

**INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL:
COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL BACKGROUNDS
AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY**

by

Shelley Renae Strickland

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Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Emeritus Richard L. Alfred, Co-Chair
Professor Stephen Lowell DesJardins, Co-Chair
Professor John R. Chamberlin
Associate Professor Victoria Johnson
Vice President Jerry A. May

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DEDICATION

To my amazing family and my friends who are like family, who encouraged, pushed, listened, prayed, helped, shared, and loved me. You are God's love exemplified.

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I hesitate to list names because I will surely omit someone, yet I have such forgiving family and friends who will understand any omissions stem from sleep-deprivation and not ingratitude! I am so blessed to have had support on both a personal and professional level throughout this journey, starting with my committee of Dick, Steve, Victoria, Jerry, and John. A special thank you is due the inspiring presidents who gave of their time and insights as participants in this study as well as the external auditors and peer debriefers.

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CHAPTER 1—Introduction

*“The Changing Community College Presidency”
Inside Higher Ed, 10/3/07*

*“Donors Have a New View of Community Colleges”
CCTimes, 7/30/09*

*“From Fundraiser to President: An Uncommon Path Pays Off”
Chronicle of Higher Education, 7/4/10*

*“Leadership Crises Ahead for Community Colleges”
Inside Higher Ed, 12/4/11*

These attention-grabbing headlines are representative of many similar statements that have graced the front pages and headlines of higher education news sources in the last five years. Such stories suggest that community colleges are increasing their emphasis on fundraising while facing a leadership crisis caused by droves of presidential retirements. As a result, fundraisers have become, or are becoming, more viable presidential candidates for the community college presidency.

News stories also note that pending presidential retirements and pipeline concerns apply to other institutional types within the higher education sector (Ekman, 2010; Hammond, 2013; Jaschik, 2006). What makes the presidency of community colleges particularly of interest, however, is that the two-year sector is the primary higher education sector projected to experience continued growth and demand (Brown, 2012; Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). Factors driving these projections include the required training for a mass retooling of the workforce, an

increasingly diverse population that demands access to education, and the need for affordable education in a challenging economy.

More research than currently exists is necessary to determine if the headlines are just hype. It does appear that in recent years professionals have increasingly ascended to the community college presidency through development channels, but it still remains to be empirically investigated what a background in development fully entails and how such individuals experience the community college presidency.

Who will lead community colleges becomes a critical question, for evidence does support the need to fill large-scale presidential vacancies in the very near future (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Boggs, 2003; Brown, 2012; Eddy, 2010; Fain, 2008; McClure, 2007; Moser, 2008; Redden, 2007; Romero, 2004; Shults, 2001; Tekle, 2012; Whissemore, 2011). As a sector, community colleges have also shown their openness to more “non-traditional” candidates for the presidency (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Cook & Kim, 2012; Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch, 2008). Given the need for viable candidates and the sector’s willingness to hire advancement professionals, further research into the connection between a community college president’s background and performance in the community college presidency is a timely and important topic.

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this study was to address the deficit of knowledge regarding a background in development as preparation for the community college presidency. Some in the education community have speculated that presidential candidates with external backgrounds, such as development, have become more viable candidates for the presidency because of more

externally-focused core competencies and expectations of the community college presidential role and responsibilities. This raises the question of whether presidents who come from inside versus outside of academia manage community college presidential responsibilities differently.

Rather than looking to presidential candidates from development as merely a reaction to increasing presidential responsibilities for fundraising and other external capabilities, hiring committees need a current model of community college presidential competencies in relation to how those competencies are cultivated through background experience. If trustees need to hire a president who can fundraise, then a more informed understanding of the relationship between career backgrounds and external functioning is needed. With negligible research on leaders from development, any evaluation of their past performance as presidents and their future potential as viable presidential candidates is inconclusive. Additionally, expectations for community college fundraising and the potential partnership represented by philanthropy must also be aligned with contemporary environmental conditions.

This study investigated whether presidents with an “external” background—those from a “non-academic” area responsible for connecting the college with external constituents—lead and manage differently than those who approach the presidency from a traditional, “internal” or academic pathway. Specifically, this study explored the following question: *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?* In total, this study compared the background experience and management approaches of 19 community college presidents.

Before describing how this study defined management of the presidency and explored the research question, it is first important to position contemporary issues within an institutional

historical context that continues to shape how community colleges operate today. Understanding community colleges' mission, leadership evolution, funding structure, and responsiveness to environmental and market demands provides important background to the emerging leadership conditions that this dissertation explored.

CONTEXT

According to a concise history of two-year schools from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) website (www.aacc.nche.edu), the first community college was established in 1901: Joliet Junior College. Early two-year schools that were focused on liberal arts and job-training programs began during the Depression and continued to evolve and flourish during the World Wars. It was not until the 1960s, however, that community colleges accelerated in their rate of establishment and growth. Today, approximately 1,200 community colleges (branch campuses bring the number to 1,600) educate nearly half the nation's undergraduates; 1,000 of these are public institutions, the sole focus of this dissertation. Walter Bumphus, AACC President and CEO claims: "Community colleges are the least glitzy, most proudly diverse, and stubbornly egalitarian workhorses of American public higher education" (Ripley, 2012, p. 51). In addition to courses for academic credit, community colleges offer additional non-credit offerings for workforce training and personal enrichment that serve millions of students.

The concept of an open access institution that would provide an opportunity for more Americans to receive postsecondary education and training has been examined from several research angles. Community colleges' continual debates over mission and identity can be viewed as a process of gradual and uneven adjustment to an organizational reality in which other higher education institutions have controlled more lucrative and prestigious markets (Brint & Karabel,

1991). Of all the higher education segments, community colleges have been most responsive to external pressures: legislative, employer, community and student demands (Gumport, 2003; Levin, 2001). Community colleges have evolved into multifaceted institutions, incorporating the purposes of several organizations into one (Levin, 2001). Much of their growth appears to have simply happened by responding to unpredictable conditions rather than adhering to a clear vision (Cain, 1999).

Although market demand and external forces contributed to community colleges' origins, leading experts have said that these institutions must be more deterministic in their futures. Community colleges can carve out their own niches in responding to a changing market while still preserving their distinctive mission (Berquist, 1998; Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). A forward-thinking orientation that puts community colleges in charge of their own destinies requires courageous institutional leadership that advocates and adheres to a clear vision (Brown, 2012; Eaton, 1988; Keller, 1983).

Indeed, strong leadership is essential for community colleges to successfully navigate the external environment (Brown, 2012; Eddy, 2010; Tekle, 2012). This study grows out of evidence purporting that entrepreneurial leaders can make a notable difference in their institutions (Bornstein, 2003; Fisher & Koch, 2004; Roueche, Richardson, Neel, & Roueche, 2008) and proceeds from the belief that the presidency in the community college is distinctive from other institutional types (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Eddy, 2010; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989; Twombly & Amey, 1991).

Leadership approaches and presidential competencies have continued to change as community colleges have evolved. In the early days of community colleges, leaders of community colleges often came from secondary schools and employed a top-down approach to

management (Eddy, 2010). These individuals, often former principals or superintendents, tended to govern unchecked and had their decisions rubber-stamped by governing boards (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). More recently, community colleges came to need a new kind of leader, as described by Eddy (2010): “In the late 1990s, conceptions of community college leadership that were based on top-down leadership models began shifting to learner- and community-based paradigms that scholars believed would better meet organizational demands” (p. 19). Community college presidents must relate broadly to their communities and a broad base of constituents, including business and cultural leaders (Romero, 2004). As Brown (2012) puts it: “The growing complexity of higher-education programs and services is requiring community college presidents to confront new challenges, and with those challenges, master new skill sets that go beyond the traditional skills once sufficient to cement the role of presidents as primary academic leaders” (p. 85).

One of the primary challenges facing today’s community college presidents is the ever-increasing need to do more, for more students, with fewer resources. The AACC (2012) reports that, collectively, community colleges currently derive their revenues from multiple sources: 34% state funds; 20% local funds; 16% tuition and fees; 16% federal funds; and 14% funds from other sources. Community colleges serve nearly a half of all post-secondary students, yet they receive only a quarter of the total public dollars used to support public higher education. Community college enrollment jumped almost 22% from 2007 to 2011, yet since 2006, 43 states have decreased higher education appropriations per student; this disjuncture is particularly damaging to community colleges that have traditionally relied on state support as a primary funding mechanism (Ripley, 2012). Unlike universities, which often leverage their tuition rates as a funding source, community colleges are open-access institutions that attempt to limit the

student financial burden. Consequently, most community colleges prefer not to depend on tuition as a primary revenue source.

Advocates for community colleges worry whether declining appropriations, particularly from the state, threaten open access and the comprehensive mission (Hendrick, Hightower, & Gregory, 2006). Current challenges of continued growth, increased accountability, and decreased funding have threatened community college open door policies before—but the extent and magnitude of that threat today is arguably unprecedented. Indeed, Brown (2012) notes a “real and measurable imbalance” between public funding and the proportion of the public served by community colleges. As matters stand, community colleges are expected to do more with less money than their four-year counterparts (Boggs, 2004; Rowley & Sherman, 2005). Many states do not reimburse remedial or noncredit studies, both areas in which community colleges have experienced continued growth (Boggs, 2004). Given all of these challenges, Brown (2012) claims:

Fundamental questions regarding the adequacy of traditional models are being raised by community college leaders and policymakers alike...A common refrain centers on the capability of the nation to sustain its community colleges in the twenty-first century with a resource system balanced between federal, state, and local funding as it evolved in the latter twentieth century. This debate is fueling discussions focused on new partnerships, engaging new stakeholders, philanthropy, and the need for a new compact between the public and higher education (p. 13).

Notice that the language emphasizes the emerging nature of partnerships, alternative revenue sources and the role of college leadership in driving these initiatives, which comprise this dissertation’s focus.

In a climate where adequate funding is no longer a given and community colleges must seek external support, it becomes crucial and inevitable that community colleges re-examine and better define their mission (Boggs, 2004; Palmer, 2005). Presidents can validate their community

college's mission and values by becoming more entrepreneurial, thereby creating an opportunity for community colleges to reinvent themselves as more self-supporting entities (Zeiss, 2003). Clarifying a community college's vision and seeking new sources of funding can indeed be mutually generative—for example, pursuing new funding possibilities through philanthropy may lead to a renewed focus on mission and vision. Other scholars (Milliron, De los Santos, & Browning, 2003; Roueche et al., 2008; Wenrich & Reid, 2003) echo the language of reinvention through an entrepreneurial, long-term vision that focuses on resources and improving performance, responding to external priorities, and improving or altering resource flows from traditional sources. Fundraising is not a discrete trend but represents the next generation of growth in community colleges because of its institution-wide impact, the external constituency relations facilitated by fundraising, and the transformational strategies that tend to accompany fundraising initiatives (Grace & Wendroff, 2001; Hendrick, Hightower, & Gregory, 2006).

The Status of Private Support

The research literature explored in Chapter 2 consistently emphasizes the increasing importance of fundraising to community colleges (Bart, 2009; Budd, 2012; Dembicki, 2012; Dillingham, Walter J., Weiss, & Lawson, 2013). Most community colleges now have foundations, the median annual revenue of which is \$250,000, with a market value of \$2 million (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2010) reports that the top 30 community college endowments range from \$4 million to \$60 million, with Miami Dade College and Foundation reporting an endowment of nearly \$150 million.

Yet, although nearly all community colleges now have some fundraising activity in the form of a development office or a foundation, the approach to fundraising has not been

systematic. As a whole, community colleges have lagged far behind their four-year public peers in realizing the need to embrace private funding (Summers, 2006). Some enterprising community college presidents entered the fundraising arena more than a decade ago, often with the encouragement of board members who were familiar with philanthropy and development from organizational commitments outside the college (Akin, 2005). Even so, the community colleges most successful at fundraising have primarily focused on raising money for student scholarships, which does not address the totality of a community college's funding needs (McGee, 2003).

The increasing demand for securing private funding to meet institutional needs presents an unprecedented opportunity for community college leadership. A disconnect exists, however, between the potential for philanthropic partnerships for community colleges, particularly given the emergence of the contemporary donor who is interested in impact at the local community level (Karoff, 2007), and the pursuit of philanthropy by presidents who are poised to facilitate such partnerships.

This study explored how community college presidents have stepped up to that challenge and what skills and backgrounds they have brought with them toward the goal of private sector support. Given the increasing reliance on private funding, it is not surprising that development professionals have assumed a prominent place in postsecondary education institutions. In the last decade, there has been an upsurge in graduate-level academic programs that enhance development professionals' careers as well as continued growth in professional associations that serve the field (Kelly, 2002; Levine, 2012; Wagner, 2002). Chief development officers now customarily serve on presidential cabinets and in more recent years as presidents themselves (Bornstein, 2003; Caboni, 2008; Chitwood & Jones, 2007). This dissertation examined

community college presidents with career backgrounds in development and contrasted them with presidents coming out of a background in academic affairs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although researchers and practitioners alike speculate that development is becoming a pipeline for the community college presidency, such speculation is largely based on anecdotal evidence and incomplete quantitative studies that group chief development officers with other administrative positions. Given the changing fiscal realities already noted, fundraising will become an increasing responsibility for current and future community college presidents (Bart, 2009; Budd, 2012; Chitwood & Jones, 2007; Dembicki, 2012; McNair, D.E., Duree, C.A., & Ebbers, 2011). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) defined core competencies for the community college presidency in 2006 and then surveyed current presidents. Presidents, in turn, reported that they are increasingly unprepared to handle the demands placed on them for board relations and advancement responsibilities, however. The traditional position held prior to the presidency—the academic affairs vice presidency—is unlikely to yield exposure to fundraising (Cook & Kim, 2012; Eckel, Cook, & King, 2009; Glass & Jackson, 1998).

Concomitant to the portrait of a changing presidential skill set, community colleges have been described as facing a “crisis” in leadership with nearly 80% of current leaders expected to retire within the decade (Duree, 2008; Evelyn, 2001; Moser, 2008; Shults, 2001; Tekle, 2012; Weisman & Vaughan, 2006). The problem of impending large-scale retirements is exacerbated by a shortage in the traditional pipeline. In addition to a majority of academic affairs vice presidents not being interested in the presidency (Cook & Kim, 2012; Eckel et al., 2009; King &

Gomez, 2008), academic affairs is also facing its own impending wave of retirements (Evelyn, 2001; Moser, 2008). Positions at the vice presidential and dean levels have had high turnover, brought on by increasing demands of leadership positions and political pressures (Whissemore, 2011).

With the resulting smaller applicant pools and a debate about the quality of those candidates (Moser, 2008), colleges have seen current presidents stay in office longer or have increasingly turned to former, even retired presidents, to fill positions. The ACE (2012) study indicated 23% of current presidents reported their immediate prior position as a presidency. A recent case at Kennebec Valley Community College in Maine provides an extreme example: although the 65-year old president announced her retirement in 2010, after two national searches failed to find a “viable candidate,” she agreed to stay on (Mytelka, 2012). A former president running a company to provide community colleges with retired administrators to fill the presidency on an interim basis claims his business has been brisk (Moser, 2008). A former two-year college president and a leading scholar on the community college presidency, Vaughn goes so far as to claim: “My studies have found that roughly 33 percent of presidents are just recycled. They move from one presidency to another” (Evelyn, 2001). President and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees J. Noah Brown underscores the urgency of the leadership crisis:

While a number of programs have been initiated to grow the ranks of community college leaders, the impending retirement boom suggests that community college boards will be hard-pressed to find new leaders at a time when leadership will be critical to resolving some of the most serious challenges facing community colleges in more than a generation (Brown, 2012, pp. 14-15).

As community colleges face a mass exodus of sitting presidents and declining resources place a premium on filling those positions with individuals who possess skills in fundraising, it has been

hypothesized that advancement will become a more established pathway to the community college presidency. Research is inconclusive, however, on whether or not an advancement background translates successfully to the presidency.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Given the impending national leadership shortage in community colleges, the need for identifying source points for leaders who can help community colleges to meet their increasingly challenging financial circumstances is critical. The traditional pipeline for the presidency has been assessed as inadequate for preparing presidents for fundraising (Brown, 2012; Eddy, 2005; Glass & Jackson, 1998). This study helps to determine whether presidents who have some experience in fundraising from previous advancement roles transition successfully to the presidency. A better understanding of the external responsibilities of the current community college presidency, regardless of previous preparation, also emerges.

This study adds to an understanding of the preparation and pathways for community college presidents, the evolution of the advancement profession, and the changing orientation of the community college presidency. In addition, although the current literature about community college advancement is generally incomplete, the existing literature does indicate the importance of a community college president's role in securing private support for the institution. This study is important because it provides insight into how presidents who have background experience in advancement execute the increasingly important executive role of fundraising. As such, the study also helps to contribute to an understanding of the advantages and challenges posed by entering the presidency through a "non-academic" pathway. The experiences of community college

presidents with a background in development also illustrate how the advancement field has evolved and how to strengthen its place in the academy.

RESEARCH DESIGN OVERVIEW

Qualitative methods were selected because they would yield more comprehensive data on the full context of presidents' previous experiences, including their views about their backgrounds and the presidency, and their approach to core presidential responsibilities. In-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection. In this study, the researcher interviewed 10 community college presidents with development backgrounds and nine community college presidents with academic affairs backgrounds to compare the “external” variable of development experience to the “internal” variable of academic affairs experience. This qualitative study provides information missing from existing large-scale quantitative studies that assessed the community college presidential pipeline but did not track advancement even as it has been deemed of growing importance as preparation.

This study is important because of its comparative nature. The literature has documented that individuals from external backgrounds have assumed the community college presidency (Bornstein, 2003; Masterson, 2010; Murphy, 1997). A few qualitative studies (Brunen, 2012; Chitwood & Jones, 2007) have explored the experiences of advancement professionals—including development professionals—who have become presidents. Nonetheless, research is negligible on the connection between one's background experience and performance in the community college presidency. This study compared and contrasted how presidents approach the role in relation to their backgrounds in development and academic affairs, respectively. It

assessed the manner in which they connect prior career experiences with presidential leadership and how they function in and perceive the presidential role.

“Management of the presidency” was defined as the execution of duties that would be pertinent to any president regardless of demographical or other institutional differences among community colleges. This targeted emphasis was based on standardizing the expected performance in the presidential role for purposes of comparison. Such responsibilities were determined as leading and managing an executive team, determining areas to directly oversee or to delegate, conveying the community college story to external constituents, communicating with board members, defining a strategic vision, and addressing fiscal challenges, including the approach to fundraising. Presidents were asked to describe these core competencies in terms not only of their current approaches and perceptions but also whether they believed performance expectations have changed and whether they envisioned any changes for the future. The constructs of management and leadership appeared mutually in several sources consulted: the literature, the AACC Leadership Competencies, and presidential evaluations, including various institutional samples as well as shared criteria from both the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

To uncover whether presidents managed the presidency differently based on their backgrounds, it was necessary not only to focus on common responsibilities but also to probe management areas where one cohort might have an advantage over the other because of previous experience, so the interviews sought to balance questions accordingly. A particular emphasis was placed on fundraising, however, so as to determine whether background experience facilitated this increasingly important presidential responsibility.

The main hypotheses made when initially contemplating the comparison by background were that development presidents (DevPres) would be more reliant on their provost than their academic affairs presidential peers (AAPres); that DevPres would exhibit more sophisticated fundraising approaches; and that DevPres would allocate more time and employ more finesse in board relations. Whether these hypotheses held true will be the primary topic of discussion in the concluding chapter.

DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

In this study, the term *advancement* refers to the broad set of professional areas that support a college in fulfilling its mission. Some of the institutional functions that commonly fit within this area include governmental relations, marketing and communications, alumni relations, and development, including roles focused on individual as well as institutional fundraising (such as corporate and foundation relations).

Development in community colleges often takes on the comprehensive term of *resource development* because it encompasses more than seeking purely private gifts. Collaborative partnerships and grants from government and other sources are often included. The number of staff is typically small and covers a variety of responsibilities (e.g., alumni affairs, development, and governmental relations). A community college president explains:

Resource development includes resources gained through collaboration, partnership building, and other strategic alliances. I advocate the organization of resource development around institutional advancement that encompasses grant development, the college foundation, and donor development, with a dedicated leader at the helm (Budd, 2012, p. 12).

Because of differing titles, overlapping responsibilities, and variances in the literature terminology, the terms *development* and *advancement* are used synonymously in this

dissertation, and *development* is assumed to include the comprehensive activity of *resource development*.

The terms *development* and *fundraising* are also used interchangeably to connote strategically and systematically building relationships and matching donor interests with institutional priorities. The actual act of soliciting funds occupies very little time in the development professional's duties. Rather, development work demands a comprehensive understanding of higher education as simultaneously an organization and a public enterprise; thus, effective community college development requires the ability to bridge multiple internal and external constituencies. These skills will be demonstrated in the literature review of Chapter 2 and in the study data.

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The next chapter (Chapter 2) includes a review of the relevant literature. This study is constructed on the basis of a unique conceptual framework that will be presented separately in Chapter 3, followed by a description of the research methodology in Chapter 4. The findings are presented in Chapters 5 and 6, each with a concluding discussion. The concluding chapter (Chapter 7) discusses the findings in context of the conceptual framework and offers recommendations for research and practice.

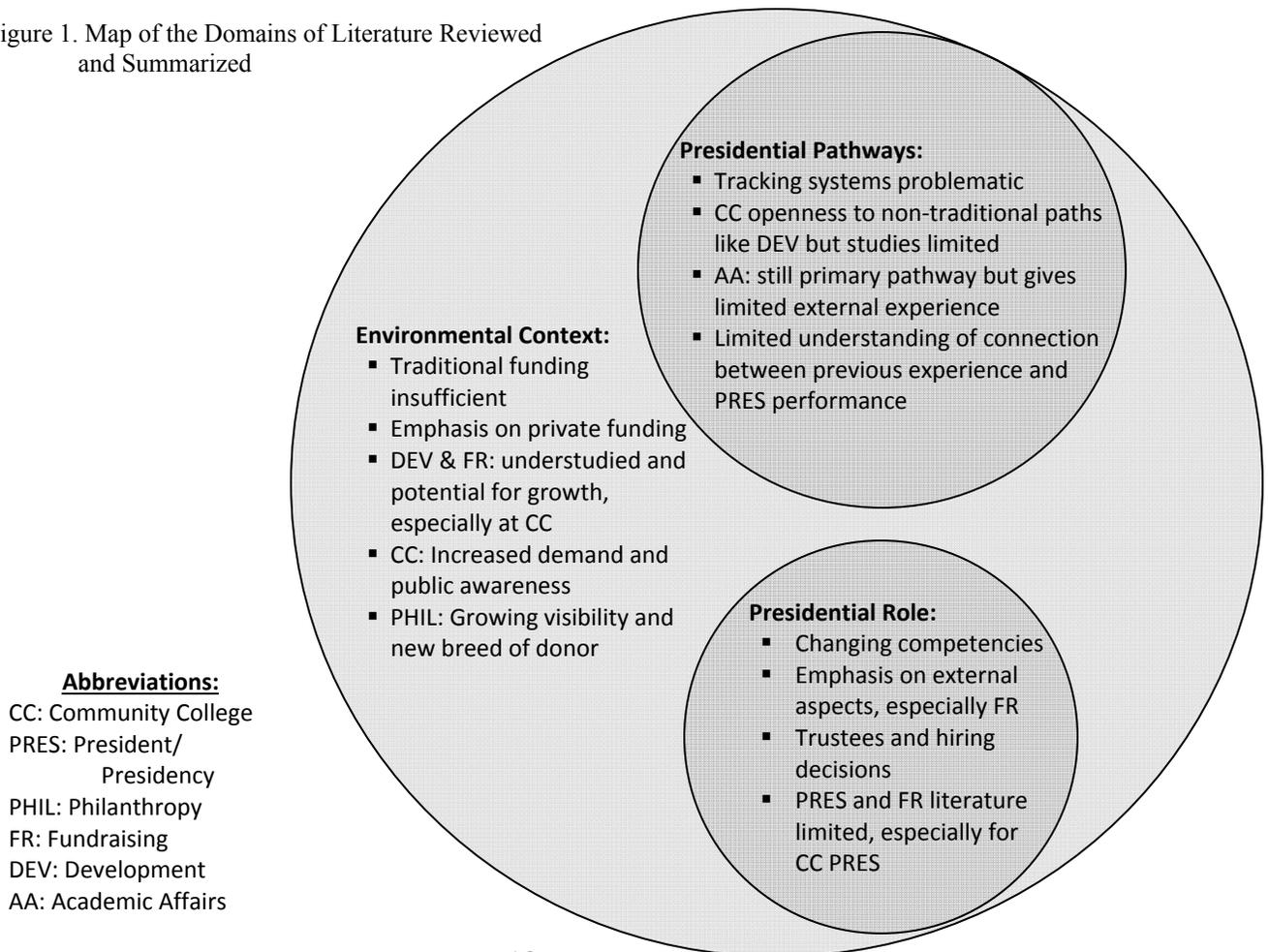
CHAPTER 2—Literature Review

At the outset, it is important to establish a context for examining the community college literature. As a whole, community colleges have been neglected by higher education scholars (Cohen & Brawer, 2008) and have not received the attention they deserve (Dougherty, 2001). In the first book of a new American Council on Education (ACE) Series on Community Colleges, series editor Richard Alfred explains the ACE monograph series attempts to fill a scholarship void regarding community colleges: “They are the fastest growing segment of higher education both in number of institutions and enrollment. Yet, remarkably, they are the least understood of postsecondary institutions in terms of literature and research describing their mission and role, organization and operations, and performance” (Brown, 2012, p. iii). Tracing higher education history from the turn of the twentieth century (when the first community colleges appeared) to the end of the twentieth century, Cohen and Brawer’s (2008) authoritative textbook on two-year institutions finds that scholars have only recently turned more attention to community colleges. Dougherty attributes this to scholarly misunderstanding and ignorance, and Cohen and Brawer point to a simple numbers problem: fewer than 100 university professors are exclusively concerned with community colleges.

