resource and responsibility, explained that the previous president left the college in shambles upon his exit. He was a hard-charging change agent who, by all indications, pushed for the type of congruence between college and environment advocated by the abundance model. By misusing this approach, however, he burned the college out and created an atmosphere of competition and divisiveness. The CCAM is a model placing a great deal of responsibility in the executive leader to balance the needs of change with the care and concerns of organizational members. Only when this balance is maintained, as in the case of Iota Community College, does the college transcend environmental constraints, provide unparallel value to its stakeholders, and reach the classification of an abundant institution.

Limitations of the Study

This study of presidential behaviors was guided by the assumptions within the CCAM and the behavioral categories were developed from to leadership expectations delineated in the POS positive practices survey, POB PsyCap, and PAL literature. Additionally, the CCAM factors of transcendence and positive spiraling, as seen in the cases, provided insight into how organizational hope, optimism, and resilience, all features of PsyCap, work to establish the institutional internal drive necessary to transcendently leverage tangible, intangible, and leadership resources. Since this study marked the first attempt to apply principles of the positivity literature into higher education, it should be viewed as an exploratory study and organic step in understanding the role of strengths-based and abundant management practices. A great deal can be learned from this study in order to improve future studies seeking to apply these same principles across a variety of higher education contexts.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this particular study is in the principles underlying the framework itself. The abundance framework was designed as a new approach to organizational effectiveness, one designed primarily around the concepts of transcendently leveraging tangible, intangible, and leadership resources. Transcendent leveraging is a new and aggressive approach to leveraging that represents an organizational mindset instead of a business tactic. Hopefulness, aggressiveness, and positive spiraling (through the development of critical mass) are built into this concept and achieving transcendence requires tremendous energy and continuous effort, something that most organizations are not currently prepared to commit. This model can be compared to the human health continuum where exceptional effort over a long period allows an individual to reach vitality or "Olympic-level" health (Cameron & Lavine,

2006). The focus of the model is not being classified as an abundant college, but rather in the ongoing journey towards greater abundance. If community colleges, like people, set the highest level of health as their goal, failure would be the inevitable result for the majority. Instead, the goal is continuous improvement towards a higher level of health, or in the case of the community college, towards enhanced organizational performance – something the CCAM, theoretically, primes community colleges for. Creating a culture of continual improvement (in opposition to espousing continuous improvement) is a difficult endeavor and the reality is that the absence of illness (crises) normally ensures that basic stakeholder needs are met, board members are satisfied, and basic core indicators are addressed. Taking an abundance approach requires commitment, dedication, and a willingness to rethink everything – something many organizations are unable or unwilling to do. It also requires operating in congruence with the principles underlying the model, something not appropriate within every college situation. In the case of Gamma Community College, for example, the president operates in manners largely inconsistent with the model (a focus on hierarchy rather than pervasive leadership); however, he is viewed as a tremendously effective and authentic internal leader. Shifting his leadership approach would likely undermine the positive effects he has had on the college, as some members would start questioning Dr. Smith's authenticity.

Another legitimate difficulty of this model is that it places new responsibilities on the executive leader, something that cannot be overlooked. Each president in this study is highly regarded and more than one has won national recognition. These are individuals who have the respect of their constituents, their boards, and national organizations and

the author wants to make it clear that regardless of how they appear within this study, they are top-notch community college leaders. This study utilized a theoretical high-power microscope to examine their behaviors in an effort to better understand how community colleges are pushed towards or prevented from reaching abundance – an emerging view on how to prime a college for greater performance. While the researcher has no concrete proof, he and other individuals studying the CCAM feel that, at best, five percent of community colleges could, in their present state, be classified as abundant community colleges. Based on this belief, nearly all community college leaders studied under the stringent requirements of this model would not achieve the label of an abundant leader. It is important that readers of this study not draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of these presidents based upon the case studies or codes emanating from this study. Rather, the presidents should be viewed as courageous for allowing themselves to be studied with such scrutiny and high expectations.