Given the recent national news and policy attention to community colleges that this literature review will demonstrate, however, scholarly interest in the community college sector is likely to grow—as is the nascent literature on fundraising and development. At the intersection of these nascent literatures is the timely topic of community college presidential fundraising and a changing external emphasis on the presidency.

Several facets of the variables that are the subject of examination were explored in the literature review. Figure 1 below illustrates the domains of literature that were reviewed; the map also summarizes the key concepts and limitations of the literature that will be detailed in this chapter. First, the greater environmental context is outlined, including declining public funding, the emergence of private funding, an increase in philanthropy’s public visibility, and heightened attention to the community college sector. Next, community college presidential backgrounds and pathways to the presidency are reviewed, including the traditional pathway to the presidency through academic affairs and skills gained from that experience as well as non-traditional pathways, particularly presidents from development and skills of development professionals. Finally, literature on the presidential role in community colleges is examined, including increasingly external expectations, trustees’ hiring considerations, and presidential fundraising.

Figure 1. Map of the Domains of Literature Reviewed and Summarized



ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES/CONTEXT

Because this dissertation is focused on the role of the presidency itself and the skills and duties common to the role regardless of the institutional profile—management of the presidency—the review of research on funding focused on a general context. To be sure, the funding picture for community colleges is complex. After reviewing the literature on fiscal support, Palmer (2005) calls for researchers to move beyond national overviews to uncover the considerable state variations, as well as intrastate variations by institutions, resulting from local histories and political nuances, as exemplified by local tax support. Because states and localities differ greatly in social, economic, and political ecologies, comprehensive studies must account for national, state and local variations (Dougherty, 2001).

Although community colleges have unique funding structures, the funding challenges they face are not confined to community colleges. With 956 presidents represented, the Inside Higher Ed 2011 Presidential Perspectives survey was one of the largest surveys of higher education leaders in recent decades, and community college leaders mirrored their presidential peers in doctoral, master's and baccalaureate institutions in identifying budget shortfalls and changes in state support as the greatest challenges for their institutions in coming years. While higher education as a whole faces these same challenges as state support has been waning for decades, the recent economic recession and its concomitant impact at the local level, with declining property revenues and loss of vital tax income, has been particularly detrimental to community colleges because of their traditional funding structures (Brown, 2012), as the next section will outline.

Traditional Funding

To understand the changing sources of revenue, it is first important to review traditional funding concepts and then examine how they have evolved for community colleges. Community colleges were founded on a funding model of thirds—one-third operating costs would be covered by the states, another third by students in the form of tuition (often covered by federal funding), and the final third by local government, primarily through taxes, bonds and millages (Boggs, 2004). The latter role is challenging for fundraising as many local constituents—prime potential donors for community colleges—feel they are already supporting the institution through their tax dollars (Jackson & Glass, 2000; Katsinas, 2003).

Less than 40 years after the explosive growth of community colleges nationwide, the funding structure has changed and remains in flux (Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). States have emerged as the largest funders, covering approximately 40% of community college budgets (Katsinas, 2003). Federal funding now primarily takes the form of competitive grants and contracts, aside from Pell Grant support (Merisotis & Wolanin, 2000). Approximately 30% of community college students receive a Pell Grant (Boggs, 2004), but, even so, federal funding as a whole is now only about 15% of total community college funding and local funding accounts for about the same percentage (Boggs, 2004; Dowd & Grant, 2006). Overall, tuition accounts for just over 20% of community college budgets (the remaining elements of the budget include funds from ancillary sources, contracts, grants, and gifts), with some institutions enrolling significant numbers of students for whom they receive no state support (Boggs, 2004). Not only have community colleges received the lowest state funding per full-time equivalent student among all levels of public higher education, but also the funding declined by six percent between 1975 and 1995 (Gumport, 2003). Researchers have found that community colleges look to other

sources for revenue when one of the traditional funding sources (e.g., local appropriations) is low (Palmer, 2005).

As the traditional sources of funding decline, community colleges respond by making up the difference by raising local revenue if possible, and by increasing tuition, cutting programs, or both (Brown, 2012; Katsinas, 2003; Palmer, 2005). Finding ways to increase revenue sources rather than eliminating programs has only been a rather recent funding strategy (Hendrick et al., 2006; Keener, Carrier, & Meaders, 2002).

Private Funding

In reality, private funding is not a new concept to community colleges. Returning to private support is in some ways revisiting community colleges' early history. Foundations such as the Kellogg Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation provided significant support in the formative years of the community college movement, the 1960s and 1970s. These foundations fostered the development and expansion of the AACC for research and programmatic support that contributed to developing new programs in such areas as vocational education, guidance and personnel services, lifelong learning, and outreach to nontraditional students (Dougherty, 2001; Twombly & Amey, 1991).

In their influential organizational analysis, Brint and Karabel (1991) also highlight that community colleges, while not dependent on four-year colleges and employing organizations for direct resources, were still contextually dependent on them initially. Because the universities dominated training for the elite segments of the labor market and future employment opportunities for community college graduates, the four-year institutions held power over community colleges and defined the context in which they operated. It appears that this

contextual dependency compelled community colleges to largely ignore tactics from business, private colleges, and public four-year colleges. Thus, community colleges only recently began balancing budgets by adopting revenue enhancing strategies rather than subtracting services (Hendrick et al., 2006; Keener et al., 2002).

A national study of private support in community colleges (Hendrick et al., 2006) found that institutions were actively seeking larger grants from foundations. In recent years, foundations have emerged as a growing source of support for community colleges (Roueche, Richardson, Neel, & Roueche, 2008), which had previously tended to principally pursue corporate support (Babitz, 2003; Ryan, 2005). Governmental grants and contracts, such as for training programs, also represent a growing source of community college revenue, according to Merisotis and Wolanin (2000). The policy analysts warn that states should not abdicate their responsibilities to provide core support to community colleges and should view federal grants and contracts as additional, not replacement revenue. Indeed, some community college presidents have chosen not to pursue alternative revenue sources such as fundraising for fear their primary public funding would be reduced (Akin, 2005). Such reasoning, Zeiss (2003) contends, is similar to waiting until an emergency occurs to plan and act.

The resource development capabilities that have evolved over the last two decades to position community colleges to pursue federal and foundation grant opportunities have also enabled presidents to seek other support. Capitalizing on the increased awareness of the impact community colleges have on their local economies (Babitz, 2003; Wenrich & Reid, 2003), community colleges are also pursuing support from local businesses and both individual and organizational donors. The national trend surveys conducted by the League for Innovation every few years found a marked change beginning in the 2003 responses: the emerging focus for

community college presidents was about private fundraising—not just seeking foundation monies but sophisticated programs aimed at individual donors, endowment and capital campaigns (Milliron et al., 2003). Zeiss (2003) explains this focus as a funding transformation from being publicly-supported to publicly-assisted organizations. Rather than a concern, he views it as a means to ultimately create more efficient and market-sensitive colleges with “greater control over their destinies” (p. 61).

Others also see the emphasis on private funding as an opportunity, even though it will be a painful process (Staat, 2011). Community colleges have untapped potential in local organizations, who will likely embrace partnerships. Alumni and even students, who tend to be older than those in traditional four-year institutions and therefore in a better position to give, present another funding opportunity (Hendrick et al., 2006; Palmer, 2010; Starace, 2012); such sources have not been regarded until recently. Community colleges also experience less embedded conflict when economic imperatives become a priority and innovation and responsiveness are essential:

...structurally speaking, several obstacles that are prominent in other segments of public higher education have less salience for community colleges, including a large proportion of tenured faculty, alumni who may embody a logic that dominated in an earlier era, or a long-standing academic structure with its own self-reinforcing momentum to preserve existing knowledge areas (Gumport, 2003, p. 56).

Seeking private funding is not without its challenges, however. For starters, community colleges were the last segment in higher education to seriously pursue fundraising (Akin, 2005). Although community college foundations have been commonplace since the 1980s (Katsinas, 2005), philanthropy has only been an established part of most community colleges since 1990 (Wagoner & Besikof, 2011). A commitment to students as the ultimate beneficiary is the reason scholars find for monitoring fundraising (Dowd & Grant, 2006), harnessing market forces for a

greater good (Levin, 2001), and for pursuing private support in the first place (Ryan & Palmer, 2005). As diminished state support leads to increasing tuition rates, which may pose a threat to student access (Wagoner & Besikof, 2011), alternative revenue streams must be pursued and philanthropy is the most promising (Ryan & Palmer, 2005).

Despite beneficial reasons for pursuing philanthropy, fundraising at the community college level remains a relatively new and untested phenomenon (Babitz, 2003; Jackson & Glass, 2000). Data on development operations and private support have been sparse. Few community colleges participate in the Voluntary Support of Education surveys conducted by the Council for the Aid to Education (Akin, 2005; Angelo, 2005; Keener et al., 2002; Wagoner & Besikof, 2011), and other data sources such as the National Center for Education Statistics and the AACC estimate the value of community college foundations but do not provide much information about their functioning (Hendrick et al., 2006). Giving by parents and friends has not typically been reported as a separate source of contributions but has instead been included in figures for giving from the local community, so it is difficult to measure the extent of this potential philanthropic source (Ryan, 2005). Wagoner and Besikof's national study (2011) becomes important for providing data on resource development efforts, demonstrating the important contributions such efforts are making to the ongoing vitality of America's community colleges.

While the literature on higher education fundraising in general is not yet fully developed, research specifically focused on community college fundraising is even more limited (Akin, 2005). The bulk of the literature is found in journals that are specifically devoted to the community college systems, such as the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, rather than in higher education journals serving the whole postsecondary field. Additionally, aside from research published by professional associations such as the Council for Resource

Development, an arm of the AACC, fundraising at community colleges is often treated as merely a special section or chapter within a text focused on higher education fundraising (Tempel & Beem, 2002; Worth, 2002).

The literature is consistent, however, on the increasing importance of fundraising to community colleges (Akin, 2005; Bart, 2009; Boggs, 2004; Brown, 2012; Dembicki, 2012; Dillingham, Walter J. et al., 2013; Jackson & Glass, 2000; Kent, 2012; Milliron et al., 2003; Ryan, 2005). Even with nearly 90% of community colleges having foundations, though, private giving has held steady for nearly 30 years because the foundations were not “*actively* involved in seeking financial support for the colleges, but instead functioned as a *passive* [researcher’s emphases] conduit for donors who sought out the colleges” (Akin, 2005, p. 67).

Increase in Philanthropy

The pressure for community colleges to pursue private funding has intensified in the last several years. This is both because of the institutions’ exponential growth, particularly over the past decade, and the ensuing resources required, as well as the current philanthropic climate. The economy is experiencing the largest concentration of wealth in the hands of a few since the defining period in American philanthropy a century ago (Katz, 2007; Nielsen, 1996; Wagner, 2003). Gates and Buffett are often contrasted with Carnegie and Rockefeller (Bishop & Green, 2008; Hrywna, 2006; Marcy, 2001; Nielsen, 1996; Tobin, Solomon, & Karp, 2003).

Whereas historical philanthropists created institutions, today’s major donors are transforming them, just as they are reshaping philanthropy. Philanthropists and their foundations, which are often the new donors’ vehicle of choice for giving (Fleishman, 2007), are proving challenging for public four-year institutions that have traditionally been the recipients of

transformational gifts (Tobin, Solomon, & Karp, 2003), named for “their unique capacity to alter the programs, perceptions and future of an organization” (Grace & Wendroff, 2001, p. 15). New philanthropy is often creative, experimental and designed to improve society or to be an experiment in societal development (Pulley, 2002). Foundations now want innovation and broad, replicable programs rather than the bricks-and-mortar and curriculum development of past higher education funding; as a result, many foundations are no longer investing in four-year institutions (Marcy, 2001; Pulley, 2002).

Today’s “social investors” are using business-style strategies to effect social change and are expecting results and accountability to match (Bishop & Green, 2008; Wagner, 2003; Conlin, 2003). Buffett and Gates are not only giving away more money than generosity giants Carnegie and Rockefeller did, they are ushering in a new kind of philanthropy very different than past philanthropic icons as they seek to apply a corporate mentality to philanthropy (Bishop & Green, 2008). The next chapter on the conceptual framework provides more insights into contemporary philanthropy.

The need for community colleges to raise new funds because of growth and decreases in traditional public funding that will likely not return to former levels of support (Brown, 2012) presents a challenge for community colleges that have not paid systematic attention to fundraising in the same way that their four-year counterparts have. At the same time, today’s breed of new philanthropists, both individuals and foundations, are seeking ways to make a significant difference in *communities*. These new philanthropists want to be partners with institutions who share a vision for transforming lives and institutions at a measurable community level, as the next chapter will also demonstrate.

Philanthropic Potential of Community Colleges

If fundraising is newer to community colleges so, too, is philanthropic attention to their mission. Overall, the emphasis on private funding of community colleges is a relatively recent phenomenon. Similarly, the worlds of mega-giving and community colleges have only recently intertwined. A *New York Times* article (Arenson, 2006) declared that foundations were becoming increasingly interested in community colleges. As a college education becomes even more critical in a knowledge-based economy and costs continue to rise, foundations are focusing on bolstering support for community colleges that serve students most at risk of not starting or not finishing college.

The Chronicle of Higher Education announced in May 2008 that the California Community Colleges received a \$50 million gift from the Bernard Osher Foundation for scholarships at the system's 109 colleges (Supiano, 2008). Half of the funding provided an endowment for scholarships, while the remaining \$25 million was added to the endowment on a matching basis as the system raised money over three years. The deliberate strategy to foster fundraising was needed, as the president for the Foundation for California Community Colleges admitted, "We haven't been at the table when it comes to philanthropy for years." In the *Chronicle* article, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) president John Lippincott notes that the fundraising operations in community colleges resemble those of public universities more than 20 years ago. Since then, four-year institutions have nearly caught up with their private four-year college peers. The California Community College system's interim chancellor also expressed surprise at learning that the foundation's founder and namesake, Bernard Osher, shared her dream of building an endowment for the system: a funding vehicle, especially at that size, usually seen only at four-year institutions. The chancellor noted

that the gift would allow for a “whole transformation of fundraising at our state level and our colleges,” and Osher Foundation President Mary G.F. Bitterman professed hopes that the Osher challenge would transform higher education in the state.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, later in 2008, also decided to infuse community colleges with funding to assist students (Jaschik, 2006). Although the Gates Foundation lauds the progress on college access, the foundation remains concerned about college completion rates. Over the past few years, the Gates Foundation has directed hundreds of millions of dollars into a comprehensive program aimed at both encouraging students to finish their community college education as well as enhancing partnerships between colleges and local employers.

Although foundations are interested in supporting at-risk students, individual donors can be less interested in supporting community colleges for this same reason, as found by a national survey sponsored by the Ford Foundation found (*Expanding Opportunity*, 2004). The research showed that the giving public sees community colleges as providing a source of opportunity for individuals to better themselves. The message of opportunity for all is an attractive communication strategy, but the message is not as well-received by the public at large if it emphasizes providing assistance to the disadvantaged. Overall, the Ford Foundation sponsored study found that people viewed community colleges favorably but were largely unaware of any financial challenges to the institutions. The study’s authors thus recommended that community colleges convey their increasing demands and decreasing resources to a public open to the institutions’ message of opportunity.

Community colleges are increasingly in the public eye as never before, and as Palmer (2010) phrases it: “Community colleges are enjoying a rare moment in the limelight right now” (p. 51). Seminole State College President Ann McGee suggests that the national attention to

community colleges brought about by proposed funding initiatives (their fulfillment notwithstanding) by President Obama could represent a “golden age” for community colleges, an era in which community colleges could capitalize upon fundraising. It appears the important role community colleges play in enhancing their communities through economic development, innovation, educational access and workforce training are beginning to be recognized (Babitz, 2003; Bass, 2009).

Despite such optimism, community colleges trail far behind their higher educational peers in securing private resources. As Kent (2012) reports: “It is as confusing as it is ironic. While community colleges contend with record enrollments and the pressure of a white hot national spotlight, the proportion of philanthropic giving to our institutions remains infinitesimal with other sectors of higher education” (p. 4). Because of their late start in formalizing fundraising operations and their neglect in monitoring and contacting alumni (Palmer, 2010), community colleges have challenges to overcome, certainly. At the same time, though, community colleges also have the opportunity to be innovative and creatively re-imagine existing development practices rather than just adapting advancement models from four-year institutions (Starace, 2012).

To recap, community colleges face shortages in their traditional funding streams at a time when they are experiencing more public scrutiny and increased demand. Philanthropy has also garnered more public attention and awareness [as well as scholarly attention], and the philanthropic world is also paying more attention to community colleges. Given this increasing potential, the president’s ability to garner philanthropic support is increasing. The following section will examine the current profiles and competencies of community college presidents.

PRESIDENTIAL BACKGROUNDS/PATHWAYS

Knowledge about the current community college presidential profile primarily derives from the tracking and reporting of two organizations: studies in collaboration with the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) and the American Council on Education (ACE). The problematic nature of monitoring and understanding ascendancy to the presidency from outside the traditional academic affairs role will be discussed. The issue becomes a cause for concern when view in context with literature that predicts a shortage of community college presidents in the near future (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Boggs, 2004; Brown, 2012; Eddy, 2010; Fain, 2008; McClure, 2007; Moser, 2008; Redden, 2007; Romero, 2004; Shults, 2001; Tekle, 2012; Whissemore, 2011), as the introductory chapter outlined, and a need for presidents who have different and increasingly external competencies, as the final section will describe.

Tracking the Presidency

The academic affairs pathway has been and continues to be the primary pathway to the presidency, according to the literature. In conjunction with the AACC in 2000, scholars (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Amey, VanDerLinden & Brown, 2002) replicated a 1984 study of two-year college presidents that systematically analyzed current presidents and their administrative careers. The 900 presidents surveyed had more diversified paths to the senior leadership position than their counterparts in 1984 (Twombly, 1988). Although the most likely previous position was provost at 37%, administrative positions, including development, represented 12%—which was a significant increase from just 3.6% in the previous survey 16 years prior. The survey did not break out the composition of positions within the administrative positions, which included

student affairs, development and advancement, and institutional research. The study authors concluded “career paths are changing” (p. 14).

In another AACC report a few years later, Weisman and Vaughan (2006) found that 55% of the 545 respondents surveyed were in academic positions prior to their first presidency, and 2.2% held chief development officer positions (other administrative positions were all less than 8%). Although that study did break out the other “non-academic” positions by title, the researchers did not contextualize the data by comparing for growth or patterns. Instead, they focused on the majority career path remaining academic affairs, a pathway that provides these competencies: “strategic planning, human and financial resource management, collaboration within and among departments and institutions, and student advocacy” (p. 11). It should be noted that these skills are primarily related to internal operations, not external affairs. The authors fail to see the irony of suggesting that individuals outside of academic affairs should seek to develop the same “breadth of leadership competencies” when they also declare: “Presidents are spending an increasing amount of time on the external aspects of the presidency” (p. 2).

These oft-referenced AACC studies are often mentioned in conjunction with the 2007 ACE study since these studies were all conducted during similar timeframes. Yet, the most recent study by ACE, *The American College President 2012* (Cook & Kim, 2012), suggests that even a few years have made a difference in reported community college presidential career pathways. In sum, the 2012 survey, which tracks presidents of all institutional types, represents 57% of all community college (referred to as “associate college”) presidents. Of these respondents, 23% had been a president in their prior position as well, which ACE concludes reflects the lack of a pipeline for the associate-college presidency. There was a slight increase in the individuals reporting chief academic officer (CAO)/provost as their previous position (44%),

and individuals reporting another senior campus executive as their previous position actually decreased over five years from 19% to 13%. Even so, the study concludes its findings by emphasizing the nontraditional pipeline:

Unlike the other institutions described, where about half of presidents come from senior positions in academic affairs, community college presidents have a somewhat more diverse route to the presidency. Many (44%) still come from academic affairs, but 13% come from other executive positions and 7 percent come from outside higher education (p. 28).

As with the previous studies, non-academic positions are aggregated. Development is not broken out but falls under the greater category of “senior external affairs” officers, which totals 13%—a figure that is equal to the share of chief student affairs or enrollment management officers.

Overall, the tracking system regarding presidential pathways is problematic for several reasons. First, the only position monitored in these studies is the position held immediately prior to the presidency. The studies assume that tracks are exclusive to that point—a career is either all administrative or all academic, and a career can be classified as such based on the position held immediately before becoming a community college president. Secondly, the data either lump all non-academic positions into one category or conflate positions into imprecise umbrella categories, such as “external affairs” rather than “advancement.” Finally, the data can be somewhat conflicting: see, for example, the 2012 ACE figures that, compared to the 2007 data, actually represent an increase in academic prior positions and a decrease in non-academic positions. Such trends are not addressed, and the study text still asserts that associate colleges have a broader career pathway to the presidency.

Despite these data challenges, the prevailing view in the literature is that the pathway to the community college presidency is indeed changing (Ashford, 2012; Chitwood & Jones, 2007; Eddy, 2010; Murphy, 1997). Again, as the introductory chapter suggested, comparing

presidential backgrounds for community colleges with other sectors is perhaps the most enlightening way to understand pathways to the two-year college presidency. Presidents with development and other “non-academic positions” are more commonly found in community colleges than in other institutional types (Weisbrod & Ballou, 2008). Non-faculty administrators who rise through the college ranks tend to ascend to presidencies at less prestigious institutions (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001), and the similarity in presidential background data for private four-year colleges and community colleges “suggests a similarity in openness to ‘non-traditional’ candidates and a likely need for external expertise (*Almanac*, 2011).”