Another limitation of this study is the long tenure of the presidents. The average tenure of the four presidents is 14.25 years with the shortest-tenured president serving at his/her current institution for under a decade. Currently, the average community college presidency lasts less than seven years (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007), so presidents within this study have served longer and had greater opportunities to influence change, model behaviors, and establish their legacy. The length of tenure also speaks to the quality of executive leader in this study. Community college presidents navigate a labyrinth of stakeholder groups unlike those experienced by most executive leaders, whether in public or private companies. While not responsible for answering to shareholders, they answer to local workforce boards, businesses, chambers of commerce, taxpayers,

congresspeople, lay boards, students, parent, unions, and multiple internal subcultures. Additionally, many lead the sole academic institution in the college's service area while simultaneously acting as the local cultural center, economic incubator, adult-basic education center, and county partnership hub. It is an exceptionally difficult role and yet these individuals have managed to navigate it successfully for more than a decade.

This study was also focused on studying the behaviors of presidents hired to reinvigorate the college after divisive administrations. Each president talked about how they scanned the environment and worked to undo existing damage based upon their understandings of effective leadership, attempting to model effective behaviors, and utilizing tactics specific to their leadership styles. Each institution was at a crossroads when they stepped into the presidency and each used the opportunity to affect positive change. While changes can, and often do, occur during a presidency, each of these presidents have remained consistent in their behaviors and therefore it was not possible, based upon the cases selected, to study the impact of changing behaviors during a presidency. Based upon the results of this study, however, the researcher believes that as long as the majority of college staff view the president as a woman or man of integrity, presidents can adjust their behaviors and integrate the skills and tactics shown to pushing their college towards greater abundance.

Building on the previous limitation, each of these institutions was primed for change when the new president arrived. In fact, the entry of a new president was, in the case of these institutions, an ideal catalyst for change as college staff were searching for a new type of leadership (Wethington, 2003). This is an important lesson in regards to the CCAM. Not every community college will find itself in a position where working

towards achieving greater abundance would be healthy, desirable, or even plausible. For example, a college in crisis (college of challenge) should not be working towards reaching abundance; rather, the focus should be on reaching health (lack of crisis). Colleges of choice, however, should not necessarily look toward reaching greater abundance either. Two colleges in this study provided great insight into situations that must be dealt with before a community college can focus on continuous movement towards greater abundance. At Theta Community College, the president has engaged in behaviors that, over time, should lead to greater abundance and possibly classification as an abundant community college, however, information from staff indicates that the a cabinet member is using his power and influence to block her attempts. By remaining off campus and disconnected from the college's daily operations, organizational members answer primarily to this individual and their interpretation of organizational values come from him. Until the president connects with the college or this individual leaves, the organization will likely never escape the abundance push-pull effect. Another college within this study, Gamma Community College, is not in a position currently, where it can reach the cusp of abundance either. The president has been exceptionally effective at what he was brought in to do, to settle down the college, repair the damage from a hard-charging change agent, and instill a sense of order. He is an internal president, a caring and ethical man, and a strong leader within the community. He is well respected, well liked (hence the dad references), and the researcher found him to be a man of high intellect, character, and perspective. While he is all of these things, his leadership style is guided by assumptions contradictory to those within the CCAM and as such, the organization will not be able to escape the abundance push-pull effect. Results from this

study indicate that reaching abundance requires aggressiveness, an open leadership style, and a philosophy that internal direction trumps external pressures – features absent from Dr. Smith's approach to leadership. The CCAM represents a different and unique approach to improving organizational effectiveness, but is not a tool that should be in every executive leader's toolbox and should not be wielded at every college. Continuous improvement practices are important (i.e. the new SACS and NCA accreditation models) and represent the present and future of community colleges, however, the CCAM approaches continuous improvement from a different perspective. In the right situation and with the right president, its principles, and the leadership principles elucidated within this study, can prime an organization for greater performance based upon transcendent leveraging, internal drive, and highly committed college staff made up of leaders at all levels.

Perhaps the most important question arising from the results of this study is just how important is abundance in priming a college to reach enhanced organizational performance? While the goal of the study was not to determine if organizational performance was enhanced by abundant presidential behaviors, the researcher, based upon theory and experience, indicated, and still believes, that colleges operating from an abundance model are primed to increase organizational effectiveness. Despite this assertion, the CCAM is not appropriate for every president or college, requires sustained effort and energy from members throughout the college, and is based upon a fundamental philosophical shift at the organizational level. Obviously, there are numerous community colleges already operating at high levels of effectiveness, however, the researcher believes that these colleges are, to some degree, engaging in continuous improvement

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practices, distributing leadership and ownership, and/or working to develop and utilize the human capital – all of which are foundational assumptions within the CCAM. In other words, colleges are likely engaging in a number of these behaviors (as were the colleges in this study) and, theoretically, these behaviors are associated with enhanced organizational performance. The CCAM simply marks an attempt to gather numerous behaviors into one model in an effort to assist colleges in moving towards enhanced performance and the ability to better serve students and external constituents. Based on these realities, the researcher feels that the CCAM should be viewed as one of many supplemental tools that can be used where appropriate and in continuing the toolbox metaphor, should be in the toolboxes of current and future community college presidents. While it will never be the "silver bullet" in priming community colleges for greater performance, the assumptions underlying the model do represent a new approach shown to have tremendous benefits in the for-profit world.

Finally, the information presented in this study is based upon a post hoc analysis of leadership behaviors spanning an average of nearly fifteen years. Obviously, these presidents were not considering a Positive Psychology, POB, or POS approach to leadership when they took their current presidencies and while some of the presidential behaviors identified at ACC, ICC, and TCC, all organizations familiar with POS, have been influenced over the last few years by a positive approach to enhancing performance, they have supplemented existing presidential efforts. The information in the study was presented through the lens of the CCAM in an effort to learn about the presidential behaviors associated with institutional movement towards greater abundance. Additionally, the researcher found evidence of an abundance push-pull effect where

presidential behaviors across or within categories contradict themselves and stall the achievement of positive outcomes sought by the executive leaders. These lessons should be viewed from the perspective of building an information base for the future rather than as a mechanism for judging past behavior. Judging presidential behaviors, which was not the intent of this study, would be both unfair to the presidents as well as disingenuous to the study.

Future Research

This study marks the first entrée of a positive and strengths-based approach to executive management within higher education settings. While the CCAM has been explored in an upcoming book and this study explores leadership behaviors based upon these abundance assumptions, future research will assist in determining the usefulness of the model across additional higher education and non-profit settings.

Future research involving an exploration into presidential behaviors should address one of the limitations within this study – examination of behaviors from presidents taking over a college in transition. New studies could take a longitudinal approach and examine the impact of sitting presidents who, in the midst of their presidency, start employing abundance tactics. The researcher asserts that, based upon information garnered in this study, if a sitting president is viewed as authentic by a critical mass of college staff, he/she can employ new strategies and successfully transition the college to a mindset where transcendent leveraging of tangible, intangible, and leadership resources is a possibility. Studies of sitting presidents could possibly lead to a modification of the abundant behavioral categories and would almost certainly

increase understanding of the role of authenticity in enhancing the influence of executive leaders.

Another artifact of this study was that all presidents were long tenured. Although movement towards an abundance approach represents a major organizational change as it is a form of organizational culture change (unearthing, assessing, and modifying deeply held organizational and workgroup values over time), a great deal could be learned by studying presidents at their current college for less than five years. As noted by a college manager at ACC, institutional change processes are iterative and can occur either through choppy difficult steps or can be relatively seamless. The presidents in this study indicated that the early years were difficult (and TCC is still dealing with this transition) based upon the need to build a foundation, an indication that the change process is erratic initially and becomes increasingly smooth as changes begin to permeate the organizational psyche (reaching a tipping point). A great deal could be learned by examining newer presidents struggling through the early stages of infusing abundance principles within their institution.

Three of the presidents within this study had employed POS and abundance principles within their institutions, so some of the terminology and tactics utilized by the presidents were influenced by this experience. President Smith and Gamma Community College, however, provided a great deal of insight into non-abundance specific behaviors associated with movement towards and away from greater abundance. The future of the CCAM and the abundance model will largely be driven by its applicability to institutions unfamiliar with the assumptions underlying movement towards abundance and

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examining executive leadership behaviors from presidents unfamiliar with this approach will provide opportunities for continued adjustments and improvement.

This study attempted to study four cases in an attempt to gain insight into the presidential behaviors associated with institutional movement towards abundance. This was a useful approach as each president employed a different leadership style and yet the researcher was able to group their behaviors across the four overarching classifications while still preserving the integrity of the individual institutional contexts. Future studies, however, should include more intense and pervasive single-case studies in order to gain greater insight into how the behaviors play out and are perceived by college staff. While this study gathered information from the president, cabinet, middle administrators, academic directors, faculty, and staff; the number of non-executive staff was relatively small. A single case study would allow for multiple individuals from each of these groups as well as obtaining information from part-time faculty and staff, students, board members, and external stakeholders.