Non-Academic Pathways

Although community college presidencies are now understood as open to non-traditional backgrounds, the literature is very scarce on how presidents from non-traditional backgrounds actually function in the role of president—particularly in comparison to those from the typical academic affairs path. A non-academic presidential pathway that has been studied somewhat is that of chief student affairs officer (CSAO), and that literature consists primarily of dissertations. Bullard (2008) found that CSAOs were hired more often at community colleges and interviewed 10 such presidents to learn of their experiences. In a survey of 400 current community college presidents, Weltsch (2009) found that presidents hired after 2001 were less likely to have been a chief academic officer in their past roles and were significantly more likely to have served in some other vice presidency role, such as CSAO. Other literature has suggested the possibility of improving racial and gender diversity in the presidency by hiring outside or beyond the traditional academic path (Leatherwood, 2007; Schmitz, 2008).

By not studying their full backgrounds or the functioning of presidents of non-traditional backgrounds in the presidency, the literature does not counter the implicit assumption that presidents from non-academic positions are indeed “non-academic.” The failure to explore this view in the literature can lead to unfortunate conclusions such as Richard Ekman (2010), president of the Council of Independent Colleges, writing in a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* piece about the “notable increase in the number of new presidents whose previous experience has been mainly as vice presidents in nonacademic areas like development:”

... we should be concerned that a growing number of colleges are being led by people who have never had direct experience in the heart of the enterprise as faculty members, department chairs, deans, or provosts. If the number continues to increase, the risk is that higher education will become an industry that is led by people who do not truly understand it, who view it as a commodity to be traded, a production problem to be solved efficiently, or a brand to be marketed.

The leap in logic rests on the premise that development vice presidents would have no academic experience or would automatically see the academic “heart of the enterprise” as a foreign commodity.

Academic experience in terms of serving as a faculty member, even part-time, is still an important part of community college presidential backgrounds. In fact, the difference between teaching and administration also becomes clearer for those who have worked in the classroom. For example, community college president Kevin Drumm (2006) reports that “Faculty begin their careers discipline-focused and engaged primarily in teaching students in a classroom where they are in charge of what happens...Faculty might receive feedback once a semester...My classes certainly do [go as planned], while little I do as president ever goes quite as planned” (p. 7). Writing of his alternative route to the presidency through student affairs, Drumm claims that student affairs does have a parallel in other college leadership roles. On the subject of chief

development officers, who are accustomed to having fundraising figures and grant success monitored and measured, Drumm contends that regular measurement and constant feedback are hallmarks of the presidency but not routine for faculty or academic affairs officers. President Drumm claims that those ascending to the presidency from either student affairs or development will seek out the faculty voice in the college precisely because they are aware of how their non-traditional path is perceived. Drumm does not directly claim that the non-traditional pathway to the college presidency is academic, but he does build upon his classroom experience in discussing his presidential experience.

Direct experience in teaching is often regarded as important presidential preparation. Weisman & Vaughan (2006) found that 86% of community college president taught at some point in their careers. *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* (2011) found 68% of community college presidents had been a faculty member—admittedly less than the 84% of four-year college presidents who reported having been a faculty member, but still a majority figure. The recent ACE study of presidents (2012) found that “In 2006, 38 percent of [associate’s college] presidents had not had classroom experience, compared with 30 percent in 2011” (p. 28). This implies that approximately 70 percent of presidents in the ACE 2012 survey *did* have classroom experience.

Teaching experience might be an expectation for presidents, but previous fundraising experience is increasingly becoming a prerequisite also, as the final section will detail. Given these changing expectations, presidents with a development background have emerged as viable candidates for the community college presidency.

Presidents with Development Experience

A *Chronicle of Higher Education* article recently predicted that fundraisers with advanced degrees will be well-positioned in the wake of the predicted presidential pipeline shortage (Masterson, 2010). The article argues that “Fundraisers who rise to the top position at a college are considered thought leaders who have an understanding of the academic enterprise and a talent for managing both finances and people.” The reference as a thought leader, and the allusion to intellectual stature, certainly goes against stereotypical ideas of fundraisers as slick salespeople. Development—if done right and in the true spirit of philanthropy—further high ideals and the academic mission. Robert Payton, a former college president and founding father of philanthropic studies, believed the study of philanthropy itself is the avenue to educational leadership for development presidents. “The president who is a scholar of philanthropy as well a practitioner has an opportunity to become engaged directly in the intellectual life of the campus,” he maintained (Payton, 1989, p. 115).

Bornstein (2003) chronicles what she describes as “a fundraiser’s quest for legitimacy in the academic presidency” (p. 61). Even in the search process, Bornstein asked that she be viewed not just as a fundraiser but as an academic, yet she reports struggling initially in overcoming faculty skepticism of her abilities as an intellectual leader. At the same time, Bornstein concedes that she had to learn not to be self-conscious or apologetic about her background in fundraising but to embrace it as a dynamic mechanism for enhancing the institution, so it becomes difficult to determine the source or extent of any faculty skepticism about development presidents.

A chapter on working with faculty is part of Murphy’s pioneering 1997 text, which attempted to capture wisdom from those who had advanced to the presidency from the advancement field and to prepare individuals with advancement backgrounds who were

considering future careers as college presidents. Although many of the presidents are now deceased or retired, the work remains the central authority on aspects of the “advancement presidency”—from positioning backgrounds in the search process to navigating experiences in the role.

Most of the Murphy text focuses on four-year institutions. In the foreword, former CASE president Buchanan echoes sentiments expressed earlier in this literature review about the favorable match between advancement backgrounds and the community college presidency as compared to other higher education sectors:

The essential interdependence of the two-year college and its immediately surrounding community places an advancement professional in a particularly advantageous position. His or her skills are ideal for the relationship building that must go on between town and gown in a relatively small geographical area, and the chief executive officer’s post may require less demanding academic credentials than in other settings, although certainly no less demanding leadership requirements. (p. x)

The advancement president must be much more than an advancement professional; as Buchanan asserts, “he or she must also be an intellectual leader who understands and articulates well the academic mission of the institution” (p. ix). The Murphy text also forecasts the diversity of the presidency that could result from drawing leaders from advancement, as women predominantly comprise the advancement field.

Like CASE, the Council for Resource Development (CRD) has also taken an active interest in documenting the experiences of those rising from its advancement ranks to the presidency. In a report on the relevancy of experiences, Chitwood and Jones (2007) cite collaboration, planning, advocacy, and communication as constituting a crucial skill set for college presidents and a common skill set for advancement professionals. The report claims that boards can easily find candidates with solid academic backgrounds and faculty understanding; it

is more challenging to find academic candidates who can address today's fundraising environment and demands for building partnerships.

More recently, CASE commissioned a survey of 70 community college CEOs and 137 chief development officers (CDOs), not necessarily from the same colleges so as to preserve anonymity. The 2012 survey findings are entitled "Mind the Gap: Perspectives on the Partnership of the Community College CEO and the Chief Development Officer" because several "gaps" exist between the perceptions or actions of presidents and development officers. Regarding their presidential performance, presidents consistently rate their competency in the following elements at much higher levels than the CDOs rate their presidents: knowledge of, comfort with, support of, and time spent on fundraising; engagement of the board and volunteers; and the positioning of fundraising operations within the institution. CEOs are shown to depend on their development officers for education about fundraising. The data also demonstrate that the institutions experiencing the most success at fundraising have a president who is committed to development and who drives that process rather than the development staff.

The CRD report maintains that presidents must lead strategic conversations, both internal and external, to explore the community's needs and ways the college can meet those needs and contribute to the community's growth and prosperity first and foremost. As a result, financial support can then follow (Chitwood & Jones, 2007). Forged by experience in development, an external partnership perspective that prioritizes donor and partner needs fulfillment will become clearer in the conceptual framework chapter to follow. The following section demonstrates the skills and competencies honed by work as a development professional.

The Development Profession

The development officer role in general, whether in higher education or another sector, has not been studied to the level requisite with the growing literature explaining specific aspects of executing the role, such as working with presidents. Aside from two key studies (Worth & Asp, 1994) and (Duronio & Tempel, 1997), the literature on the development professional is rather scarce and essentially anecdotal or autobiographical.

The dated nature of these studies is problematic as so much has changed within the realm of philanthropy, as previously outlined. Today, development officers must function as true philanthropic partners (Hodge, 2003; Peet, Walsh, Sober, & Rawak, 2010). Fundraising has become a complicated and sophisticated activity (Levine, 2012). Pribbenow (1997) calls upon everyone involved in philanthropic fundraising to “seize the crucial role as teachers whose chief aim is to ‘form’ professionals as persons who are reflective, responsible, skilled, and imaginative practitioners” (p. 4). In their comprehensive study of fundraisers, Duronio and Tempel (1997) found that teaching of some form was the single most frequently reported former occupation. Payton, Rosso and Tempel (1991), the “founding fathers” of philanthropic studies, maintain that fundraising has been about training rather than *education*; they urge that fundraisers need to know *why* development is important, not just *how to* perform its functions.

Development officers must operate with more than a series of skills or a checklist of tasks. They must have curiosity, innovation, a willingness to challenge the status quo, and keen analytical perspectives (Burk, 2003). Burk (2003) contends that professional fundraisers really have three responsibilities, which she ranks by priority: (1) To cultivate the philanthropic spirit and encourage giving, not to a single organization but to the charitable sector, for the benefit of

society as a whole; (2) To be an advocate for donors, no matter which nonprofits they are supporting; and (3) To raise money for one's own organization.

In their report on the June 2011 Washington, DC, Growing Philanthropy Summit, Sargeant and Shang (2011) position the first recommendation as a need to “Redefine relationships from donor relationships to individual relationships” (p. 6). They contend that fundraising is too focused on the perceived needs and interests of donors giving to a certain organization rather than recognizing that donors fulfill their aspirations by giving to organizations. Collectively, such giving helps to build community (Rooney & Nathan, 2011). Fundraisers bear the responsibility to nurture this broad view of the nonprofit sector, which also puts the emphasis on community, the core of community colleges.

To recap, although progress has been made in positioning development as a noble endeavor (Payton, Rosso, & Tempel, 1991), research on the development profession remains underdeveloped. The existing literature does describe a skill set much broader than merely soliciting funds. Development in higher education is connected to the academic mission, and fundraisers in higher education are committed to the education of themselves and donors. Even so, the majority of community college presidents have come from a more traditional educational path: academic affairs.

Typical Academic Affairs Experience

The top academic position at community colleges—entitled vice president for academic affairs (VPAA), chief academic officer (CAO), dean of instruction (DOI), or provost—is considered responsible for setting the academic vision for the institution and promoting academic quality through oversight of curriculum and academic programs, and supervising and managing

academic personnel (Cook & Kim, 2012). The provost position has not been thoroughly examined, however. The research focuses more on descriptive profiles (Keim & Murray, 2008; McKenney & Cejda, 2000) rather than on documenting CAO functions. Researchers note that while *The American College President Study* conducted every five years by ACE provides rich data on presidents, research has been more limited on individuals holding the provost position that most typically leads to the presidency (Eckel et al., 2009).

An ACE study, *The CAO Census: A National Profile of Chief Academic Officers* (2009), found that only 37% of CAOs at “associate’s colleges” intend to seek a presidency in the future. Most relevant to this study, the ACE study suggests that CAO duties are primarily internal rather than external:

CAOs reported that they generally are only modestly engaged in off-campus activities, reflecting the internal nature of their jobs as well as the inside/outside split in duties that is common between CAOs and presidents. Exceptions are relations with other colleges and universities, and community relations and outreach. Seventy-two percent said they do little or no fund raising. Seventy-five percent said they spend little or no time on alumni relations; 64 percent spend little or no time on government relations; and 58 percent reported they spend either little or no time on corporate relations and economic development (p. 8).

The academic affairs vice presidency is unlikely to yield exposure to fundraising (Glass & Jackson, 1998).

In Wallin and Johnson’s (2007) survey of 97 community college CAOs who had undergone a change in CEO at their institution, CAOs shared the view that a president “is expected to be a strong academic and instructional leader, a politically astute advocate, a successful fundraiser, an economic development expert, and an enthusiastic community leader” (p. 24). Given these demands on a community college president, 57% of the CAOs indicated that they believe a community college presidency is a “risky” career move.

CAOs are often not interested in the presidency because of the intense scrutiny and public demands of the presidency. Some CAOs are also hesitant to “cross over” into administration, an activity that is often viewed with suspicion by faculty (Stripling, 2011). More than anything else, the “increasingly external orientation of presidential duties” explains why only 30 percent of all chief academic officers aspire to become college presidents (Ekman, 2010).

In addition to being disillusioned by the external aspect of the college presidential role, the CAO Census data demonstrates that academic affairs vice presidents are also not prepared for external responsibilities. James Renick, senior vice president for programs and outreach at the American Council on Education and the former chancellor of North Carolina A&T University, claims that boards are concerned about academic administrators operating effectively as presidents when most of their careers have been spent dealing only with internal constituents (Jaschik, 2006).

Developing a relationship with boards of trustees can be a challenge for any president, especially without prior exposure. Instead of reporting to one person (the president) as a vice president would do, a CAO who becomes president must quickly accustom to reporting to boards with as many as a dozen members (Stripling, 2011). Working with boards, in general, is not part of the CAO job experience.

In summary, the literature on pathways to the community college presidency shows agreement on the need for future leaders and suggests a different profile, driven by external skill sets, is necessary for contemporary presidents. The academic affairs pathway provides limited exposure to external skills, particularly fundraising, which has proven to be a significant challenge to current presidents. Moreover, the majority of provosts are not interested in pursuing the presidency. The literature suggests that community colleges, more than other higher

education sectors, are open to non-traditional candidates and that trustees are increasingly expecting prior external experience.

The ways educational researchers currently track pathways of presidents is problematic, however, for understanding connections between backgrounds and the presidency. Most knowledge of pathways derives from largely demographic studies and news stories; empirical studies on the connection between pathway and functioning in the presidency are limited in number and in their scope. If the increasingly external nature of the presidency has created an opening for more non-traditional candidates, for the success of the sector, their performance and tenure must also be monitored. The literature now focuses only on trends in hiring beyond academic affairs backgrounds. Brown (2012) warns of the “scarcity of presidential talent when new talent will be more critical than ever to keep community colleges on an even keel through the turbulent waters of declining public resources and growing demands for programs and services” (p. 87). The presidential pipeline is limited in depending upon only the typical pathway or sitting presidents, especially when the greater environmental context is more demanding and changing.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL ROLE

Academic experience alone is no longer enough for the presidency because the role itself has changed. As Brown (2012) puts it: “There was a time when presidents were primarily academic leaders on campus. Today, they must balance their academic leadership with the need to raise money, navigate competing demands from local constituencies, and engage in local, state, and federal advocacy” (p. 15). The bottom line is that the community college presidency is now primarily an external position and demands the skills requisite with external relations.

Changing External Role

The college presidency across higher education has become increasingly external. Five years ago, 59% of presidents in the ACE study reported spending the majority of time with constituents within their institutions. The figure dropped to only 16% in the 2012 study. As for community college presidents specifically, in the ACE 2012 study, they reported spending most of their time on budget/financial management (59.3%), with community relations next at 37.8%. Fundraising was not in the top three as it was in other sectors, but in the case of the two-year college constituent base, it could be argued community relations is synonymous with development. Compared to other sectors, public community college presidents did have the highest representation on economic development boards at 68.6%, and 88.9% of them serve on a nonprofit board—another external time commitment.

Current community college presidents meet more frequently with business and industry leaders now than they did five years ago—half of them meet at least weekly (Weisman & Vaughan, 2006). Although current leaders tend to agree in surveys with the six core competencies for the community college presidency articulated by the AACC in 2006—organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism—current leaders admit that they typically lack these skills themselves, particularly knowledge of and comfort with fundraising (an aspect of “resource management”). Since the AACC (2006) competencies’ release, numerous studies, including Eddy (2010), Duree (2008), and several dissertations have validated the attributes, while still acknowledging the challenge of fundraising and other external competencies for most presidents.

McNair, Duree, and Ebbers (2011) assessed 282 responses from an open-ended question of presidents included in a quantitative survey, *What do you wish you had done differently to*

prepare for community college leadership, knowing what you know now? The largest and most specific set of responses (49) related to needing more training in fundraising. Indeed, current presidents need and want to learn skills such as fundraising, but most presidents end up learning these skills on the job (Gentile, 2009). Results of a survey being used by the AACC to develop the curriculum for future AACC Presidents Academy Summer Institutes found fundraising was one of the top three topics of the most interest to presidents, with the other two being related topics of managing in challenging times and improving student success, the *Community College Times* reported (2011).

The literature increasingly documents presidents' views of their changing role—particularly because of fundraising. A president who followed the founding president of a community college who served for 40 years believes such long tenures will not happen in the future because of the new emphasis on fundraising (Redden, 2007). Another president claimed when he talked about fundraising a few years ago in an interview, “The search board looked at me like I was crazy and one person even said, ‘You can’t fund raise at a community college.’ Well, look how far we’ve come so quickly” (Redden, 2007). A *Chronicle of Higher Education* article provides other examples:

A long-serving community college president explains, ‘I used to sit in my office and wait for people to come to me. Now I’m away from my desk at least half the time.’ Not long ago, the duties of presidents of public, private, and community colleges differed greatly, but now, as one president points out, ‘they’re all converging.’ ... Another long-time president says the biggest change in 16 years has been the changing expectation and increasing responsibility for fundraising. That’s a shift from when he first became a college president. Then, he spent 60 percent of his time running the college and working with internal constituencies, like faculty and staff members. The job is much more like that of a four-year president....(Ashburn, 2007)

A current chancellor estimates that today’s community college presidents spend 35 to 50 percent of their time on fundraising. Community colleges must transition from being dependent

on governmental funding to relying on private/public enterprise for funding, and as organizations must evolve to manage these new revenue sources, leaders must also learn new tax structures and a new language (Ullman, 2010). Eddy (2010) summarizes: “Contemporary community college leaders thus require skill sets and life experiences that differ from those needed in the past and that allow them to successfully navigate 21st-century challenges.” (p. 5).

As a result of this external emphasis on the presidency, prospective leaders will no longer be able to wait and learn fundraising when they ascend to the presidency. According to Perrakis, Campell, & Antonaros (2009), leaders aspiring to the presidency must hone these skills along their pathway before attaining the highest office, for what once were minimally important presidential skills of and experience in fundraising are now necessary and essential (Brown, 2012). These expectations are reflected in the literature on the considerations governing boards have when hiring presidents and the skills and expectations they now hold for presidential candidates.

Trustees and Hiring Considerations

According to the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) website (www.acct.org), approximately 60% of governing board trustees are appointed, while 40% are elected. Boards, comprised almost entirely of non-academic people, are becoming increasingly more engaged in the presidential search and might be increasingly receptive to presidents coming from a nonacademic background (Starace, 2012). In particular, presidential candidates coming from advancement backgrounds might have an advantage with hiring boards because advancement officers are used to working with board members.

A study of 41 community college trustees in Illinois (Plinske & Packard, 2010) examined 68 possible characteristics, competencies, and professional experiences for community college presidents to see what trustees most valued and considered in hiring decisions. Nine emerged with consensus as “critical:” “passionate about education, good moral character, articulate, master’s degree required, dependable, good listener, has the ability to establish trust, team-player, and vision” (p. 12). These essential skills are not exclusive to academic affairs sensibilities or educational abilities. The trustees expected experience at the senior management level, but the trustees were not firmly wed to having teaching experience.

Researchers (Hassan, Dellow, & Jackson, 2010) surveyed 58 community college presidents and trustee board chairs from New York and Florida on 45 items to determine their perspectives of the AACC competencies and what constitutes effective leadership. The survey allowed respondents to offer additional competencies beyond those outlined by the AACC. Presidents and chairs converged on their views of both competencies and leadership, but one additional competency was cited by trustees: fundraising.

Boards are increasingly prioritizing fundraising and external skills and are even more open to non-traditional candidates (Ullman, 2010), and even to candidates from outside of higher education (Plinske & Packard, 2010). Even candidates with experience in four-year institutions are now attractive because of their experience in fundraising (McClure, 2007). This is because traditional candidates from academic affairs will not likely have the external skills necessary for the presidency today, particularly fundraising experience.

Trustees are not always expected to utilize their own potential as fundraisers—or donors—for the community colleges they serve. “Elected or appointed institutional trustees may not see fundraising as a main priority, but it is naïve not to understand that fundraising will be a

condition of trusteeship” (Nielsen, Newton, & Mitvalsky, 2003). When the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) unveiled a survey of trustees and showed their potential resources, administrators “were surprised at the relative wealth of these board members, given that community colleges have typically placed less emphasis on fundraising potential as a qualification for board service than have other sectors of higher education” (Moltz, 2009). Ultimately, it will be the president who must encourage philanthropy among trustees. It is well documented that fundraising success depends on the president having a strong relationship with board members (Chappell, 2010). Development experience helps in working with boards (Murphy, 1997).

Trustees often work closely with search firms on presidential hiring, and views from these executives can also be found in the literature. A search consultant for community college presidencies claims that institutions are increasingly requiring their leaders to already be savvy about finances and fundraising. She claims, “Unless you’ve been a president [or a development officer], you haven’t really done any fundraising. You may have shadowed a foundation but you probably haven’t gone out and asked for \$2 million” (Ullman, 2010, p. 25). Another search firm executive and former head of three higher education associations claims that, with projected continuing declines for public funding, public college presidents will be increasingly expected to identify and secure alternative revenue sources such as private philanthropy or other revenue-generating private partnerships (Skinner, 2011). Another veteran higher education search firm executive declares:

The bottom line is that trustees are looking for presidents who can be more creative about finding new resources, efficiencies, and reducing costs. And they want someone who can lead that conversation effectively.”...Although boards have always been interested in fundraising, it’s an even bigger issue now. “I don’t know if institutions today can afford to have a president who can’t raise money. (Starace, 2012, p. 19)

Pierce (2012) states that she has worked with committee members who have evaluated candidates solely for their ability to be compelling as the public face of the institution and to fulfill what they argued were the two primary responsibilities: effectively raising money and allocating/reallocating funds fairly and wisely. “They based this argument on their belief that people other than the president can and even should run the institution” (Pierce, 2012, p. 83). The trustees are hiring for external capabilities because they expect the presidents to primarily function externally, with fundraising as an increasing responsibility.

The Presidency and Fundraising

In their large empirical study of entrepreneurial presidents (including community college leaders), Fisher and Koch (2004) note that every president, regardless of the institution, is expected to be an accomplished fundraiser. Fisher and Quehl’s *The President and Fundraising* (1989), the first and still one of the only books to focus on the president’s role and fundraising, clearly focuses on four-year comprehensive institutions. The text does not draw upon empirical evidence but instead offers profiles of several established presidents and seasoned development officers and suggests guiding principles.

Vaughan (1986) wrote the first book on the community college presidency, but this text neglects the topic of fundraising. Vaughn describes fundraising as an unanticipated yet important expectation of presidential responsibility; presidents interviewed for his study conveyed that a significant amount of time is spent on external affairs, including the more recent activity of fundraising.

In a publication through the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the professional association devoted to institutional advancement, on the community

college presidency and fundraising, Ryan (2005) explains that while fundraising has always been an intense topic of debate among community college presidents as well as between presidents and their trustees, the discussion has shifted during his 30-year career. In the 1970s, the question was why community colleges should do private fundraising. In the 1980s, the question shifted to how these institutions should do private fundraising, and in the 1990s became reframed as a question of to what extent they should pursue philanthropy. Today, the concern is on how to maximize private fundraising—that is, community college presidents should now consider this activity a given and optimize its effectiveness.

In general, upon reviewing the literature on the presidency and fundraising, Cook (1994) finds a theoretical perspective has only recently been applied (Cook & Lasher, 1996) and that the number of research studies with an exclusive focus on presidential fundraising is limited. Especially for this reason, Bornstein's book provides an important contribution to the literature on presidential fundraising.

Bornstein (2003) also writes from a position of authority, as the first president to have that office endowed in her honor. In her empirical study of 184 college presidents, she positions fundraising as a means for presidents to effect change. In the presidency, fundraising must not be conducted as a fragmented or marginal process or by a reluctant president who views it as begging for support, Bornstein contends. Instead, fundraising can be a means to bring about institutional change if presidents integrate fundraising into the life of the college and enthusiastically position philanthropy as an opportunity for donors to partner with the institution in ways that serve the best interest of both parties.

Even though relationship building is a key aspect of fundraising, Bornstein believes that developing and delivering a compelling narrative about the institution's vision, mission, and

goals might prove to be the most important challenge and opportunity of the presidency.

Bornstein claims that of possible funding sources, philanthropy is most subject to presidential influence and can help to realize a president's vision and goals. The president's agency is again established as the determining factor for fundraising effectiveness.

Because fundraising is no longer an optional but an expected and necessary activity for presidents of all types of institutions (Fisher & Koch, 2004; Kaufman, 2004; Ryan, 2005), the president's perspectives and attitudes toward this aspect of the role determine the degree to which fundraising is embraced on an institutional and personal level. Although fundraising is not a trained behavior for many coming out of the academic pipeline, they often come to enjoy the role (Bornstein, 2003; Pierce, 2012).

Community College Presidents and Fundraising

The literature on presidential fundraising in community colleges specifically discusses successful behaviors, but it often does so without applying theory or broader implications as Bornstein does. To some extent, this is understandable because as newcomers to fundraising, much of the emphasis is on encouraging community college presidents to be successful and equipping them with the basic skills to function effectively.

The literature largely takes two forms. One is that community college fundraising receives a dedicated chapter in a book otherwise devoted to fundraising in four-year colleges and universities. The other is that this knowledge is shared within literature of the community college sector. The former literature is often written by development professionals, whereas the latter features community college presidents writing for their peers, along with scholars and researchers of the community college sector who often provide a fuller perspective.

Worth's *New Strategies for Educational Fund Raising* (2002) serves as perhaps the most authoritative and comprehensive text on development in higher education, yet only one of 31 chapters is devoted to community colleges. Within that, the role of the president is not explored, but it is noted that the sense of urgency and level of success in which community colleges are entering and experiencing fundraising seems to be changing—a finding in keeping with the presidential emphasis on opportunity.

Untapped opportunity is the approach of the successful community college profiled in an oft-cited work of predominantly four-year institutions (Duronio & Loessin, 1991). The president from the community college case study sees the potential if patrons of the college's library, theater and fitness center become eventual donors through those connections to the institution. The development officer believes the president's most important contribution is to have made the college more aware of what it has to offer, which has also made the community more aware. In other words, external potential cannot be fully realized until internal potential is recognized—the opportunity mindset works both ways. The president must also embrace fundraising as an important activity. The authors conclude that because the fundraising president has a strong commitment to the college as both an educational institution and a community resource, he has a vision about what increased support will do and has a plan for achieving it.

In the one community college chapter of another important case study collection, Kopeck and Kubik (1997) explore the added challenge community colleges face, as their fundraising activities have usually been conducted through a separately-established foundation because of regulations regarding the separation of public and private funds. The college president must be the critical conduit between the foundation trustees and the college trustees (Carlsen, 2003).

According to Kopeck and Kubik (1997), the primary responsibilities are thus communication and the establishment and promotion of shared vision and goals.

Presidents must set the vision and convey the potential of fundraising, including some long-term activities and investments in staff and programs, to boards as well as to internal constituents. Presidents must balance the pressure of meeting immediate needs with the importance of also implementing initiatives such as alumni relations, which have a long-term potential pay-off but a short-term cost (Starace, 2012).

The texts devoted primarily to four-year institutions do not seem to incorporate community college literature as much as they present selected community colleges as case studies and position them against other data and writing from higher education. Community college scholars and researchers consider broader works from higher education but also account for the unique implications for two-year institutions, beyond just the challenges of having a separate foundation [some four-year schools have this model also, but it is not mandated].

For example, McGee (2003) widely teaches and writes on the fundraising role of the community college president and speaks uniquely from her previous experience as a vice president for development at another Florida community college. While she acknowledges the important roles of the development officer and foundation board members, in raising significant private funds, the president alone plays a pivotal role: “People with money, power, and influence want to have ready access to the president of the college before, during, and after their contribution. They want to know that they have placed their trust and their funds into the hands of someone whom they respect, who will use their donations to further an institution in which they believe” (p. 46).

Phelan (2005) also writes from the perspective of a sitting college president and describes the varied new and expanded roles presidents have taken on to address funding challenges, such as lobbyist, spokesperson, and advocate. He acknowledges that these roles represent a “marked departure from the traditional role of the community college president, which was primarily as an educator” (p. 96). He concedes that presidents might be conflicted by their inability to be integrally involved in curricular operations but with the reduction in state spending, leaders have no choice but to engage in activities to secure alternate resources.

Presidents Wenrich and Reid (2003) also acknowledge that some might feel the community college president is already overburdened without adding the role of fundraiser. They argue the work should not be seen as antithetical to other presidential responsibilities. Instead, other roles and daily activities should be viewed from a fundraising perspective, and the president should hire and empower qualified staff to carry out the donor development process. Even so, the fundraising responsibility cannot be fully delegated. The college president must be the visible leader of the efforts to the community as the chief representative of the institution (Babitz, 2003) and, moreover, many major donors will want to work directly with the president on a significant investment. Wenrich and Reid acknowledge that many community college presidents did not expect to have fundraising responsibilities and might be troubled by asking for money. If presidents see fundraising as “simply advocating for their colleges and telling their stories” (p. 30), the actual solicitation becomes easier. The authors urge that fundraising should be viewed as the process of matching the donor’s needs and interests with those of the college.

This external focus and orientation is indeed the critical element of understanding philanthropy, upon which this dissertation’s conceptual framework in the next chapter will build. Community college scholars and researchers identify several implications for a fundraising

president. While some of the literature plays up the positive aspect of the natural partnerships community colleges have with their communities, the full extent of partnership now necessary in a challenging funding climate will require an even more intensive commitment. The president must take the lead in nurturing new relationships with community agencies and potential partners from conception to implementation until a history of trust develops (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). More time out in the community must be the new model for presidents (Dembicki, 2012).

A passion for the institution and storytelling ability are key presidential attributes for fundraising. Compelling tales should be shared with audiences both external (Kaufman, 2005) as well as internal (including board members), where buy-in is just as critical. Leaders must work to build a philanthropic culture on campus by involving faculty and staff in the fundraising process (Budd, 2012). People will expect immediate outcomes (Ryan & Palmer, 2005), yet fundraising is a process that requires time and a commitment regardless of the prospects for financial success (Ryan, 2005; Starace, 2012).

Given the many challenges of fundraising, it is not surprising that Jackson and Glass (2000), arguably the leading researchers on resource development in community colleges, found in their study of North Carolina community colleges that being able to provide adequate presidential leadership emerged as the most pressing issue for fundraising. Aside from the community college presidents who exhort their peers through writings devoted to fundraising, such as McGee and Phalen, other leading scholars in the study of community colleges, such as Roueche and Roueche, have examined successful leaders. *The Creative Community College* (2008) is most pertinent to this literature review, for the authors describe how community colleges, which have been entrenched in tradition for nearly a century (if considering their first establishment), are now facing unprecedented change. Among those changing realities is that the

diminishing federal and state funding will not return, and that institutions must instead raise those funds to become more self-sustaining. In their case studies of community colleges that are successfully addressing this challenge, every president exhibited innovative responses.

Some of the many creative ways community colleges keep their doors open and build a financial base for the future include reaching out to students and building the student body; using technology to track college resources, prevent waste, and make sustainable choices; developing partnerships that lead to stronger foundations and additional opportunities for shared contracts; and spending money that builds the college culture in recognizable ways, such as new facilities and artistic outreach programs that will build an alumni base and attract community support (p. 245).

Soliciting students and spending money in the hopes of cultivating new revenue sources—these are rather bold ventures. Not surprisingly, the authors conclude that three key leadership strategies enable the successful fundraising efforts. First, the presidents take risks. Secondly, they attempt to change perception by viewing the challenges as opportunities, and they actively seek to take control of their destinies rather than having their destinies determined by external forces. Thirdly, they redirect their energy from worrying about maintaining funding streams into building relationships, partnerships, and consortiums.

Partnerships are no longer considered fringe activities. Community colleges are committed to building relationships with many entities. Corporate partnerships aid relationships for workforce development and strategic community development. They help with community awareness of the vital role the community college has in building, maintaining, and growing the economic foundation of local areas. They bring opportunities for fundraising, putting colleges in touch with key community members who can help with creative solutions for funding challenges (pp. 243-244).

Clearly, new sources of support are necessary as are new approaches to administering that support. Typically, community colleges have directed private support toward student scholarships, enrichment programs, equipment purchase, and portions of capital projects (Kopeck & Kubik, 1997; Ryan & Palmer, 2005). Unlike their four-year counterparts, community

colleges have only recently begun to establish endowments or use philanthropy for faculty development (Bart, 2009; Kopeck & Kubik, 1997; McGee, 2003). Fisher & Koch (2004) conclude that presidents must strategically take risks and engage in entrepreneurial activity such as fundraising if they want to transform their institutions. Those successful at identifying new donors and sources of support have moved from a traditional role of maintaining to aggressively pursuing and creating opportunities (Kent, 2007). Even so, many leaders seem hesitant to embrace bold visions and avoid taking risks. In a study of the leadership behaviors of community college presidents in Maryland, private fundraising and external relations was cited as the primary challenge they all faced (Malm, 2008).

Aside from a few exhortations to creative leadership and encouragement from presidents who successfully fundraise, the community college presidency appears to have approached fundraising reluctantly and then largely drawn upon a four-year model. An emphasis is increasing on seeing the strategic possibilities of fundraising, but the connection to fundraising as a strategy for comprehensive change has not been fully established. In summary, the literature on fundraising and the community college presidency tends to be written as first-hand accounts from current or former presidents about these responsibilities (Boggs, 2003; Bornstein, 2003; McGee, 2005; Phalen, 2005) or as essays about the importance of the president to successful fundraising efforts (Glass & Jackson, 1998; Worth, 2002). In general, the literature lacks an empirical basis (Akin, 2005; Cook & Lasher, 1996). This limitation in the literature will be addressed through the next chapter's conceptual model.

SUMMARY

Competencies for community college presidents are changing, as the external elements of the role are increasingly necessary and valued by governing boards. The traditional funding model is no longer sufficient to address increasing demands and declining levels of public support. Community colleges must turn to alternative revenue sources, with philanthropy as a promising partner, as evidenced by recent investments by a new breed of philanthropist. The community college president is viewed as key to fundraising success.

Even so, despite a breadth of literature on presidents and leadership, the literature on presidents and fundraising is more limited, particularly that focused on community colleges, whose fundraising operations are still emerging. The literature on development professionals is also underdeveloped. Given the increasingly external demands of the role and the increasing need for more qualified candidates to address the impending leadership deficit, non-traditional candidates—particularly those with fundraising experience, such as development officers—appear more likely to ascend to the presidency. Tracking systems for understanding presidential pathways are problematic, and research focuses more on the backgrounds of those ascending to the presidency rather than the experience in the role and any correlation to prior experience. Academic affairs remains the most common pathway to the presidency, but the skills gained in the role do not fully address current competencies. Development presidents appear to have been positioned well, but research has not fully explored prior backgrounds or examined such nontraditional candidates in comparison to the academic affairs “norm,” the dichotomy established by existing research.

To reiterate, presidents in higher education must be involved in fundraising. While community college presidents did not historically have fundraising roles, they must play those

roles now. Thus, presidents with backgrounds in development possess skills that are relevant to today's presidency. The external orientation of the role and the external demands on community colleges must be addressed more than responsively or reactively.

As depicted in the map of the literature presented earlier, the literature establishes a basis for the study and underscores the need to address deficits in knowledge. The largely atheoretical literature fails, however, to provide a sufficient construct for analyzing the issues it establishes. The following chapter provides a conceptual framework that will illustrate the possibilities for strategic change by community college presidents who embrace true resource development, including philanthropic partnerships.

CHAPTER 3—Conceptual Framework

The preceding literature review chapter provided an exploration of the literature pertaining to the key variables in the research question: *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?* The literature conveys that the presidential role in community colleges has evolved as the institutions have become more complex; current skills needed in the position are changing; current presidents report not being prepared for the increasingly external focus of the role; and impending retirements present the need to fill presidencies on a mass scale. While limited, the literature on both the skills and experiences of development officers and chief academic affairs officers suggests that development officers have become more attractive candidates for the presidency because of external competencies and that a majority of chief academic affairs officers are not interested in the presidency because of the external nature of the position.

These conditions do not exist in a vacuum, however, so environmental factors surrounding these changes in the community college presidency were also explored in the literature: a decline in public funding, an increasing emphasis on private support, enhanced visibility and substantial growth of the community college sector; and a new breed of donor motivated by community support and measurable impact.

How presidents anticipate or respond to these environmental conditions is the crux of the research question at hand. In essence, presidents are faced with two choices in responding to the changing environment: merely seeking to replace the revenue that was provided by traditional

public funding or seizing an opportunity to forge new partnerships. By only documenting the context, the literature fails to provide a means for understanding it. A theoretical framework is needed.

This chapter provides a new conceptual model for examining the environmental context impacting the need for community college presidential fundraising. Theory does not explain the specific variables of the research question; rather, and more importantly, a theoretical framework provides the very context for the research question. It situates the variable constructs and the comparison of internal or external background experience as preparation for the presidency within the greater environment.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THEORY

Although the literature about community college philanthropy and presidential fundraising is largely atheoretical, examining both within the comprehensive categorization of nonprofit fundraising and philanthropy provides a theoretical foundation. This broadened perspective is warranted, as educational institutions are nonprofit organizations (Gumport & Snyderman, 2006) and educational fundraising principles originated from practices in other types of nonprofits (Worth, 2002). In addition to the structural basis as nonprofits, community colleges, with their unique position within the higher education sector, perhaps share more in common with general nonprofits than elite private universities. Community colleges and nonprofits share the challenges of having more limited resources to meet increasing demands and to truly serve their communities. The colleges' explicit focus on providing access and educational opportunity for the surrounding community (Gumport & Snyderman, 2006) also aligns with a nonprofit centrality of mission (Minkoff & Powell, 2006).

Elements of Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which has been utilized in the nonprofit literature (Helmig, Spraul, & Tremp, 2012; Moulton & Eckerd, 2012) particularly around fundraising (Kelly, 1998; Mixer, 1993), form the foundation of this dissertation's conceptual model. The choice of RDT was intentional in utilizing a theory that would be accessible to both scholars and practitioners alike and would have direct, practical application for understanding the environmental challenges facing community colleges. Additionally, the theoretical application should augment the literature for fundraising in higher education; though not widely applied, there is a recognition of the theory in the field (Kelly, 1998, 2002; Peterson, 2007).

Because the dissertation research spans different fields and literatures, the conscious decision was made to utilize a theory, such as RDT, that would not be altogether unfamiliar, thus maintaining accessibility while also establishing credibility, even as applying the theory in an original way still provides a unique contribution. Although its application has been more limited, RDT also has relevance for philanthropy (Frumkin, 2006). The common constructs of strategy and strategic leadership provide the connection between philanthropy and RDT. Development cannot be examined today without accounting for changes in philanthropy, including its increased visibility, a new breed of donor seeking community impact, and the philanthropic potential of community colleges.

This chapter begins with an outline of the foundational principles of RDT. These concepts will then be applied to the challenges facing community college presidents as described in the literature and illustrate the possible presidential responses: merely seeking to replace the revenue that was provided by traditional public funding (dependence) or seizing an opportunity to forge new partnerships (interdependence or mutuality). The theoretical framework of

community college presidential fundraising illustrates the potential of mutually beneficial partnerships, or interdependencies, between community colleges and philanthropy in the shared interest of enhancing the community. The chapter concludes with a depiction and description of a conceptual model that captures the relationship between the variables examined in the study.

RESOURCE DEPENDENCE THEORY (RDT) OVERVIEW

Resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) builds from the core concept that organizational survival relies on the ability to *acquire and maintain resources*. Although current literature on community college fundraising tends to focus on the importance of the presidential role, resource dependence theory can help focus attention on the environmental context and on the power that proactive securing of resources can hold for some institutions. Organizations gain power by *controlling resources to minimize their dependence on others* and instead to *maximize others' dependence on them*.

RDT assumes organizations exercise some degree of control or influence over their resource environment (Oliver, 1991, 1997). Although situations might present environmental constraints, the theory provides for *strategic choice* as organizations determine how to *diversify resources* and position themselves within the environment. Organizations have the opportunity to pursue *strategies* that overcome environmental challenges. In an open system, an organization manages *interdependencies* between itself and organizations in its environment—such as between a nonprofit and its donors—through an *exchange process* (Mixer, 1993). Dependencies can be *reciprocal*.

External resource dependence also affects an organization's internal dynamics. As organizations respond to external forces, they can undergo organizational change and adaptation.

Internal players connected to the facilitation of external interdependencies experience an increase in power. Organizational leadership must foster alignment between external and internal systems and relationships to please external stakeholders. In doing so, leadership can thus enhance resources that enable the organization to fulfill its mission (Wright & Bocarnea, 2007).

Establishing relational connections requires “strategic leadership” (Pfeffer, 1997).

Although RDT concedes that leaders do have a symbolic role as others in the organization often hold power, the theory outlines two possible actions for leaders. A leader can facilitate the organization’s adjustment to its surrounding social context (termed a responsive role), or a leader can seek to modify the environment and make it more favorable to the organization (a discretionary role). Either role requires that the leader understand the social context and the organization’s interrelationship with its environment, and problems arise when that knowledge and understanding is not present in the leader.

Pfeffer (1997) reaffirms the original RDT concepts he and Salancik developed (1978) and more explicitly advances ideas applicable to resource development or fundraising. In reviewing corporate giving studies, for example, he highlights the importance of connections among nonprofit board members and the presidents or corporate giving officers. He cites the shortcoming of studies that solely consider the individual or organization as the unit of analysis and fail to account for the ongoing relational aspect of the environment. Relational connections positively affect the flow of resources and organizational legitimacy (Bornstein, 2003).

RDT CORE CONCEPTS

Core concepts of resource dependence theory were applied to the dissertation’s research focus and the environmental conditions in which development presidents (DevPres) were being

compared to academic affairs presidents (AAPres). Given the loss of traditional revenue sources, community colleges are now seeking private support like never before. Similar to the RDT concepts of a responsive or a discretionary leader, community college presidents have a choice in approaching the changing environment by fundraising merely out of necessity—a short-term, functionalist approach—or approaching fundraising as an opportunity, a more strategic and long-term endeavor. How the presidents' backgrounds have prepared them for this situation, how they perceive the presidential role regarding fundraising, and how they manage the presidency formed the basis for collecting and analyzing the data and presenting the findings in subsequent chapters.

This application will illustrate the theoretical constructs in terms of both community colleges and philanthropy. In order to maximize the effectiveness of philanthropic partnerships and move the institution from dependence to interdependence, community college presidents must understand the environment, as RDT stipulates—in this dissertation's context, knowing how to fundraise and what contemporary philanthropists seek in partnerships. Presidents must exercise strategic leadership to establish relational connections, facilitating not only external connections but also aligning the college internally to forge mutually-rewarding partnerships.

Core RDT Concept: Acquire and Maintain Resources

The ability to acquire and maintain resources is vital to organizational survival. No organization is completely self-contained but rather operates within an environment containing other organizations. Organizations depend on and must transact with other organizations for the resources they require. Problems arise not because of organizational dependency on the environment but because this environment can change as organizations enter and exit, and then the resource supply amplifies or wanes. When the environment changes, an organization must

change its activities in response to the different environmental factors or face the prospect of not surviving.

Community College Application: Addresses the inadequate three-pronged stool funding model.

The literature review demonstrated that the traditional funding model of thirds (states, students, and local government) is no longer sufficient. Philanthropy is expected to play an increasingly important role in community college funding; community college presidents are expected to fundraise as part of their presidential responsibilities. Acquiring and maintaining resources is a concept that naturally aligns itself with fundraising. Even so, the theoretical framework helps to illustrate how presidents might approach this activity, whether or not they perceive it to be part of the presidential role, and how they manage the presidency accordingly.

If a critical aspect of organizational leadership, according to RDT, is to understand the environment, a community college president should know how to position private funding within the institution's funding. According to Mixer, (1993), whose oft-cited book on nonprofit fundraising frequently forms a basis for community college fundraising, "strategic" managers are distinguished by their sensitivity to new forces and developments in the environment and an ability to successfully confront new conditions. A starting point is to appreciate that private support is not a new concept for community colleges. In fact, Brint and Karabel (1991) contend that instead of "elite sponsorship" by large private foundations such as the Kellogg Foundation making possible the historic growth of community colleges in their early years, community colleges grew because they attracted elite sponsorship. That is, funders are attracted to the dynamic potential represented by community colleges.

Organizational leadership is essential for securing a strategic investment, as an organization needs “strategic clarity” with a clearly-delineated plan for achieving compelling and credible goals (Foster, 2008). It is possible to enact new strategies while remaining true to the nonprofit mission (Minkoff & Powell, 2006). In fact, securing private funding does not need to displace or compete with traditional funding sources; it can complement them.

The country’s most exemplary nonprofit organizations, as determined by researchers at Duke University’s Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship, integrate fundraising into every aspect of their programs, mission, and strategy (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008). Successful nonprofits consider the government, private sector, and individuals as collective partners in realizing their missions and pursue funding from all of them. The lesson for community colleges is to similarly consider funding beyond the public sector, through partnerships that help further the mission. The president must exercise strategic leadership to develop such partnerships.

In assessing the possibilities of private contributions, governmental funding, and commercial activity, nonprofits must develop a comprehensive approach to securing resources that considers the opportunities and challenges posed by each funding source (Froelich, 1999). Froelich’s influential study also demonstrated that a professionalized bureaucracy is most conducive to government funding, whereas a professionalized administration fosters private contributions. In other words, the historical style of community college leadership worked when public funding fully supported the institutions, but a new style of leadership is necessary for fundraising. Presidents are critical to fundraising success, both by understanding and embracing the presidential role in fundraising and also by managing the presidency to position the organization to effectively seek private support.

Philanthropy Application: With their comprehensive nature, supporting community colleges provides a means to reach many sectors and people.

Although their ultimate effectiveness might be questionable, both philanthropic leaders and the scholars studying them contend that contemporary philanthropy—individuals and organizations alike—wants giving to result in maximum impact (Fleishman, 2007; Frumkin, 2006; Grace & Wendroff, 2001; Karoff, 2007; Rimel, 2001; Schervish, O’Herlihy, & Havens, 2001). In trying to have a broad impact, however, foundations often spread their financial and human resources too thin (Fleishman, 2007). Community colleges also suffer from trying to “do it all” on few resources.

Philanthropists, both individuals and organizations, want to partner with organizations that enable them to reach a wide population, and community colleges offer that opportunity. They also want to partner with such organizations to ensure that they fulfill their potential and societal expectations (Porter & Kramer, 1999). Rather than defining a problem and how to fix it, which is the traditional pattern of philanthropy, today’s philanthropy is market-conscious and knowledge-driven because it builds upon continuous feedback from stakeholders (Nicholls, 2006).

For example, while the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation now has well-defined operating goals, Bill Gates reached this clarity in funding strategy only after many years of honing his philanthropy through investing in his home community of Seattle (Nicholls, 2006). Following the pattern of many philanthropists, Gates began giving locally and expanded later; his local philanthropy began in his thirties, but his philanthropy expanded globally in his fifties. The local connection underscores the attractiveness of community colleges for philanthropy, if community college presidents actively seek to acquire such resources.