Finally, the understanding of presidential behaviors on institutional movement towards greater abundance would be enhanced by deeper examination at the division level. Results from Theta Community College indicated that an executive team member can greatly impact presidential efforts to affect institutional change, however, the researcher was not able to interview the individual in question. Interviewing this individual would have been helpful in better understanding his/her impact on the president's change efforts and in detailing the non-presidential behaviors that prevent an organization from escaping the abundance push-pull effect. Institutional buy-in is crucial, however, buy-in must come from those with hierarchical power, not only those with

influential power. Studying the behavior of cabinet members and institutionally identified

non-executive leaders would be useful in better understanding the CCAM, the pervasive

impact of presidential behaviors, and the value of influence vs. power in community

colleges.

Conclusion

In general, this dissertation provided an important first step in applying cutting

edge principles from organizational psychology and business within the higher education

context. Higher education literature is truly a heterogeneous literature base depending

heavily on research from sociology, psychology, communications, information systems,

health, business, law, and numerous other fields of study and is strengthened by attempts

to fuse new and different theoretical and ontological concepts and constructs. Positive

Psychology principles and the corresponding schools of POS and POB have provided

individuals studying organizations with new assumptions and expectations for enhanced

organizational performance that, when applied within the unique context of the

organizations studied, can provide a new tool for ensuring organizations are able to adapt

and remain proactive regardless of changing external conditions.

This dissertation provided insight into presidential behaviors associated with the

ability to transcendently leverage available and grow new tangible, intangible, and

leadership resources; an approach dependent upon an organizational mentality of hope,

optimism, resilience, and an internal drive that, while not negating the impact of external

pressures, creates an institutional philosophy placing the impetus for change and

development in the hands of college staff. Considering the increasingly turbulent higher

education industry with new and non-traditional competitors, increasing accountability

standards and micromanagement attempts by lawmakers, changing opinions about public

financing, and a truly globalized economy, community colleges need to operate from a

mentality that, ultimately, the college largely controls its destiny. Additionally, the

underlying mission of the community college is to effectively serve its service area, a

mission made more difficult if the college operates in a reactive manner and passively

waits for congresspeople to deliver the yearly stipend – a resource that, when adjusting

for increasing state budgets and inflation, has decreased substantially in recent years.

Community colleges are in the midst of a leadership exodus, something predicted

years ago, at the executive and non-executive leaders. While numerous presidential and

leadership programs exist at the university, national association, and individual trainer

level, new information exploring potential advances and modifications to training

methods and leadership competencies is crucial for ensuring that future leaders are

provided with a diverse array of tools. This model represents a departure from traditional

leadership approaches as it places the emphasis on the president as sensemaker and

anchor; it largely ignores personality traits, traditional leadership styles, and the issue of

charisma; and focuses on adjusting the organizational mindset towards hope, optimism,

continuous improvement, and transcendent leveraging. The researcher is not suggesting

this model should necessarily supplant any current leadership preparation approaches, but

rather that it may prove useful as a supplement to approaches founded on understandings

of the transformational leader. In addition to professional development programs, this

model could also prove useful for academicians and organizational researchers. The

CCAM is built upon numerous, yet related, theoretical approaches and could be useful in

studying other higher education and non-higher education organizations as each type has

its own set of stakeholders, histories, and connections to local communities. Additionally, the model is elaborate and built upon multiple theoretical bases and could be used to assist professors and students in working with diverse literature bases. As a graduate student, the researcher benefited greatly from examining multiple literature bases and this experience has enhanced his ability to both critique and incorporate multiple research sources and has improved his research skills as well.

Finally, this study is built upon an enhanced conceptualization of the continuous improvement concept that has gained greater notoriety recently through government reports, changing accreditation standards, and non-academic publications. Continuous improvement is essential for effectively meeting the needs of an ever-evolving student population, increasingly global workforce structures, and fluid economic conditions; however, many of the continuous improvement mechanisms are externally mandated and may or may not fit the community college context. The CCAM and corresponding leadership behaviors, however, account for the nature of the professional bureaucracy and comprehensive mission driving most community colleges. Also, the model places the impetus on the president and staff for establishing an institutional philosophy of self-destiny, promotes proactivity in meeting stakeholder needs and external pressures, and emphasizes the development of leaders throughout the organization. This model represents a new philosophical approach to leadership and management in the higher education literature and should prove useful in assessing and enhancing organizational performance within community colleges. Over time, it may also prove to be a useful tool for those leading community colleges, those responsible for preparing the next generation of leaders, and those studying these critically important organizations.

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