Analysis

Rather than responding to external forces reactively and begrudgingly, presidential leadership in development can proactively position community colleges to harness changing external dynamics. Pierce (2012) claims one of the “pleasures of the presidency” is working with donors to effect change and that the presidents who have experienced this have partnered closely with the donors as well as those on campus with whom the giving benefits. College presidents are uniquely positioned to deploy development as an exercise in relationship-building, mutual exchange, and mutual satisfaction. A new generation of philanthropists wants to create impact within their lifetimes by expending their resources—extending entrepreneurial success to the nonprofit sector. Community colleges with a compelling story can help donors to understand how the strategic impact of their giving can be met as they partner to benefit the community.

A community college president might be successful in securing private funding (*acquiring resources*) and even seeing some of those gifts repeat (*maintaining resources*), but fail to fully realize the philanthropic potential of the institution. In fact, the literature review documented that situation, where some fundraising for scholarships has occurred over the years and not much else. Donors may give without being fully engaged, and philanthropy could become just one more resource upon which community colleges are reliant, depending on how a president views and prioritizes fundraising. The next RDT concept will illustrate how presidents would pursue a true philanthropic partnership, moving beyond dependence to interdependence and empowering their institutions in the process.

Core RDT Concept: Maximize Others' Dependence

In an environmental system where organizations must acquire resources from others, organizations are seeking resources from others at the same time they are providing resources that other organizations seek. Resource dependence is thus inextricably linked with power. Organizations may hold more power than others because of the nature of their interdependence. The potential for an organization to have influence over another is determined by the organization's discretionary control over the resources needed by the other organization and how dependent the other is on that resource compared to alternatives. An organization wants to offer a resource that others find critical and that is not widely replicated by alternative sources.

Community College Application: Public becomes more aware of vast service role and more appreciative of and invested in their success.

As the literature review demonstrated, community colleges are currently experiencing attention and visibility that they have not before (Bass, 2009; Kent, 2012; Palmer, 2010), among a general public largely unaware previously of the comprehensive nature of community colleges and their need for private support (Babitz, 2003; Bass, 2009). Fundraising requires that the community college story be effectively conveyed, and presidential leadership in this aspect through acting as the chief storyteller is critical, as the literature review demonstrated (Bornstein, 2003; McGee, 2003; Morrill, 2007; Nicholson, 2007; Ryan, 2005).

When conveying the community college story in today's environment, presidents can emphasize the way community colleges enhance their communities through economic development, educational access, and workforce training (Babitz, 2003; Bass, 2009). As the public becomes more aware of the contributions of the community college, they also can become

more invested in and dependent upon not only the institutions' survival but also their success. The power differential in corporate and nonprofit partnerships becomes less significant when nonprofits effectively navigate these collaborations through effective leadership (Galaskiewicz, 2006). A president can manage the presidency to foster such collaborations. A community college president articulated the mutual dependency between donors and community colleges in today's environment: "The nation is counting on community colleges to educate workers and support local businesses and economies. If the nation is counting on us, our donors are as well" (Sygielski, 2011). Colleges and their donors alike want to improve the community's economy.

Philanthropy Application: Philanthropists can find partners who share in their vision for change and impact.

Although philanthropists can be viewed as powerful by nature of their wealth, philanthropists also become dependent on the organizations they support in order to exercise and fulfill their motivations for giving. Individuals' motivations for giving can vary but usually involve the need to repay a debt, to feel one's life has meaning, to make a difference, to carry on a legacy, or to achieve recognition (Grace & Wendroff, 2001; Lindahl, 2010). Foundations by law have to give away their resources, and companies share their wealth because it fosters goodwill and marketability among consumers (Tempel, Seiler, & Aldrich, 2011). Both individual and organizational donors are dependent on organizations they support to achieve their goals.

Presidents can cultivate financial resources in the form of philanthropy in particular by understanding that as donors determine the ways to have an impact, they seek professional advice, including from nonprofit leaders (BOA, 2012). Gunderman (2010) asserts that if giving conversations focus only on the needs of recipients, donors are actually deprived of an

opportunity “to develop and express the excellence of generosity by putting their distinctive resources to work for the benefit of others.” Other researchers (Prince & File, 1994; Schervish, 2000) have called on organizations to empower philanthropists through involvement, participation, and integration. Indeed, looking at what motivates and attracts today’s donors and at institutions that have benefited from their largesse helps to construct an argument that the common element between the two is a desire for engagement (Grace & Wendroff, 2001; Tempel et al., 2011; Tobin et al., 2003; Wagner, 2003).

Analysis

Community college presidents appear to have struggled with fundraising because it entails external relations, an activity that was not historically perceived as a presidential responsibility. Dependency on the traditional funding model long allowed community colleges to function as rather insular institutions. Sharing the mission, or storytelling, precludes insularity. Now forced to seek alternative funding options, community colleges must better articulate their good work to an environment largely unaware of their needs.

The community college’s core funding connection to the public sector, through its funding model and mission to serve its local community, positions it as an existing organization touching nearly every aspect of the market and environment. Through partnership with community colleges, philanthropy can achieve the far-reaching impact it seeks. The theoretical model thus reconceptualizes the institution from being dependent. In the case of philanthropy, the community college and private funders become interdependencies.

Core RDT Concept: Control Resources to Minimize Dependence on Others

Organizations are controlled by an external source if they are heavily dependent on that source for a large proportion of input. An organization seeks alternative resources or resource diversification to diminish the critical nature of a particular exchange relationship.

Diversification is a way of avoiding being dominating by a more powerful external exchange partner. RDT maintains that the government in particular can create significant problematic interdependence for other organizations. Diversification lessens dependence and provides an organization with more control over its own survival and adaptability to the environment.

Community College Application: Private partnerships strengthen agency over determining their future and lessen reliance on public funding.

Rather than waiting for traditional funding sources to return to previous levels or treating private funding as a stop-gap, community college presidents can approach resource diversification as a way to have more control over an institution's destiny and to lessen its dependence on others. External activity by presidents for fundraising can have ramifications beyond just increasing private financial resources. Sharing the community college story to a variety of constituents has potential ramifications for increased enrollment, programmatic support, and curricular development, among other resources.

Understanding the integrated aspect of fundraising with not only other types of funding, as previously discussed, but also with other aspects of college operations allows for enhanced partnerships on several levels. For example, Cisco Systems sought to engage in "strategic philanthropy" that extended its networking core business concepts into programs that bring people together in all aspects of life and encourages community capacity (Hoyt, 2003). Cisco

developed a Network Academy that provided training for high schools and community colleges in technology careers. Cisco provided correlating equipment that schools purchased at a substantial discount. Another example of a mutually beneficial corporate and community partnership is Maui Land and Pineapple (MLP), a Hawaiian landowning company with resort and agricultural interests. By sponsoring training in land-based arts for students at the local community college, MLP simultaneously turned around its unprofitable pineapple production operation, addressed Maui's youth unemployment, and helped reduce Maui's dependence on imported food (Karoff, 2007). A true philanthropic partnership provide for mutually informing ideas, goals, and perspectives and results in impact to the broader community.

Aggressively communicating the mission and strategically positioning the organization by directing resources to fundraising activities results in more contributions than focusing on maintaining efficient operations (Frumkin & Kim, 2001). This sentiment echoes the findings in the community college fundraising literature, where cost-cutting was often employed in a futile attempt to meet budget and to secure continued funding from governmental sources. Visionary presidents have sought to move beyond such dependency.

Philanthropy Application: Government would be likely to continue policies that favor philanthropy.

Although philanthropy has largely operated unfettered by governmental restrictions (Raymond & Martin, 2007), calls for greater accountability (Fleishman, 2007; Frumkin, 2006; Katz, 2005) and a re-examination and understanding of philanthropy's origins and what were once radical concepts of private support to address large societal concerns (Gregorian, 2000) have arisen both from within and outside of the philanthropic sector.

Frustrated by traditional institutions, modern-day donors have started to create their own hybrid giving vehicles that blur the lines between nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Karoff, 2007). Given the greater calls for accountability both from within and outside of the philanthropic sector, opting out of existing systems rather than finding ways to work creatively within them is not a viable pathway. By encouraging philanthropy to invest in community colleges, which share with philanthropy an origin as rather radical American inventions to serve society (Brown, 2012), community colleges can also help philanthropy to retain its relative freedom from government restrictions. Philanthropic investments in community colleges would actually position philanthropy as a mutual funder with government. The community level impact assists with accountability and transparency.

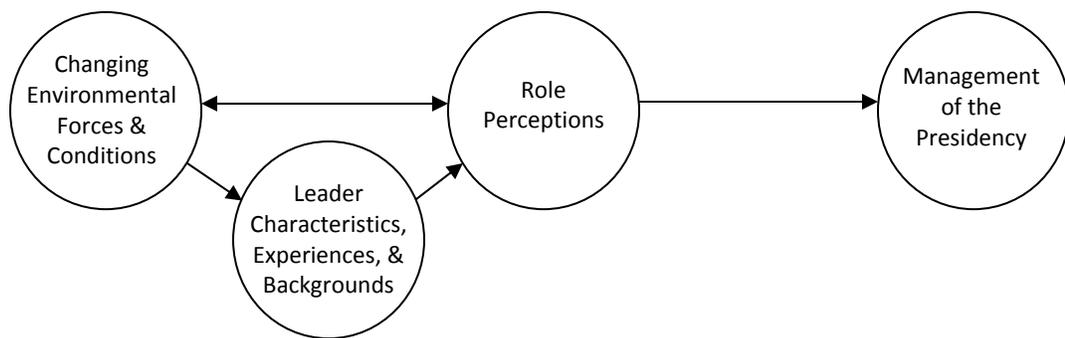
Analysis

Philanthropy was essentially a grassroots and radical American invention when organized philanthropy moved beyond charity a century ago (Cutlip, 1965; Fleishman, 2007; Gregorian, 2000; Katz, 2007), just as community colleges were institutions on the frontier of educational change at their founding (Brown, 2012; Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Both philanthropy and community colleges have faced calls for greater accountability and scrutiny, and partnering in ways that have a visible, measurable impact at the community level could be mutually beneficial. Seeking partnerships beyond traditional funding sources can help community colleges to have more control over their own destiny, and by investing in such institutions rather than creating its own hybrid organizations, philanthropy can retain control over its resources unfettered by governmental restrictions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK SYNTHESIS

Representing a synthesis of the literature and the RDT concepts outlined in this chapter, the diagram below (Figure 2) presents a conceptual model of the variables investigated through the dissertation. The changing environmental forces and conditions form the context for examining the outcome of interest, management of the presidency. The preceding literature review chapter explored the environmental context of a changing community college presidency, including a decline in traditional sources of revenue for community colleges and the increasing visibility and growing importance of philanthropy.

Figure 2. Conceptual Model



As the literature on development professional competencies illustrated, ideally, philanthropy is not a one-sided endeavor but rather a process and partnership based on mutual exchange. As philanthropy has grown in prominence, both within and beyond higher education, the development profession has also evolved, and fundraising expectations for college presidents, including those at the community college level, have concurrently amplified. Thus, this study examined the leader characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds that appear to be changing because of the shifting environmental forces and conditions.

The leader characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds in turn influence the way the presidency is perceived—the intervening variable of role perception. How presidents perceive

the presidential role today is shaped both by their own characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds as well as forces in the environment. A significant issue emerging from the literature is a perspective of fundraising as a “regrettable reality” for community college presidents, in which the leaders are unfortunately at the mercy of a changing funding structure. Philanthropy is perceived as merely “taking something” from donors to meet college needs without recognizing that a truly effective fundraising partnership allows for philanthropists to fulfill their needs to make a difference and create impact. By applying resource dependence theory to philanthropy, the model repositions institutions and philanthropists as interdependencies. Perceptions of the presidential role today can thus contribute to changes in the environment, so the directional flow in the model is indicated as two-way.

Being external means approaching the environment in a proactive, mutually generative way. As RDT illustrates, and as the data will show, external resource dependence also affects power dynamics internally. The management of the presidency examines not only the external actions of the presidents but their internal leadership as well. How the president prepares the institution for the pursuit of philanthropy is a critical component and underscores the need to better understand how development presidents approach the role—how they perceive the presidential role and in turn manage the presidency—in comparison to their more traditional academic affairs presidential peers.

Role perception and the resulting management strategies have been illustrated by the application of RDT in this chapter. Solely seeking private funding to replace lost revenue merely positions fundraising as an exchange. The relationship may or may not be ongoing or for the best purposes. It is a short-term strategy. With the changes in philanthropy, donors are looking for more than a simple exchange: they seek meaning, accountability, purpose, and impact. They are

dependent on organizations to provide those experiences, and in doing so, an organization can help to maximize others' dependence and help to control resources and minimize dependence on others. Creating interdependence, a mutuality, applies the RDT concept beyond just securing resources to achieving resource diversification. Mutuality leads to strategic change on both the organizational/institutional as well as the community/societal levels.

Partnerships can provide for community economic development, new programs, and innovation. A community college has much more to gain than just resources in terms of access to cutting-edge industry perspectives, technology, products, curriculum, advocates, volunteers, mentors, and employers for students. Strategy and strategic leadership are required to move beyond just acquiring resources and merely responding to environmental constraints. A comfort with and understanding of changes in philanthropy is necessary for fostering interdependencies and proactively positioning the institution. The data will explore the connections between presidential backgrounds, role perception, and managing the presidency in today's environment.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented a theoretical framework for the study that addresses significant shortcomings in the literature: its atheoretical nature and its failure to provide a mutuality of perspective between philanthropic partners and fundraisers and their institutions. The foundation of resource dependence theory (RDT) repositions institutions and philanthropists as interdependencies, thus empowering community college presidential fundraising and positioning partnerships with community colleges as a strategic choice for philanthropy. Presidents' perceptions of the presidential role are influenced by the changing environmental forces and conditions as well as the leaders' own characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds. Role

perception in turn impacts the management of the presidency, the outcome of interest in the study.

The process for securing data on the presidents' approaches to their role, the two cohorts of presidents interviewed, and the rationale behind the comparative study will be described in the following methods chapter. Two findings chapters will then follow, and a concluding chapter will further apply the conceptual model to the study's findings and discuss the implications.

CHAPTER 4—Research Methodology

This chapter describes the study’s research methodology for investigating whether community college presidents with an external (fundraising) background differ in their management of the presidency, and if so how, from presidents with an internal (academic affairs) background. It begins by providing rationale for qualitative research and then provides an overview of the research design. Information on data collection techniques and a depiction of study participants are provided. Data analysis procedures and reporting are explained, followed by issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and limitations. The chapter culminates with a brief concluding summary.

RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The literature, as reviewed in Chapter 2, suggests that community colleges, more than other higher education institutional types, are open to non-traditional candidates for the presidency and that their trustees are increasingly expecting prior external experience from college presidential candidates. Yet, the current avenues for tracking presidential backgrounds are problematic. The only position monitored is the position held immediately prior position to the presidency, and these studies assume that career tracks are exclusive to that point—meaning a career is either construed as all administrative or all academic. Data either lump all non-academic positions into one category or conflate positions into umbrella categories that are not precise, such as “external affairs” rather than “advancement.”

The literature review also demonstrated that contemporary and future community college presidents increasingly need a different skill set of primarily external competencies. The traditional pathway to the presidency through academic affairs provides limited exposure to external skills, particularly fundraising, which has proven to pose a significant challenge for current presidents, even as it has become an expected responsibility. Partly because of the changing role of the college presidency, provosts are increasingly not interested in pursuing the presidency—and even if they had greater interest in the college presidency, provosts are projected to undergo the same wave of impending retirements as the current presidential population. If the increasingly external nature of the presidency has created an opening for more non-traditional candidates, then the performance and tenure of such non-traditional candidates must also be monitored. The literature currently focuses only on trends in hiring beyond academic affairs backgrounds, not how such nontraditional hires actually function as presidents.

Given the assumptions, omissions, and discrepancies in the existing literature, qualitative research was determined as the most viable method for gaining comprehensive data on the connections between career backgrounds and ascending to the presidency. Qualitative data are particularly useful for understanding the rationale or theory underlying relationships in quantitative data (Eisenhardt, 1989). Qualitative data hold power for their robust potential to test hypotheses and their ability to “supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). A recent national study that found fundraising was the primary challenge for community college presidents issued an explicit call for qualitative studies to elucidate the existing literature and offer more insight into pathways and preparations for the presidency (Duree, 2008).

Interviews as a particular qualitative method efficiently provide rich, empirical data, especially when the phenomenon is infrequent (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Although non-traditional backgrounds appear to be increasing, it is still an emerging phenomenon and thus one well-suited to using interviews. Interviewing allows us to understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). As Patton (1996) explains:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot observe...we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time...we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

Interviews were thus employed to reveal the “full story” of pathways leading up to the presidency—why roles were chosen, what was really involved in previous experiences, why the person chose to seek the presidency, and views on the hiring situation. This information goes beyond what can be gleaned from a curriculum vitae or a quantitative survey. Additionally, interviews were utilized to reveal how leaders perceive their role as president—what previous experiences they draw upon, how they manage their multiple responsibilities, and what they hope to accomplish—thereby obtaining the other critical data needed to address deficiencies in the existing literature.

RESEARCH DESIGN OVERVIEW

The literature suggests that presidents coming from a “nontraditional” background such as development are growing in both numbers hired and demand by boards. Even so, the understanding of “development presidents” is incomplete, both in terms of their full backgrounds and in assessing their approach to the presidency in relation to the “norm” of the academic affairs

president. Because of the deficiencies in the literature, particularly focusing only on the fact that presidents from development have ascended to the presidency and examining such presidents in isolation from greater environmental forces impacting the presidency, more comprehensive research is needed to gain an understanding of presidential backgrounds and presidential leadership and management.

This study offers a more thorough exploration of backgrounds and context for assessment of the current community college presidential role by comparing the leadership and management approaches of “internal” and “external” presidents. Development experience specifically was used to connote an “external” orientation. Other areas of background such as communications or student affairs could have represented an “external” orientation, which is considered a “non-traditional” pathway to the presidency from the traditional route through academic affairs, the dichotomy established in the literature. Presidents who entered the presidency via the traditional academic affairs pipeline were considered “internal.” The following table (Table 1) further outlines the way “internal” and “external” were conceived, based on descriptions in the literature.

Table 1. Expected Internal and External Orientations by Background

INTERNAL/ACADEMIC ORIENTATION	EXTERNAL/FUNDRAISING ORIENTATION
Primary concern is campus	Primary concern is beyond campus
Dealings primarily with internal constituents, such as faculty	Dealings primarily with external constituents, such as donors
Focus is on all matters academic: curriculum, faculty, students, classroom space, etc.	Focus is on all matters to support academics: funding, buildings, scholarships, etc.
Top academic position (provost/CAO/DOI/VPAA) typically achieved by advancing through academic ranks as faculty member, department chair, dean and then top role	Top development position (VP for Advancement, CDO) does not have defined career path. While lower-level development position might precede it, CDO can come directly from private sector background
Limited exposure to volunteers/boards	Extensive exposure to volunteers/boards
Thinks in terms of the college	Thinks in terms of partnerships
Academic skills required	Interpersonal skills required
Ability to relate to faculty	Ability to relate to community leaders
Teaching experience presumed	Teaching experience not presumed
Might not be expected to represent college in community	Expected to represent college in community

The research design sought to address both aspects of deficiencies in the literature through a two-faceted focus: (1) testing assumptions based on the position held previous to the presidency by exploring what backgrounds fully entail; and (2) investigating the potential impact of the two possible pathways to the presidency, broadly conceived as internal or external, on ways the presidency is perceived and enacted by those from either background. Again, qualitative methods allowed this information to be discovered, both the additional context and details on backgrounds beyond a curriculum vitae or listing of previous positions as well as an understanding of the rationale underlying the relationship between the variables of pathways, role perception, and presidential management. Consideration of the greater environmental forces underpinning both pathways and presidential leadership and management provided the underlying construct of the study. Specifically, this study sought to answer a central research question: *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?*

Comparison Group

The use of a comparison group in qualitative research differs from such use in quantitative research; rather than measuring difference, comparison groups allow researchers to understand the value in difference (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). A qualitative comparison group can contribute to a study's robustness by "identifying the absence or presence of particular phenomena in the accounts of different groups; exploring how the manifestations of phenomena vary between groups; or exploring how the reasons for, or explanations of, phenomena, or their different impacts and consequences, vary between groups" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 50).

It was also important to have a comparison group to help address limitations in the current literature. The studies that have focused on presidents coming from a development background essentially assess only that experience. They do not seek to analyze other factors leading up to or beyond the development role. More importantly, they do not address the question of whether these presidents with a development background function comparably or differently in the role than those coming from the most popular pathway, academic affairs.

Sampling Procedure

A purposeful sampling strategy (Yin, 2011), criterion sampling specifically, was employed to identify presidents with a background in either advancement or academic affairs. The process for targeting advancement presidents was more complex than targeting academic affairs presidents. The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) provided a list of advancement presidents at the post-secondary level, which was then narrowed down to presidents of community colleges only. These listings were cross-referenced with those in *The Advancement President* (Murphy, 1997). The roster was further narrowed to identify presidents with specific experience in development, as the database included individuals with previous experience in marketing communications and governmental relations as well. A list from the Council for Resource Development (CRD) of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) helped to verify the development and community college foci. Finally, these listings were still validated for accuracy and updated contact information.

This preliminary research identified a pool of 22 community college development presidents who could be interviewed. This pool did not include several other presidents who were omitted because of a lack of current contact information or because they were no longer in

office; some of these omitted presidents appeared to have retired while others had transitioned to other roles or careers in higher education. Several development presidents have been hired during the course of the study as well, but these presidents were not contacted as the intention was to interview presidents with an established tenure and thus an informed perspective on the presidency. As the demographic tables below will show, the presidents interviewed have been in positions beyond the average presidential tenure of seven years (ACE, 2012) or are currently in their second or third presidencies.

It must be emphasized, however, that any demographic information was not a consideration in the selection. The sole selection criterion was development experience, so as to intentionally replicate the way advancement presidents are defined in the literature and categorized by CRD and CASE. The potential effects of the selection process on the resulting data will be discussed in the limitations section of the final chapter.

Because the most common background for the community college presidency is academic affairs (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Cook & Kim, 2012; Weisman & Vaughan, 2006), the potential pool of presidents for the comparison group was much broader. To narrow the focus, selection was concentrated on presidents within a reasonable driving distance and further restricted to those with a connection to the researcher's dissertation chair and/or institution. The academic affairs backgrounds were validated by reviewing the president's public biographical information.

For the purposes of the study, Development Presidents (DevPres) are defined as those who once held a formal position with responsibility for development in a community college. Academic Affairs Presidents (AAPres) are defined as those whose advanced to the presidency through the traditional academic side of the community college as a former vice president for

academic affairs (VPAA), chief academic officer (CAO), dean of instruction (DOI), or provost. The goal was to interview a maximum of 10 leaders who would comprise the “external” sample (DevPres) and to target the same approximate number of presidents for a comparison group (AAPres), for a total study sample that with document review would entail a sizeable yet still manageable amount of data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Pilot Testing

Simultaneous to the process of gathering and analyzing background information on the study population, expert opinion was also sought on a series of questions that would be used to construct an interview protocol. Two different experts in community colleges were consulted about the study, the intended focus, and proposed interview topics—following research recommendations for field testing a protocol draft (Weiss, 1994). Creswell (2003) advocates using such “external auditors” to assess the project overall. These experts—one in a community college association and another a higher education consultant with experience in community colleges—offered nuances to look for in responses, prioritization of certain questions over others in case of time constraints, and suggestions that were incorporated through slight wording changes in the protocol.

Pilot interviews were then conducted with three seasoned community college presidents with experience in both academic affairs and development. Only a small number of test interviews were necessary to gain a sense of the process (Weiss, 1994). The pilot interview presidents responded to questions and also provided an overall sense of the topic, the information that would likely be gleaned by the interview questions, and suggestions for approaching and interviewing other presidents.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The recruitment strategy was to reach out to presidents initially via email and then to follow up with a phone call if needed. Requests were sent to 11 potential presidential participants for each group or cohort. It was not necessary to make any phone calls as the presidents were extremely responsive and interested in the study. Nearly all potential participants replied to the email request within 48 hours and indicated their willingness to participate.

The email request for participation mentioned the researcher's own experience in development to provide credibility regarding the topic. In the pilot interviews, permission was also secured from one highly regarded president to mention her name in outreach to a couple of other presidents. The email also mentioned the researcher's dissertation chair, who is well-known in the community college sector. One request to a DevPres did require a second email request; the president apologized for not responding sooner and the interview was successfully scheduled and conducted. One other DevPres and two AAPres did not respond to the initial interview request, but as interviews had already reached the point of saturation (discussed below as a strategy for achieving credibility), it was not necessary to pursue these additional participants.

In the end, the researcher interviewed 10 DevPres and 9 AAPres, for a study sample of 19 (excluding data from the three additional pilot interviews). The interviews were conducted face-to-face when possible, with half of the interviews scheduled around a conference many presidents attend. For the remainder, the presidents were offered the option of Skype videoconferencing but only two presidents accepted this offer; in one of those cases, technical

problems on the president's end resulted in an interview by telephone, which is how the other interviews were conducted.

The interviews were semi-structured, based on the interview protocol in Appendix A, and ranged in length from 45 to 85 minutes. They were conducted over a three-month period from November 2011 to January 2012. The researcher constructed a synthesis of subject responses immediately following each interview, recording overall observations and recounting particularly striking comments to be located later in the transcript—a version of a contact summary form developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The electronically recorded interviews were all professionally transcribed. From the point of transcription on, all presidents were referred to by pseudonym, even in the researcher's own notes, forms, and memos.

All presidents were interviewed to investigate their experiences prior to the presidency and the execution of their presidential responsibilities in terms of how they view and prioritize key responsibilities, including advancement activities. To reiterate, the interview protocol was vetted by two community college experts and piloted on three presidents before data collection began. Presidents were asked questions around three key areas that will be explained in more detail below: (1) their background, including career history prior to the presidency, reasons for becoming a president, and the relationship between prior experience and the presidency; (2) their management of the presidency around the dimensions of administration and operations, leadership on campus and in the community, their relationship with the board, strategy and long-range planning, and financial management; and (3) their college's advancement performance, including changes and successes under their tenure.

These three key areas connect to the conceptual model. The first set of questions was designed to uncover the full extent of a president's pathway to the presidency. Because the

literature review revealed deficiencies in the ways presidential backgrounds are categorized, the initial interview question was deliberately broad so as to solicit a comprehensive understanding of the president's background: Presidents were asked to describe their career trajectory or pathway leading up to the presidency (their current one and any prior presidencies, if applicable). This question yielded lengthy responses with revelations that could be explored further.

Subsequent questions about backgrounds asked what aspects of prior experiences they most draw upon in the presidency, how they learned about fundraising, why they became a college president, surprises in the role, and what if anything they would do differently along the pathway. These questions attempted to understand the relationship between their background and their perceptions of the role of president. They also yielded information about the greater context of the president's pathway to the role, including their understanding of the institutional culture at the time of their hiring.

Conceptually, to standardize performance expectations and to provide a basis for comparing the cohorts and how they function in the presidency, the second set of questions explored management of the presidency, the outcome of interest. Since institutions might have college-specific responsibilities for a president, questions to assess management of the presidency were designed around duties that would be pertinent to any president regardless of institutional size, location, etc. This targeted emphasis was based on regularizing possible measures of performance in the presidential role for purposes of comparison. The dimensions of management and leadership were derived from mutual constructs in several sources: the literature, the AACC Leadership Competencies, and presidential evaluations, including various institutional samples as well as shared criteria from both the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Questions explored

leaders' management of the presidency, including the executive team structure, areas of operations that are delegated, how the community college story is conveyed to external constituents, how often and in what ways they communicate with board members, how they achieve buy-in for a strategic vision, and how they have addressed the challenging fiscal environment.

Questions concerning the common management dimensions also sought to provide a balance between expected "internal" and "external" capacities. To uncover whether or not presidents managed the presidency differently based on their backgrounds, it was necessary to focus on common responsibilities as well as to probe management areas where one cohort might have an advantage over the other because of previous experience. Moreover, the questions on management of the presidency simultaneously sought to uncover a president's sensitivity to the environment on both an institutional and a greater sector-level view and any correlations to role perception. For example, presidents were asked to respond to questions about core leadership and management competencies not only in terms of current approaches but also how they believed performance expectations have changed and whether they envisioned changes in the future.

The remaining set of questions centered on advancement activities specifically, including expectations for their involvement with fundraising at hiring, whether such expectations have changed, and the college culture around philanthropy. Advancement has been offered as the rationale behind hiring DevPres, so it was important to have a comparison of such expectations and execution by AAPres to scrutinize the connection between backgrounds and perceptions of and approaches to the external aspect of the role. These questions helped to uncover not only how that responsibility is led and managed by the president but how the president perceives that

aspect of the role. Following the theoretical framework of a proactive or reactive approach to the environment, the questions also sought to uncover the presidents' understanding of philanthropy and any predisposition for responding to the increasing expectations for fundraising by community college presidents related to their backgrounds.

Although not all questions were asked or asked the same way in each interview, all interviews contained questions from the three broad areas—background, management competencies, and advancement. All interviews began with the broad question about the leader's pathway to the presidency and concluded by asking presidents if there was anything else about their background or the presidency not yet discussed that they thought was relevant to the study.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The presidents were promised that their identities would be carefully guarded. Not only did this fulfill IRB requirements, even though this study was rendered “exempt” from review, but the assurance of confidentiality encouraged presidents to speak freely about themselves, their institutions, and their governing boards. In several cases when answering a question, presidents explicitly said that they were only sharing the information because they had been assured confidentiality.

Given the limited population pool of the DevPres, disclosing characteristics of individuals would make it harder to preserve their anonymity. Even among AAPres, who are far more numerous in general, revealing precise geographic information about their institutions would make their identities more open to discovery. For these reasons, and because the focus of this research is on the *role of the president* rather than the specific individuals or their

institutions, the presidents in this study will be presented and discussed in terms of the two broad groups, or cohorts, as DevPres and AAPres.

The four tables below (Tables 2–5) provide contextual information about these two cohorts. The top chart provides personal information about the presidents, one chart for each cohort: gender; age range (following AACC ranges); number of presidencies held; tenure in years of the current presidency; and whether the president is from the area or is a community college graduate. The DevPres table also charts whether the president had teaching experience or held an academic affairs post; the AAPres table charts whether the president had grantwriting or community college development experience prior to the presidency. The tables on the institutions represented by the presidents (one for each cohort) provide information on the presidents' colleges: number of students; number of employees; year the college was founded; the region of location; the number of governing board trustees and whether they are elected or appointed; the college budget; the year the foundation was established; the number of foundation trustees; and the foundation assets.

Some of this information was gleaned through the interviews, and some was found through document analysis, in this case researching information on the institutional websites. The documents targeted for analysis were presidential bios/CVs; institutional history, including anything about the president's hiring; an organizational chart; an annual report; a foundation report; and a strategic plan. Materials were not available in every case, and in the interviews the presidents often explained why; for example, many institutions have moved away from publishing a traditional strategic plan and not all such materials are made public.

Table 2. Academic Presidents (AAPres) Background Information

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Presidency	Tenure/ Years*	From Area	CC Grad	Prior Grantwriting Experience**	Prior DEV Experience**
Frank	F	60-64	1st	9 yrs.	Yes, state	No	No	No
Jenkins	M	40-44	1st	5 yrs.	No	Yes	No	No
Olsen	M	55-59	1st	9 yrs.	Yes, state	No	No	No
Walsh	F	65-69	2nd	7 yrs.	Yes, region	No	No	No
Hurst	M	55-59	2nd	1 yr.	Yes, state	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duncan	F	60-64	1st	8 yrs.	Yes, state	No	No	No
Perry	M	65-70	1st	12 yrs.	No	No	Yes	No
Wooten	F	60-64	3rd	1 yr.	Yes, state	Yes	No	Yes
Unser	F	60-64	2nd	7 yrs.	Yes, region	No	Yes	Yes

*At time of interview
**Prior to first presidency

Table 3. AAPres' Institutional Information

Pseudonym	# Students	# Fac/ Staff	Year Founded	Locale: AACC Region	Trustees: Elected (E)/ Appointed (App)	Budget (\$Mil)	Foundation (Found) Est.	# Found. Trustees	Found. Assets (\$Mil)
Frank	5K-10K	500- 1000	1989	III-Central	9 E	\$ 41	1993	30	\$25.0
Jenkins	5K-10K	500- 1000	1946	VI-NE	9 App.; gov. & county	\$ 50	1966	18	\$ 3.6
Olsen	10K-20K	250- 500	1970	IV-MidW	9 App.; county	\$ 50	1976	22	\$ 1.5
Walsh	20K<	1000<	1912	IV-MidW	9 App.; county	\$145	1973	24	\$ 8.0
Hurst	<5K	250- 500	1919	III-Central	6 E	\$ 15	1968	28	\$ 6.5
Duncan	<5K	250- 500	1968	IV-MidW	8 App.; gov.	\$ 6	1989	22	\$ 3.5
Perry	10K-20K	500- 1000	1961	IV-MidW	7 E	\$ 72	1966	20	\$10.7
Wooten	20K<	500- 1000	1965	IV-MidW	7 E	\$100	1985	24	\$12.0
Unser	10K-20K	500- 1000	1961	IV-MidW	9 E	\$ 66	1978	21	\$14.0

Table 4. Development Presidents (DevPres) Background Information

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Presidency	Tenure/ Years*	From Area	CC Grad	Prior Teaching Experience**	Prior AA Role**
Glidden	M	60-64	1st	7 yrs	Yes, region	No	No	No
Siegel	M	60-64	3rd	2 yrs	Yes, region	No	Yes	Yes
Croft	F	60-64	1st	11 yrs	No	No	Yes	No
Baker	M	65-69	1st	4 yrs	Yes, state	No	Yes	Yes
Ross	F	60-64	2nd	2 yrs	No	No	Yes	Yes
King	M	50-54	1st	5 yrs	Yes, state	No	Yes	Yes
Dabundo	F	60-64	1st	6 yrs	Yes, state	Yes	Yes	No
Bettendorff	F	55-59	2nd	2+ yrs	No	No	Yes	No
Daniel	F	60-64	2nd	8 yrs	Yes, state	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paulson	F	50-54	1st	12 yrs	Yes, region	No	Yes	Yes

*At time of interview

**Prior to first presidency

Table 5. DevPres' Institutional Information

Pseudonym	# Studen ts	# Fac/ Staff	Year Founded	Locale: AACC Region	Trustees: Elected (E)/ Appointed (App)	Budget (\$Mil)	Foundation (Found) Est.	# Found. Trustees	Found. Assets (\$Mil)
Glidden	<5K	<250	1968	VI-NE	23 App.; gov.	\$8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Siegel	5K- 10K	1000<	2007	I-NW	5 E	\$43	2010	22	\$17.0
Croft	<5K	250-500	1966	III-Central	6 E	\$39	1981	22	\$ 9.0
Baker	<5K	<250	1967	V-SE	12 App.; gov. and county	\$19	2012	37	\$16.0
Ross	<5K	250-500	1967	VI-NE	10 App.; gov.	\$20	1984	35	\$ 3.0
King	<5K	<250	1985	III-Central	7 E	\$15	1984	28	\$ 4.4
Dabundo	10K- 20K	500- 1000	1963	VI-NE	11 (9 App., 2 E); county	\$12	1985	17	\$ 1.5
Bettendorff	5K- 10K	500- 1000	1963	V-SE	13 App.; gov.	\$37	1983	16	\$ 6.5
Daniel	10K- 20K	500- 1000	1967	V-SE	9 App.; gov.	\$63	1975	25	\$33.0
Paulson	10K- 20K	500- 1000	1964	VI-NE	15 App.; county	\$31	1983	18	\$ 6.0

As preparation for the interviews, the researcher reviewed institutional websites to learn more about the presidents, their tenures, their teams, and their colleges, in keeping with suggestions by Yin (2011) for using documents to complement interviews. The information was also charted and compared after the interviews to help assess the cohorts both individually and comparatively. This assessment began by charting basic demographic information.

As the tables show, the study has slightly more women in both cohorts and in the sample as a whole than the CEO [a term ACE uses interchangeably with president] average of 33% women, according to the American Council on Education (ACE, 2012). While 87% of all community college CEOs are white, according to ACE (2012), 18 of the 19 study participants are white. All of the presidents in the sample have a doctorate, while the CEO average is 81% (ACE, 2012). It also appears the study sample is slightly older than average, both by cohort and as a whole, when comparing to data of the AACC:

- 1% of CEOs are under 40 (0 in sample)
- 3% are 40-44 (1 AAPres)
- 7% are 45-49 (0)
- 22% are 50-42 (2 Dev Pres)
- 37% are 55-59 (2 AAPres and 1 DevPres)
- 25% are 60-64 (4 AAPres and 6 DevPres)
- 7% are over 65 (2 AAPres and 1 DevPres)

According to ACE (2012), the average CEO tenure is seven years. Of the presidents in the sample with a lesser tenure, most had more recently begun a second or third presidency but had enjoyed long tenures in a previous role. The sample thus validates findings from ACE (2012) that a significant number of current presidents (23%) held a presidency immediately prior.

The study sample, to reiterate, was chosen based on prior position alone, not on demographics. Thus, this demographic information is presented only to demonstrate that the

participants represent a range of qualities that do not diverge notably from general statistics on community college CEOs.

Because the study compares two cohorts, the researcher began to chart other elements emerging from the interviews in an attempt to make sense of and visualize the data. Graphically representing the participants' backgrounds by cohorts was particularly helpful with making the connection between the depth of academic experience in DevPres and the lack of development experience in AAPres, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. As that chapter will also detail, data regarding institutional contexts at the time of hiring were examined to determine whether presidential background and experience had played a role in the president's hiring. Thus, institutional characteristics for the cohorts are also presented. Chapter 6 explores board relations, both governing boards and foundation boards, and it should be noted that the institutions represent a variety in their governance and foundation structures.

Because of the conceptual framework on strategic change and partnerships, it was also prudent to assess elements that might play a role in building connections, such as whether a president was from the area or had graduated from a community college. Although not charted, as a whole, the presidents had spent the majority of their careers almost entirely in community colleges. The few exceptions will be noted in Chapter 5.

Again, the study focus is on the presidential role itself, not the individuals in the role or the institution behind them. In the end, neither demographic nor institutional characteristics were factored into the study findings. The charts are presented to illustrate that the cohorts do contain varied qualities within and between them, even as the findings will demonstrate that the cohorts often showed remarkable unity as cohorts and, in important ways, emerged as a unified sample.

It was originally assumed that document analysis would play a bigger role in the study and that written materials would form a kind of check against perceptual findings. Because data analysis was concurrent with data collection, it quickly became evident that institutional characteristics were not relevant. The management of the role itself, as defined by core responsibilities, prevailed despite the type of institution. Delving into further analysis of materials would derail the research focus to comparing institutions rather than comparing cohorts. As the findings will illustrate, the presidents showed remarkable unity in talking as a “cohort,” in sharing similar experiences and opinions within their groups, as well as demonstrating continuity between cohorts, particularly around the management of key presidential duties.

DATA ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Data analysis actually began during the data collection process (Merriam, 2009). Analysis of the data followed an iterative process (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). The researcher hand-analyzed the data. Hand-analysis of qualitative data is manageable in studies with less than 500 pages of transcripts and preferable because it provides a “hands-on feel” for the data (Creswell, 2005).

The researcher first read the transcripts several times and also reviewed the contact summary sheets with the transcripts. These summary sheets and interview notes proved useful in helping to develop themes for each president individually, and also useful for helping to develop a sense of themes within and across the cohorts.

The transcript texts were then divided into segments. Although the interviews varied in the exact questions asked, they did follow a similar sequence of broad types of questions. The

data were approached from this natural organization, which highlighted unusual or unexpected responses. These text segments were then labeled with codes. The researcher employed a provisional “start list” of codes as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest by considering the conceptual framework, research question, and contextual understanding based on prior experience. Although the coding certainly went well beyond this list, these central areas helped in refining the coding into themes. Because of the comprehensive nature of the interview questions and the tendency for the presidents to talk on interesting but sometimes tangential material, the resulting data covered a wide range of topics. To help narrow the codes, the researcher sought to reduce the overlap and redundancy of the codes by focusing on answering the research question (Merriam, 2009).

Finally, these codes were collapsed into themes. Theme development is essentially about finding an answer to the research question and a thorough understanding of the phenomenon or concept being studied. The themes were then overlaid to offer two broad perspectives (Creswell, 2005).

Memos written throughout the entire process also followed this same progression of winnowing the data. The memos initially provided a venue for asking many questions (Eisenhardt, 1989), and then became a way to document early impressions of the data. Documenting the process helped to distinguish data ultimately relevant to the question at hand from those which were merely interesting, and finally provided a way to recognize possible themes.

In addition, the researcher was also visualizing the data. As Miles and Huberman (1994) explain, creating and using displays is not a separate process from analysis but rather part of it. As previously noted, such analysis yielded key insights. Creswell (2005) suggests creating

comparison tables or demographic tables to present the data. Tables 2 through 5 represent a combination of both types.

Visual devices were also used to present the empirical evidence. The findings chapters each contain a table that summarizes the key theoretical constructs, as such tables complement “the selective story descriptions of the text” and signalize rigor and depth of the empirical analysis (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 29).

ISSUES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

The standard of evaluation in qualitative research centers around trustworthiness, or how well the researcher has provided evidence that the analysis accurately represents the reality of the situation and population studied. Credibility parallels the quantitative concept of validity and assesses whether the researcher has adequately represented the participants’ perceptions (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). Similar to reliability, dependability is determined by the ability to track a researcher’s processes and procedures for collecting and analyzing data (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). Several strategies exist for promoting credibility and dependability, and Creswell (2005) suggests using at least two in a study. The researcher actually employed several strategies.

One strategy is to strive for “maximum variation” in the study sample by striving for a sample selection with enough variation or diversity so that the findings may have a greater range of application by consumers of the research (Merriam, 2009). As the demographic tables show, the presidents widely vary in their personal characteristics as well as their institutional characteristics, with broad ranges in sizes, structures, and locations of the colleges.

Another strategy is “adequate engagement in data collection.” Merriam (2009) advocates spending enough time collecting data so that the data become “saturated,” that it appears no new information is being found. Because data were being analyzed even while being collected, it was clear by the final interviews that an appropriate point of saturation had been reached.

Triangulation, which is the process of corroborating data from different people, types of data, or methods of data, is a common strategy for achieving trustworthiness (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). As explained above, the process of reviewing websites and documentation provided a means of triangulation. In addition, the qualified individuals contacted as part of the pilot study and external auditing reinforced the triangulation process.

Consulting with members is another important trustworthiness strategy (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). The researcher verified the accuracy of findings by having four presidents (two from each cohort) who participated in the study review them for accuracy. Their feedback also provided confidence in sharing findings with a presidential audience.

Along these lines, consultation with an external auditor (an expert outside of the study) provided further credibility for the findings and the study as a whole. As Creswell (2005) describes this role, the auditor reviews the project and provides a verbal or written evaluation ideally both during and at the conclusion of a study. A seasoned higher education expert, the external auditor used for this study is a former community college president who serves on accreditation committees, conducts program evaluations, and consults with higher education institutions. As recommended, the external auditor was consulted throughout the course of study.

An initial consultation about the study itself and the proposed interview questions began the auditing process. Subsequent outlines and chapters were then also reviewed.

In addition to the external auditor, the researcher used an extensive peer debriefing process, as recommended by Barber & Walczak (2009): “Multiple debriefers may be helpful during coding and analysis to bolster the theory created through the interpretation of the research” (p. 8). Often, a peer debriefer is used for just one aspect of the data analysis. For example, Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) suggest employing “inter-rater reliability” by having a colleague review a researcher’s codes to be sure the coding is appropriate and relevant to the research questions, or by having a colleague do actual coding of transcripts that the researcher also codes, and comparing and discussing similarities and differences in the researcher’s coding. Both these steps were employed for this study.

In fact, the researcher used peer debriefers for three different aspects of data analysis. First, three different peer debriefers read sets of four to six transcripts and then wrote up their analysis of initial impressions, ideas, and common themes—a process suggested for the initial coding stage (Creswell, 2003). A different peer debriefer was also asked to code one of the longest interviews in the AAPres cohort to test for bias toward development as well as to compare codes. Two other peer debriefers with broad organizational studies experience, including familiarity with higher education and nonprofits, reviewed the coding schema and validated the themes.

Additionally, discrepancies in the findings were acknowledged (Yin, 2011) and multiple perspectives and tensions and contradictions in individual experiences were reported (Creswell, 2005). Although there is remarkable unity within the cohorts, exceptions are noted.

Finally, the researcher is disclosing personal biases, as discussed below, so as to help develop authenticity.

THE RESEARCHER AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As Yin (2011) explains, the conversational nature of qualitative interviewing presents an opportunity for “two-way interactions, in which a participant even may query the researcher” (p. 134). This was the case in the majority of the interviews. During at least one point in most interviews, such as when the conversation first began and presidents wanted context established, or at the conclusion when the presidents often asked about the interviewer’s career aspirations, the researcher could not separate personal interest and biases from this study. Indeed, the researcher was at times a part of the interviews. In acknowledging the researcher’s own development background, which the presidents knew of from the introductory email even if personal interests had not yet been part of the conversation, the presidents would sometimes make comments such as, “well, you know about this” or “I don’t need to explain this to you.”

In fact, as disclosed to the presidents if asked, the researcher’s interest in this study is motivated by personal interest and aspirations. After reading about the upcoming turnover in the community college presidency in particular, and in observing the two-year system’s seeming openness to hiring advancement professionals, the researcher decided to return to graduate school and obtain a doctorate as positioning for a future presidency. While pursuing the doctorate, the researcher has become more open to other career possibilities. The researcher still hopes a college presidency is in the future but now envisions that as being a capstone to a career devoted to the study of higher education philanthropy in the intervening years.

After having spent more than a decade in advancement positions, marketing communications and then development roles, the researcher feels strongly about the importance of fundraising and that it should be recognized and valued within the academy. While development professionals can carry on many fundraising activities, it is essential to have the active support and involvement of the institution's president, especially with donors at the highest levels. Although the researcher has taught at the community college level and feels strongly about the community college mission, the researcher's advancement positions were held only at four-year institutions. Thus, while the researcher's knowledge of fundraising is strong in general, an understanding of fundraising's unique context in two-year institutions is not informed by firsthand experience.

Even so, the researcher must acknowledge a bias for the importance of development and for viewing it as a strategic activity beyond just securing funds. The researcher also feels it is essential for college presidents not only to work well with their development staff but to also be involved firsthand in the fundraising process.

Because the presidents knew of the researcher's experience and it was stated explicitly in the interview request, the researcher believes that this early connection helped to establish a rapport and the confidence of presidents to disclose confidential and potentially inflammatory or damaging information. The presentation of the data, however, reflects an ethical commitment: the presidents were promised confidentiality and their anonymity was preserved by using pseudonyms for their names and institutions in the charts contained in this chapter. In subsequent chapters, they are referred to as members of a cohort only, as previously outlined.

LIMITATIONS

This section outlines the perhaps inherent limitations of the study's methods. The final chapter addresses the larger limitations of the study itself, such as selection effects and the impact on resulting data. Acknowledging the researcher's personal bias toward respecting and advancing the development profession represents one of the key limitations of this study. A background in development allowed the researcher to understand and gain access to participants, but it was also necessary to intentionally seek to overcome this bias through the steps taken above involving peer debriefers and external experts throughout the research process.

A related limitation is the phenomenon referred to by Maxwell (1996) as participant reactivity. Because participants were informed during their recruitment of the researcher's background in development, they could assume a loyalty to the profession of development. Participants were also recruited through connections to the researcher's dissertation chair and another well-respected colleague in the pilot interviews. As a result, participant responses may have been influenced or affected. Because of either their mutual desire to advance the development profession or to please a colleague, participants might have sought to offer the responses they perceived the researcher was seeking or that might be helpful to the researcher. It is also possible that, because of personal connections, participants might have been guarded and potentially less forthcoming in their responses. To address potential participant reactivity, the researcher consciously sought to focus or redirect the interview away from personal or relational conversation. Prior experience as an interviewer, as well as prior related research experience, was helpful in this regard.

Self-selection by the presidents is also a limitation of the study. As previously noted, community college development offices are small in staff. One manager might comprise the

office with administrative support. Development positions in community colleges pay less than comparable university positions, according to both CASE and CRD, and anecdotally, there does not seem to be crossover from a two-year to a four-year institution. For development officers who choose to work in a community college, likely because of their commitment to the sector, the only path for career advancement beyond development is the presidency. Although the information was not known at the initial selection, the study DevPres all turned out to hold doctorates, compared to the sector average of 81%. Pursuit of an advanced degree might indicate intentional positioning for the presidency, but such speculation is beyond the scope of this dissertation to answer. However, given the lack of career advancement, rather than deducing that development itself is a pipeline to the presidency, it does seem reasonable to conclude that the DevPres might have self-selected onto a presidential pathway by attaining academic credentials and experience.

To some extent, however, a similar rationale of self-selection could be applied to the AAPres. Although the pipeline appears to be changing, for many years the provost position has been the traditional pathway to the presidency. Although the pathway does not force ascension to the presidency, it does facilitate that process should the provost so desire. By assuming that role, a provost could be considered to have taken into account that position as the traditional career trajectory to the presidency—a self-selection as well.

This final limitation of self-selection underscores the importance of the environmental forces and context to the study. Pathways were not examined in isolation. While self-selection is perhaps a factor in the study population, assessing for the impact of other forces on the presidency helps to mitigate self-selection as the determining effect. As the conceptual model

illustrated, motivations for seeking the presidency and perceptions of the role constitute other key factors, which will be examined in the study.

SUMMARY

This qualitative research study explored the management of community college presidents who have a previous background in development (a term used synonymously with fundraising) with a comparison cohort of presidents coming from the traditional academic affairs pipeline. Specifically, this study sought to answer a central research question: *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?* Nineteen presidents in total were interviewed to investigate their experiences prior to the presidency, as well as their execution of core presidential responsibilities, including advancement.

The following two chapters will present the findings from those interviews. Chapter 5 focuses on the pathway to the presidency, while Chapter 6 concentrates on the management of the presidency. Each chapter concludes with its own discussion of the findings. The overall implications of the findings from both chapters are summarized in Chapter 7, along with recommendations for research and practice.

CHAPTER 5—Pathways to the Presidency

In context of the environmental forces and conditions that indicate changing competencies for community college leaders (Ashford, 2012; Boggs, 2003; Duree, 2008; Eddy, 2010; Fisher & Koch, 2004; Redden, 2007) and the attractiveness of candidates with external skills (Budd, 2012; Chitwood & Jones, 2007; Hassan, Dellow, & Jackson, 2010; Masterson, 2010; McNair, Duree & Ebbers, 2011; Pierce, 2012; Pulley, 2012; Starace, 2012), presidents' characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds were examined to determine their impact on perceptions of the presidential role. This chapter focuses on the presidents' backgrounds leading up to their first presidency as well as the institutional culture at the time of their hiring. Several leaders are now in their second or third presidency, but pathway examination focused on the initial presidential hire.

As detailed in the methods section, Development Presidents (DevPres) are defined as those who have formerly held a formal position with responsibility for development in a community college. Academic Affairs Presidents (AAPres) have advanced to the presidency through traditional academic routes. Development is usually referred to as a non-academic or administrative unit and represents a small but growing pathway in comparison to the majority pathway through academic affairs. The researcher sought to compare both the academic and fundraising experiences of the cohorts and to examine how they viewed and balanced these responsibilities to answer the research question, *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?* The findings in

this chapter will illustrate that the cohorts are not as distinctive in their backgrounds or in their perceptions of the presidency as previous positions alone might imply, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1 (repeated). Expected Internal and External Orientations by Background

INTERNAL/ACADEMIC ORIENTATION	EXTERNAL/FUNDRAISING ORIENTATION
Primary concern is campus	Primary concern is beyond campus
Dealings primarily with internal constituents, such as faculty	Dealings primarily with external constituents, such as donors
Focus is on all matters academic: curriculum, faculty, students, classroom space, etc.	Focus is on all matters to support academics: funding, buildings, scholarships, etc.
Limited exposure to volunteers/boards	Extensive exposure to volunteers/boards
Thinks in terms of the college	Thinks in terms of partnerships
Academic skills required	Interpersonal skills required
Ability to relate to faculty	Ability to relate to community leaders
Teaching experience presumed	Teaching experience not presumed
Might not be expected to represent college in community	Expected to represent college in community

Since the literature claims today’s presidents need a comprehensive skill set (Eddy, 2010; Hassan et al., 2010; McNair, Duree & Ebbers, 2011; Starace, 2012), the interviews were structured to gain an understanding of how the presidents broadly considered “internal” and “external” responsibilities and whether they connected these areas, as the table above illustrates. The presidents were asked to explain in detail their specific prior roles, responsibilities and paths. They were also queried about the institution’s culture and history at the time of their hiring as president, from the leaders’ perspectives and understanding of why they were hired, so as to ascertain whether institutional needs might differentiate the type of leader hired.

This chapter will present the results of those interviews largely in that order. These findings can be summarized as follows:

—EVERY EXPERIENCE MATTERS:

Leaders believe they benefit from a broad and varied range of experiences prior to the presidency.

—THE PATHWAY HELPS TO PICTURE THE PRESIDENCY:

Leaders considered the presidency because of their comprehensive attributes, not just previous positions.

—THE PRESIDENCY REQUIRES A HOLISTIC VIEW:

Presidents believe they need both “internal” (academic) and “external” (fundraising) experience.

—THE PRESIDENCY EVOLVES:

Presidents address challenges from the college culture at their hiring by drawing upon their backgrounds and viewing the presidency as a changing role.

Although there is variance within the sub-findings that factor into each of these themes, as the chapter will present in detail, each of these four findings collectively represent *nearly all* the presidents interviewed. Findings for both cohorts will be discussed, sometimes in direct comparison and also by providing more detail about themes specific to one particular group when appropriate. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the agreement among the findings, and why the cohorts’ backgrounds and perspectives are not as different as might be expected.

**EVERY EXPERIENCE MATTERS:
Leaders Believe They Benefit from a Broad and Varied Range of Experiences
Prior to the Presidency**

Although this study is about specific background experiences in academia or fundraising that presidents have, this section also covers the many non-traditional experiences and skill sets that the presidents interviewed said had helped them. The findings indicate all of the presidents interviewed are active learners (Eddy, 2010) who perceive that they gained valuable skills and insights from a wide range of experiences, many of which might not be included on a curriculum vitae. In a striking area of almost complete agreement between the cohorts, the majority agreed that community college presidents benefit from a broad and varied range of experiences prior to

taking on the top posts. The following chart (Chart 1) summarizes the sub-findings that will then be discussed in detail.

Chart 1. Every Experience Matters

Key Finding (Representing a few responses each, unless noted)	Representative Quote (Different president in each example)
Misleading Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I was really the vice president of miscellany out there—no rhyme or reason as to why what reported to me. –DevPres ▶ An opportunity came up to become the chief academic officer at another community college...I said, “Does the president know that I’ve never taught in the classroom?” –AAPres
A Broadened Focus by Circumstance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I would never say no to anyone who offered me something in terms of doing something different or having new responsibilities or taking on additional responsibilities for the college. –DevPres ▶ My background is in academic affairs, but I did have one boss who threw me into everything so it was very useful, as painful as it could be. –AAPres
Seeking Responsibility or Challenge (more than half in each cohort)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The president and the board of trustees determined that a foundation was needed...I still remember going to the president and saying, I will help you if you want me to. –DevPres ▶ For one thing, I just took advantage of every opportunity. When they needed a volunteer for something, I did it. –AAPres
DevPres’ Connections to Academic Paths (nearly all)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ So this whole issue of transformation and this belief in yourself that is the power of the community college mission as I experienced it as a community college student cemented my belief in where I was going to focus the rest of my career. –DevPres
Atypical Backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I started as a paraprofessional on a grant, which I like to say is the lowest life form on the campus. –DevPres ▶ So my career path professionally was pretty traditional, but the non-traditional for me was the external [officiating]—that’s what got me prepared for dealing with real life. –AAPres
<p><i>Leaders believe they benefit from a broad and varied range of experiences prior to the presidency.</i></p>	

If this study had been conducted through a survey, with a listing of previous roles by common titles, or if assumptions had been made about what the presidents had done in their roles

strictly by looking at positions on their curriculum vitae, it would likely have led to incorrect conclusions about the nature of the experience the presidents actually gained in their previous roles. By asking presidents to describe their backgrounds in detail along with key experiences that they draw upon in their presidency now, it became clear that presidents in both cohorts often functioned very differently in their roles than one might assume. They sometimes were hired into positions without the typical background necessary for that role and they often did much more than the title itself implied. They also continue to draw upon characteristics and experiences beyond previous roles, including their academic paths and atypical backgrounds.

To unpack backgrounds, it was necessary to explore more specifically what the presidents had had responsibility for and experienced in their prior positions. This leads to the study's first finding: leaders believe every experience matters because presidents benefit from a broad and varied range of experiences prior to the presidency.

Misleading Titles

Usually when a person holds a position at a high level, such as a vice presidency, one can assume that previous positions in that same area prepared the person for that role. The interviews revealed that is not always the case. For example, a president had been hired as a chief academic officer, despite no teaching experience. Although that is unusual, it fit the institution's needs for that position. Thus, a typical role and title was assumed by an atypical hire. Another president had been previously hired as a vice president for advancement, despite not having any previous background in that area other than some grantwriting. That situation is also unusual, and it was a risky hire, but the person's extensive experience in other areas of the community college positioned her for taking on the challenge.

In addition to not being able to assume a person has the prior experience for a role, it was also the case that a title did not fully encompass nor explain all the duties a person actually performed in a position. For example, one DevPres' previous vice presidency had morphed into a broad role from what was originally to be a dean's position, both because of her skills and success in meeting new challenges and the institution's needs:

I was really the vice president of miscellany out there—no rhyme or reason as to why what reported to me. I had advancement, I had marketing, I had institutional research—that was the planning and communication piece—but I eventually also had the entire information technology shop and enrollment services. Then I took on the administrative leadership for a new campus—a workforce development oriented campus where I was able to do soup to nuts with the president to raise the money to build it, found the real estate, helped with all the design specs of buildings, did all the curriculum development, did all the job descriptions for everybody that was hired to staff the center. So that was really a career planning opportunity for me.

The broad and disconnected areas of responsibility met the demands of the college and elevated the vice president's career.

Just as some presidents had previously been hired into roles without having the prior experience usually necessary to assume the position (though clearly they had the capacity to perform, as they succeeded in those roles and continued to advance in leadership), sometimes presidents in their prior roles were asked to take on more than the role itself would usually entail.

A Broadened Focus by Circumstance

As the previous example about a morphing role also illustrates, sometimes the interviewees' former presidential supervisors gave their executive team members additional responsibilities. As an AAPres described:

My background is in academic affairs but I did have one boss in my prior life who threw me into everything, so it was very useful, as painful as it could be, so that you are dealing with staff. If you come up the academic line you typically don't know how support staff work, the banding piece of it. So that was actually a very fortunate thing. But it was

amazing—it depends on the president and the organization, what the president encourages or allows the VPs to do.

This president found the additional responsibilities to be useful, but another AAPres found herself being taken advantage of, as increasingly more was asked of her as a president's executive assistant.

I was his executive assistant, and he was tired of working...he would take me on trips and I had to go to all the meetings, and I had to report on all the meetings. He needed a speech, I would write the speech. He didn't want to go to something, I would go to it. At first, I was very angry, and then I realized that the experience he was giving me was unbelievable...I'd deal with the board too for him sometimes...I used to be angry because I worked all the time. I would be on TV because no one else was around to do those, but the worst part was they'd come back [the president and other VPs], and then they'd second-guess everything I did. But, great training. Great training.

Although not ideal, and the AAPres did elaborate on the gender dynamics of the situation, the AAPres still views the broad exposure brought about by unique circumstances as central to her own presidential preparation.

In small organizations, it was especially the case that positions tended to have extensive responsibilities. For example, one AAPres credits being one of two vice presidents with helping him to learn and gain necessary skills “because you've got to have a handle on everything in the organization: how it works and the finances and it gave me a good background in technology.”

In hindsight, these presidents can look back on expansive positions as providing them with skills they could then build upon for the presidency. In other cases, presidents intentionally had taken on more expansive responsibilities for the chance to grow and learn.

Seeking Responsibility or Challenge

In some cases presidents in their previous positions looked for new opportunities or asked for additional responsibilities so that they could gain new skills and knowledge. As a DevPres explained about her career path, “I really loved problem solving, and the challenges and learning something new.”

Sometimes presidents were open to whatever possibility presented itself. As an AAPres shared: “For one thing, I just took advantage of every opportunity. When they needed a volunteer for something, I did it.” A DevPres actually gained experience beyond grantwriting that positioned him for further advancement by volunteering his efforts:

The college was about to enter a capital campaign, and I found that very interesting. There was no relationship at that time between the grants area, which reported up through academic affairs, and the college foundation. I volunteered with the foundation and that’s where I began to learn development work.

This president was not alone in finding that volunteering could provide leadership training. An AAPres offered the example of serving as a faculty union president as an important leadership training experience. Being willing to take on challenges can translate to career progress, as another AAPres explained, “The first college that I worked at was a rather large institution, so I had a lot of different opportunities to get different experiences and additional responsibilities.”

Beyond being open to opportunities, some presidents had also been very intentional about experiences they wanted to gain. For example, one DevPres had worked outside of higher education to broaden her perspective:

I did a brief period of time out of higher ed, and I worked in economic development. And when I made the decision to do that, it was a very calculated decision in that I thought, you know if we only see ourselves through our own eyes, we’re not likely to solve some of the challenges that we’re addressing in higher ed. So I thought it would be good, especially at a community college, where we’re working so closely with economic and

workforce development, to understand what their needs were. So for a brief period of time, I worked in economic development so that I could get that perspective.

The president intentionally chose external experience to enhance her community college leadership.

Another DevPres found new perspectives within higher education by being intentional about working for very different community colleges as she gained leadership experience.

I look back on it and I am very pleased with my choice of colleges where I worked. They had different mission emphases that helped me understand the differences of community colleges which I think is important—that they were in three different states so that I could understand state structure and context. I would not have done that differently.

The president had been very deliberate about her career path and training.

When asked to reflect on their own backgrounds, the presidents in both cohorts stressed that they drew upon all their previous experiences—well beyond a stint as a chief academic officer or as a chief development officer—in their role as president. They emphasized the need for a broad level of experience and knowledge. As one AAPres contended, “It’s important to have experience, but it’s more important to have the right experience. I know some administrators that have 40 years of experience, but it’s kind of like one year, forty times over.”

A seasoned AAPres maintained her vast and varied experience had led her to where she is now and urged that other presidents also need a far-ranging background, particularly “that broad perspective on the importance of every employee at our colleges and the difference that they make and how they help our students and our community.”

Two DevPres who came to the community college in teaching roles originally after time in the private sector believed this experience was also relevant. One shared that “I have found that every experience that I’ve had has become relevant at some point in this role whether it is

dealing with attorneys on contractual matters, and the years I spent running my own business.”

The other DevPres reflected:

And I think one of the real keys of my first presidency was that I came to the table with academic, professional technical teaching experience, fundraising experience in the development office and corporate life, had the ten years of corporate life as well. So that was, I think, a huge career advantage in terms of being selected as president of a small rural community college that was in need of strong vision and financial stability.

The presidents positioned all past experiences as essential preparation.

An AAPres who also had previous experience outside of higher education before coming to the community college as a faculty member maintained there are core areas of knowledge and experience that presidents must have:

I think you need to gain experience with some board relationships, fundraising, definitely the curriculum, and facilities. I think a campus president needs to have a very keen understanding of facilities, deferred maintenance and things that go along with that. And if you have a college with athletics and housing you better understand that. So, there's about eight dimensions, I would think, and just find people that are good at those areas and learn from them.

What is especially interesting about this AAPres' comment is that he advocated gaining experience by learning from others, and he answered many questions about skills he had gained by referencing mentors and others he had learned from along the way.

He was not alone in emphasizing learning, and another AAPres even cited her liberal arts background continually as a way she approached unfamiliar areas of the presidency for her, such as fundraising: “You know people kind of scoff at that these days, but in terms of whether you are talking to donors—if you have a broad intellectual background you can talk about many things, so I think that has served me well.”

Learning and knowledge also became part of the interviews in another way. The questions about background leading up to the presidency were broad and did not ask specifically about educational experiences, but the DevPres shared their academic paths without prompting.

DevPres' Connections to Academic Paths

The AAPres as a whole have rather traditional academic backgrounds. That knowledge comes from researching their biographies prior to the interviews, for AAPres never referenced their educational paths when asked to discuss their backgrounds and paths to the presidency. By contrast, nearly all of the DevPres responded to the same question about their backgrounds and presidential paths by also including information about their academic paths. This finding represents one of the biggest divergences between the cohorts.

With only a couple exceptions, DevPres have less traditional academic paths than their AAPres peers. One DevPres started discussing his background, for example, by highlighting that he was the first in his family to graduate from college. Notably, being a first-generation college student is a trait shared by many community college students.

The DevPres shared other examples of ways they themselves identified with community college students because of their academic experiences. A DevPres explained:

I like to tell people that I never graduated from a community college, but I've got community college written all over me. What I mean by that is I didn't go to college until I was 26 years old. I did go to a community college, took a few courses, and it was a community college faculty member who explained to me how a guy at 26 could go to college, that there was a thing called financial aid. My parents had not gone to college; my dad was a janitor, mom was a bookkeeper. I found that I was a really good student. I really did well in a college environment. I went to graduate school because I was motivated to be a student. I worked for a couple of years and went to graduate school. I had met my wife at that point and, you know, I felt place-bound, like many of our community college students are...

Another DevPres had a similar experience: “I was a very late bloomer. I raised my children, sent them to college, and then I decided okay, I need to complete a job that I didn’t complete a lot of years ago.”

Two of the DevPres were themselves graduates of community colleges. One spoke of the lasting impact even after she moved onto and graduated from a university. “I never forgot my roots in the community college. So when I saw the opportunity to go to a community college [to work], I grabbed it and loved every minute of it.” The other community college graduate formed an even deeper attachment to community colleges:

I should tell you that I am also dyslexic so for me coming through grade school it was undiagnosed and so I was not the valedictorian of my high school graduating class. One of the reasons when I went to the state university to become a teacher, I majored in preschool education—early childhood education—because I felt the little kids wouldn’t know how dumb I was. So this whole issue of transformation and this belief in yourself that is the power of the community college mission as I experienced it as a community college student cemented my belief in where I was going to focus the rest of my career.

The president wanted to work toward transforming others as she herself had been transformed.

The AAPres cohort also has some community college graduates, but this fact is only known through research into their biographies. They did not cite this experience when discussing their own backgrounds and paths to the presidency.

For several of the DevPres, it was not only the undergraduate experience but also the graduate one that was more non-traditional. In these cases, the graduate experience shares qualities and characteristics with the typical community college population—even if the DevPres’ undergraduate degree had been traditional. For example, a DevPres shared:

I wanted an MBA—got that and decided I would not go back to school again as long as I was raising my sons. I would get up at three or four in the morning study then take care of the children, get them off to pre-school then kindergarten then first grade. Now it is very, very challenging. At the same time my husband was starting a business in [a

different city]. So juggling all these things. And all the while really working hard at the college...

Similarly, another DevPres explicitly made the connection with her non-traditional educational experiences and the community college:

I guess if I could do it over again, I wish I would have taken a more academic pathway for myself personally. I was a first generation college student... Then I had to go school at night to get my masters in business administration and went in kind of a part-time cohort through my doctoral program. So if I had it do to over again, I wish I could have studied full-time on my masters degree. I wish I could have done more of the study abroad opportunities. I didn't have those opportunities. And I don't know if I would have been better prepared or not—maybe I wouldn't have been. Maybe the fact that I had to kind of pull myself up and go through it is why I value community colleges.

The presidents did not discuss their doctoral training even though they all hold doctorates. While not the focus of this study, it is interesting that doctoral training was not referenced in terms of usefulness on the pathway to the presidency. It could be that the doctorate is not an essential but more of a preferential credential at the community college level.

Although the DevPres have more nontraditional educational backgrounds than the AAPres, leaders in both the cohorts have what could be deemed more unusual characteristics or elements in their career paths.

Atypical Backgrounds

Although some departed from intended vocations, as the next section on the decision to pursue the presidency will illustrate, most did have a career path. Still, the lack of one did not hold back one AAPres: “But to be honest I didn't really have a career path in mind. I just loved to learn and was a very curious person and quite frankly a liberal arts background has served me really well.”

Another AAPres with a successful experience in the traditional academic affairs trajectory surprisingly cited his experience outside of higher education, and an unusual one at that, as the best preparation for the presidency:

I will say the preparation for me though, was probably outside the classroom. I got into officiating...so I had a lot of leadership opportunities...and I think, for me, looking back and just reflecting back, that prepared me more than any classroom activity that I had in college.

Strickland: Dealing with the parents and stuff?

Yeah, I did high school and then I did college. So, absolutely. Players, coaches, parents...That's simultaneous to when I was teaching, so my career path professionally was pretty traditional, but the non-traditional for me was the external—that's what got me prepared for dealing with real life.

The practical experience prevailed over the traditional academic preparation.

This perhaps surprising answer about backgrounds serves as a reminder that paths, academic or career, do not necessarily predict one's ultimate position or success. Both cohorts have examples of leaders with long and successful careers and tenures as community college presidents who had rather inauspicious beginnings. One DevPres explained, "I started as a paraprofessional on a grant, which I like to say is the lowest life form on the campus." Another DevPres started this way as well, and two of the AAPres began as adjunct faculty.

In summary, presidents from both cohorts conveyed that all experiences matter and that they consider a broad base of knowledge and skills necessary for the presidency. They draw upon all their previous positions, even those outside of higher education, in the presidency. Even so, some experiences are essential to the presidency, and the groups explained ways to gain essential skills. The DevPres discussed their academic paths, which entail direct experience with community colleges or similar challenges to those faced by many community college students. Some presidents shared atypical experiences in their backgrounds, including starting in very low positions.

Especially given these atypical paths, to fully understand the backgrounds of the cohorts leading up to the presidency, it was important to explore not only what the presidents did before assuming that role, as the previous section has done, but also to explore how the leaders came to perceive the presidency as a role they wanted to attain in the first place.

**THE PATHWAY HELPS TO PICTURE THE PRESIDENCY:
Leaders Considered the Presidency Because of Their Comprehensive Attributes,
Not Just Previous Positions**

Just as backgrounds are multi-faceted so, too, are the reasons why the presidents assumed the position. The next section will present five factors, some of which corroborate Eddy's (2010) research on presidential leadership. The following chart (Chart 2) summarizes the finding's components.

Chart 2. The Pathway Helps To Picture the Presidency

Key Finding (Representing a few responses in Each cohort, unless noted)	Representative Quote (Different president in each example)
Commitment to Community Colleges (Several DevPres; 1 AAPres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I had a specific goal. I wanted to be a president of a community college. I was very taken with the mission of community colleges. I myself was a non-traditional student. –DevPres ▶ I had already decided that I loved the community college environment, that I probably wanted to be a president. –AAPres
Presidency or Else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Having worked for two presidents at the same institution, I reached the end of what I could do, so I had the presidency left. And so I needed to make a decision whether I would just keep what I was doing or take the next step. –DevPres ▶ I looked at the next job and I have done this every time. And, I said, I'd like to be part of the decision-making process and then the other part of it was I thought, I can do that job better. –AAPres
Aspired to Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ At that point in the 70s, I thought I want to go through instruction and ultimately become a president. I thought I had the necessary skills to do that. –DevPres ▶ Even when I was in the public schools, I wanted to be superintendent. –AAPres
Presidential Push/Mentorship (Nearly all in both cohorts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ I had one [president] that set the aspiration; one that made me realize it was a possibility; and the other who put me on the right path and set me free to do it. –DevPres ▶ [The president] gave me the opportunity to be department chair, get some training, and then really mentored me and helped me move up. –AAPres
Family Considerations (ALL DevPres; 1/3 of AAPres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ My spouse and I had committed to stay in one community and raise our family so both of those careers were in the same community. –DevPres ▶ I didn't come here to make my mark and bounce. I came here to raise a family. –AAPres
<p><i>Leaders considered the presidency because of their comprehensive attributes, not just previous positions.</i></p>	

Together these factors illustrate the next theme: leaders perceive the presidency as a role they want to attain not because of previous positions but because of the comprehensive nature of their characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds. Before comparing how the cohorts manage the presidency in the next findings chapter, this discovery helps explain how presidents come to perceive the presidential role itself, which in turn determines their management of it.

Commitment to Community Colleges

As they had earlier in discussing their backgrounds, several DevPres when asked why they became president, responded by first framing their motives in the context of advancing the community college mission. Nearly all the AAPres also spent their careers in community colleges, but only one talked about seeking the presidency for that reason: “By that time, I had already decided that I loved the community college environment, that I probably wanted to be a president.”

The DevPres spoke of the mission and their intentional leadership as connected. For them, the two are intertwined in their professional aspirations:

So I started into the community college and became captivated by the mission because it combined the focus on business with education, which I’ve always been—I am a complete believer and always have been in the fact that education transforms lives. So it combined education, business and the community. I have always been very involved in the community, so those three things came together very well for me personally.

Advancing personally is advancing the college. Other DevPres echoed this connection. One explained: “I wanted to be a president of a community college. I was very taken with the mission of community colleges. I myself was a non-traditional student.” Another shared: “By then I was hooked on the mission of the community college and the impact of the work that we do. So I was by then convinced it was a worthy mission and something I really wanted to try to advance.” Notice the explicit connection to mission, which was again offered by several DevPres but cited by only one AAPres as a reason for pursuing the presidency.

Aside from the difference in citing the commitment to mission as a motive behind pursuing the presidency, the cohorts are otherwise very similar in all but the final one of the following reasons for pursuing the presidency. Each of the reasons will be detailed next.

Presidency Or Else

The presidents spoke of reaching a point in the college hierarchy where they could only effect change by gaining the power of the presidency. One DevPres explains that being in the VP role “did something interesting to me in the sense that I started feeling like I had all the crap and none of the authority. There were things that I just wanted to try to do that I wasn’t going to be able to do unless I was sitting in that office.”

An AAPres echoed hitting the hierarchical wall and wanting more authority, in addition to acknowledging a personal timeline:

I was in my fifties and thought, well, if I am going to be a college president it is probably now or never. The president was not inclined to leave at all, and she is still there as a matter of fact. I gave myself, oh, let me try this for a couple of years. My job was not at stake so I wasn’t really worried about losing my job, but I just thought, well, it may be time to explore and see what is out there. And, I said, I’d like to be part of the decision making process and then the other part of it was I thought, I could do that job as well as or often better than it has been done before, so I guess I am a little bit competitive. So part of it would have been the ego—could I do it?

As a vice president working closely with a president, it became natural to evaluate a president’s performance.

Comparing oneself to other presidents became very personal for a DevPres who had unsuccessfully sought the presidency in the college where she had previously worked:

The interesting thing is that once you have been a finalist for the presidency and you have had a chance to envision where you would take a college, it is very hard to see someone take it in another direction. I came to a firm conclusion that in order for me to continue to grow and emphasize what I thought was vision for a community college, I would need to leave.

She successfully secured a presidency at another institution. Similarly, another AAPres decided to take the presidency at his same institution, even though he had not otherwise been interested after a lengthy career as a vice president, because he did not want to work for a different leader.

Because the relationship between [my predecessor and me as VP] was very good... It's when he left I thought I'm not going to do this for another person, because the other person is going to come in and want to manage [me] and so I've either gotta be the president or I've got to move on.

He did successfully pursue the presidency, never regretting that decision, despite not aspiring to the presidency otherwise.

Although these examples illustrate presidents essentially seeking the presidency as the only option left for them, as Eddy (2010) also found, others were much more intentional about seeking the presidency, often because they had always aspired to the highest leadership positions in any setting.

Aspired to Leadership

The most extreme example of a president seeking the post with intention is an AAPres who survived a potentially fatal situation. She had been unsuccessful in securing a presidency when she became very sick with what was thought to be cancer "...and as I was going into surgery, I had had other friends say, well, see all this trying to be a president and all that, that's not important. Here you are you now with this major illness. And I remember thinking to myself on the gurney, 'Oh shit, I might die, and I really wanted to run a school.'" That profound realization helped her after healing to approach the presidential search with vigor and she soon secured her first presidency.

For others, aspiring to the highest leadership position was something they had always done, which is not surprising given their success in advancing through the community college system to vice presidential posts, either in development or academic affairs. To position themselves for the top post, they spoke of intentionally gaining the skills and experience

necessary to round out their backgrounds, which “was certainly not by accident. It was developed and then it was strategy,” as one AAPres explains.

That strategy can also include actively seeking a mentor to help with positioning for a presidency. For nearly all of the presidents in both cohorts, it was a mentor who first introduced the idea of pursuing a presidency and actively pushed them to seek the highest office.

Presidential Push/Mentorship

The importance of mentors is well established in the literature (Eddy, 2010; Nohria & Khurana, 2010). With only two exceptions in either cohort, the study presidents all corroborated the importance of mentorship to the presidency. A president can groom another president by setting an example, as a DevPres conveyed:

I knew very early that was what I wanted to do. Probably because when I got my very first job I had a very inspirational president. I’m not saying he was good, but he was inspirational and I thought he was having the most fun. He certainly had the most creativity and the most ability to try new things and that is what I wanted to do.

Even well into a second presidency, the DevPres can pinpoint the impact of a president’s example in setting her own career path.

A president can also mentor another president by providing opportunities and experiences to position the mentee for the role. A DevPres traced her career to such mentorship:

My president at the time saw that I enjoyed the engagement, enjoyed the camaraderie, and he provided me opportunities to advance pretty quickly. He retired and my dean at the time who hired me became the president. And I watched him and finally went into his office and said I want to do what you do and he said stick with me. And every four years he put me in a different aspect of the college that better prepared me, whether it be provost of a campus, the foundation as executive director for some fundraising background, or he put personnel under me so I had a human relations background. Quite honestly, when I left after 16 years at [XCC] to go to [YCC] as a president, I was fully prepared for those responsibilities. Now the other aspect of a presidency is certainly reaching out to the community and creating a culture within one’s institution. But as far

as the job skills and a competency set, I was very comfortable exiting [XCC] and moving on to [YCC] for my first presidency.

The DevPres enjoyed a positive experience in her first presidency because of the direct experience, exposure, and preparation the mentoring president had provided.

Another DevPres also experienced the direct career guidance of a mentoring president.

The DevPres explained:

And [the president] urged me from almost the time I began working for him that I should consider that [role] as an option. And to be frank he helped me make that decision by putting me in a different role. If you notice on the progression from when I went from a dean to a vice president—what happened there was that he simply did some restructuring and moved all of the student services and some other ancillary units under me.

This president indicated that the decision was nearly made for him. Others also noted that presidents they worked for had to do more than suggest. These presidential mentors had to convince the now sitting presidents to set their sights higher. An AAPres who learned to know her president socially shared how “he saw in me early on that I had potential beyond, you know, being an instructor, and I wasn’t quite sure. I had a six-month old child, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do.” Presidential mentors, even at early career stages, proved influential in careers.

A DevPres had different mentors who played the various roles outlined above, collectively positioning her for the presidency. As she eloquently explained:

Well, I think the possibility of being a president was my first mentor at [XCC]. He saw something in me that I didn’t see...He said you could be a community college president if you want to be one. So he said it—I guess he set my aspirations. My second mentor was at [YCC]. So I had the aspiration when I went there—she gave me so much opportunity to run forward with the strategic planning processes that I think that is when I realized I can be a community college president. She helped me—when we realized I could be one. The third mentor was at [ZCC]...she certainly laid out the career map while I was at [ZCC] to make sure that I built some degree of confidence in just about every functional area you can think of. She laid the ground work for my skill development to be a president. Then she was actually the person who, when it was time said, “It’s time.” So

I had one who set the aspiration, one who made me realize it was a possibility, and the other who put me on the right path and set me free to do it.

Notice that mentorship can take several forms, and other presidents also cited having benefitted from more than one mentor.

The presidents did not cite the role of mentors only in initially seeking the presidency. They also professed the importance of sustaining that relationship and that they continue to seek their mentor's counsel and advice, even years into their own presidencies. An AAPres provided an example:

One of the things I always talk to aspiring presidents or vice presidents about is how important it is if you have somebody that has been instrumental in your career and has been a good mentor, that it's important for you to continue to build the relationship. Rather than, if I had just lost contact with [former president] over the years, he would not have called me, you know, six years later and said "I want you to consider applying for my VP position"...and he was actually the one that found out about my [current presidential] position. And still, even today, he's somebody that I talk to two or three times a year, if there's a challenge or something I'm struggling with. So, just having that relationship with him and mentoring from him was, you know, was very, very valuable.

Like this AAPres, other presidents from both cohorts expressed that they now actively counsel and mentor other aspiring presidents. The presidents in the study truly recognized the importance of mentors. As another AAPres urged, "I don't believe anyone is self-made, so you know that's a responsibility we all have too, bringing along the people that want to be brought along."

The DevPres, in particular, had been impacted by other former fundraisers. In addition to a couple DevPres who had been mentored by other presidents who had come from the development pipeline, others mentioned having been inspired by the ascension to the presidency of development colleagues in the Council for Resource Development (CRD) and the usage of the association's educational resources and network. The year before his presidency began, one DevPres witnessed "a very close friend who was also a vice president of development and a long

time CRD member ascended to a college presidency. And actually I'd seen that happen a couple of times through CRD...and knowing that, feeling that it was an ideal skill set and beginning to watch people do it, along with the rise and importance of development in our colleges, I decided I could be competitive at this, first of all."

Beyond mentors, other people can factor into seeking a presidency—or not. Family considerations also emerged in the interviews.

Family Considerations

Whereas mentors played a role in the lives of presidents in both cohorts, the role family played in taking on a presidency—at least as it was willingly shared—represents a big divergence between the cohorts. All 10 DevPres framed their backgrounds in the context of family—either their parents' influence or their roles as spouses and parents and how that impacted their career choices. Only three of nine AAPres brought up family at all.

The difference in responses is especially significant when considering that presidents were never asked specifically about their families. The DevPres all offered this information and divulged in detail. Some DevPres, for example, shared how they stayed in an institution or an area because of a spouse's job or so that their children could be raised with stability. Other DevPres chose to be president in an area with family ties for them, or they postponed taking on a demanding role or making a major move until their children were out of the house. The three academics who did cite family included a woman who chose to be in the same state as her aging parents; a woman whose career decisions often revolved around her husband's career (and who also suggested another dissertation topic might be understanding women presidents and the role

of the spouse); and a man with children at home who wants to stay in the same area until they are grown.

In summary, viewing the presidency as a role one wants to attain results from more than previous positions held. The comprehensive attributes of leaders factor into their decision to become a president. For DevPres, the ability to advance the mission was a primary factor in seeking the presidency. Both cohorts also experienced reaching a leadership threshold where the presidency was the next step, and aspiring to top leadership posts was a trait both cohorts shared. They also indicated the important role a president played in mentoring them for a presidency, by pushing them forward or positioning them to gain the necessary skills and confidence to advance. For the DevPres, family considerations also played a prominent role in whether and when they chose to seek the presidency. The leaders' characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds not only factor into their positive perception of the presidency as a role they wanted to attain. They continue to affect how the presidents regard their role.

**THE PRESIDENCY REQUIRES A HOLISTIC VIEW:
Presidents Believe They Need Both “Internal” (Academic) and
“External” (Fundraising) Experience**

This finding makes more explicit connections between the leaders' backgrounds and their view of “internal” and “external” preparation and responsibilities, as outlined in the introduction to this chapter. The following chart (Chart 3) summarizes the sub-findings that indicate presidents value both experiences and believe the presidency requires combined experience.

Chart 3. The Presidency Requires a Holistic View

Key Finding (All representing more than half of both cohorts, except for the first DevPres only finding)	Representative Quote (Different president in each example)
DevPres consider teaching experience important for non-traditional candidates (6/10).	<p>► I think it is real important to have some experience teaching. It's generally a requirement on most presidential searches and that's real hard to overcome if you don't. –DevPres</p>
Academic experience does not fully prepare for the presidency.	<p>► I have a new vice president for academic affairs who has been at this institution for 14 years...her biggest adjustment has been working with the board and working with me in synch. –DevPres</p> <p>► I felt like I knew everything I needed to know because the department is where the rubber meets the road. And [the president] said there is another part of the college you have no idea about, and so he was right. –AAPres</p>
Backgrounds determined how fundraising experience was gained.	<p>► I was one of the few people who would go to CASE, but I realized that while I was hearing the university stories, what we do as community colleges is that same thing they do, we just do it on a smaller level. –DevPres</p> <p>► The college was not awash in cash, so I did a lot of grantwriting...a way of raising dollars for things that you wanted to do that were move-ahead activities. –AAPres</p>
Backgrounds influenced how fundraising is regarded as a presidential responsibility.	<p>► Fundraising really is, for me, being passionate about the colleges that I work with, and the students that I work for, and sharing opportunities for others to join the students in the campaign on behalf of student in higher education. –DevPres</p> <p>► I did some workshops for presidents, and I'm telling you, there's just not a lot of knowledge about fundraising or even understanding that that is such a big part of their role. –AAPres</p>
The presidency is perceived to require a balance between internal and external action.	<p>► A good president knows how to make those decisions on the fly: when to focus internally and when to focus externally and they are equally demanding and important. Because the college has to be focused on meeting local needs, but we are still a higher ed institution and if our internal stakeholders are not functioning at the highest effectiveness and efficiency and aren't happy, then we can't fulfill our external mission. –DevPres</p> <p>► My time needs to be spent on developing and facilitating the strategy for the college, and then being in the community cultivating and securing funding outside of the state and county...I have to go back and communicate more about what I'm doing and why I'm not as visible on campus as when I first arrived. I need to do more of that. –AAPres</p>
<p><i>Presidents believe they need both "internal" (academic) and "external" (fundraising) experience.</i></p>	

Presidents were asked to explain in detail their specific prior roles, responsibilities and paths. They were then asked what aspects of their prior experiences they most draw upon in their presidency and the skills and knowledge they found to be essential for the role.

DevPres Consider Teaching Experience Important

Both cohorts believe that “internal” traditional academic experience, even just teaching on a part-time basis, is essential background for the presidency. Because the AAPres know academic affairs is the expected pathway to the presidency and all but one possessed extensive teaching experience, they did not discuss classroom experience as extensively as the DevPres. The DevPres explicitly discussed the need for teaching experience, and several AAPres affirmed it was important for DevPres to gain an understanding of the academic enterprise in some way.

The Dev Pres described their teaching experience as important for gaining an understanding of the faculty perspective. All but one DevPres had taught at some point, and six DevPres had held full-time academic affairs positions at some point in their careers. For the DevPres, teaching is an important preparation for the presidency. As one former adjunct explains, “It [teaching] added very much to my knowledge, my experience in higher ed, because teaching as an adjunct, as you know, it is a totally different perspective.” Another DevPres alludes to the academic credibility teaching brings: “So if you’re going to spend your career on the development side of the house, to be able to teach a course or two, I think that rounds out the resume and is an important piece of it.”

Even though the DevPres felt teaching is important, they also wondered whether the academic perspective could be gained in other ways. One DevPres explained that a colleague had once encouraged her to take a full-time faculty position as preparation for a presidency. While

she does not regret following the administrative path instead, she wondered:

Sometimes I think, boy, that would have been interesting had I done that. Would that have benefited me? Because I don't have the perspective on the ground in the faculty departments where I know there is a lot of opportunity for me to have a better context. But I have enough committee experience, I think, in leading committees, so I understand the faculty context pretty well.

Other DevPres agreed with her view that the faculty perspective could be gained in other ways.

DevPres also pointed out that teaching experience or lack thereof should be viewed as only one factor in gaining essential skills for the presidency. A DevPres illustrated:

Many people say that presidents who are not full-time faculty members or don't come out of the faculty ranks have a difficult time leading faculty. And for me, I don't know whether I lead them well, but I feel like I have a genuine and deep appreciation for what they are trying to accomplish. But I have a skill set that I wouldn't have had had I spent those [many] years in the classroom. So there is kind of that trade off.

As this president indicates, the DevPres acknowledged a common perception that teaching is essential for gaining credibility with faculty. The DevPres had clearly spent time pondering this perspective, as most of them brought up their opinions without prompting. One DevPres reasoned, "Would I still be a good community college president if I had never taught? I think I would, although maybe I can empathize a little better with the faculty."

Because the DevPres discussed their teaching experiences in context of their backgrounds before the presidency, the only DevPres who did not have teaching experience was directly asked in the interview if this emerged as a factor during his presidential pursuit. Among the DevPres, he also had the most years of development experience and had spent a considerable career in community colleges before seeking the highest post. He was thus able to successfully position his background as academic:

And that's the way I approached the search committee, was that in our grant and development work we certainly work with faculty, we build programs along with the

faculty, we seek resources to develop academic programs, we build laboratories. We are tightly allied with the academic operation. And then, of course, I had through my history had many faculty that would support that and did so for me. I went to other faculty, 'cause you know faculty will network with each other about a president, and I guess I passed muster. But that is, yes, that is a relationship to the academic side. And grants for much of my career, grants were tied to academic affairs.

This DevPres did not feel it was necessary to gain formal teaching experience before the presidency.

By contrast, two of the DevPres with the most teaching experience, both of whom had held full-time academic positions in their careers, still try to teach as presidents because "It keeps you grounded in what the business is and what we're doing." It can also blunt faculty concern.

The other explained that teaching provides a different perspective:

I also teach. I try to get involved in the more intellectual stuff, but I really like the advancement part. I love meeting people. I complain that I have to give up my evenings and weekends but then I come back like, Oh, I had the best time meeting so and so.

As this president's comments illustrate, the classroom provides a more structured and inwardly focused experience than development work does. Perhaps arguably less cerebral, development work is not devoid of intellect, an appraisal in keeping with the literature (Burk, 2003; Payton & Moody, 2008; Peet, Walsh, Sober & Rawak, 2010).

The AAPres themselves agree with the limitations of the faculty perspective. As one AAPres explained:

The skill set that you have might serve you as a classroom faculty member—some of that transfers to each level of job—but some of it does not. And if you are not really comfortable talking to people and figuring them out and having fun with them, you are probably not going to be raising money.

This AAPres, in other words, contrasts the internal experience of the classroom with the external demands of the presidency.

Even being a department chair does not ensure having a comprehensive experience, as one AAPres found when taking on a president's assistant role after being in the top faculty administrative position. Although she initially felt she already knew "everything I needed to know" after serving as a department chair, the president who wanted to hire her as an executive assistant explained, "there is another part of the college you have no idea about, and so he was right." Notice that an academic leadership role did not provide a comprehensive view of college administration.

In fact, even the top academic position—entitled a vice president for academic affairs, chief academic officer, or provost role—is itself very different from being president, maintain presidents from both cohorts who had been in that role.

Academic Experience Does Not Fully Prepare for the Presidency

Although both AAPres and DevPres agreed that teaching is an important, if not essential, academic experience for presidents, they also maintained that the highest academic post that one can hold—the vice president for academic affairs position (and comparable titles previously noted)—is very different from the presidential role. It should be underscored that this was a shared view, for both cohorts had experience at the highest levels of academic affairs. Half of the DevPres had held an academic affairs post in the past, including the provost position. Like their AAPres peers, the DevPres saw the limitations of the provost role in preparing for the presidency.

One DevPres explained that board interaction represents one of the biggest differences between a vice presidency and a presidency: "When you are the president and you are working with the board it is a much different perspective than the vice president working with the board.

It kind of hits you right in the face when you become the president.” This president expounded further:

I have a new vice president for academic affairs [VPAA] who has been at this institution for fourteen years but she has moved—she was a faculty member, she was a dean then she was an associate vice president and now she is a vice president. She is a good example of our succession plan. But she has not in that leadership development that we do in-house had any real contact with the board. That has been her biggest adjustment: working with the board and kind of working with me in synch.

Despite a considerable career at the college, the VPAA is struggling with board relations.

Even more than the board interaction is the comprehensive nature of the presidency, maintained another DevPres:

Being a president is not being a vice president with a few more things to do. It is a very, very different role. For one thing I have also been a president now twice at very small colleges and that means that you do everything. Things come across your desk and people expect you to at least offer an opinion if not to make a decision on things that some presidents would never see. And you have to be a big picture person—you are not the academic person anymore, you are not the advancement person—you are everything. And it is a very, very different role.

The president must be able to move beyond a natural affiliation with a former area of responsibility and view the college comprehensively.

The level of responsibility is perhaps the biggest differentiation in the roles of provost versus president. Vice presidents can take comfort, if needed, in knowing that the president is ultimately responsible. Corroborating the previous point of the DevPres above, another DevPres offered, “When I was acting president [during a president’s illness], it was like, well, I always had the president to lean on. I didn’t worry about anything. I worry a lot now.”

Indeed, the public responsibilities—the external aspects of the role—represent one of the biggest challenge for new presidents in general. Both cohorts shared this view of the intense responsibility represented by the comprehensive and very public nature of the presidency, as

summarized by an AAPres:

There's a big difference between being the president and even as a provost, you're second to the president. There's a huge difference in operating an entire college and worrying about everything. You know, it's your community. A community college is so significant to the quality of life of the people you serve. So, your role is all-encompassing, you no longer have a slice of the pie. And you're responsible to a lot of people. As a provost, I was responsible to the president. I was responsible to, of course, my associate provost and the deans and the students, but not like this. It was like, now I'm responsible to a whole community. And legislators, state and federal legislators, colleagues across the nation. I mean, it doesn't matter. People of foreign countries. I mean, you are now the face of a college. And that's what's probably the biggest difference, I would say.

As another AAPres explained, it is the challenges of working with boards, the community, and with the foundation and fundraising “that you, frankly, are not going to have much experience within a number two position.”

The presidents could articulate the differences between the provost and presidential roles and separate them clearly as exposing different facets of the college. As an AAPres admitted, “The academics area's pretty, pretty easy to delegate. You can ask them questions about some strategic elements that can be incorporated in and don't have to be planned.” A DevPres explained the delineation of roles at the highest level:

When I went through the Future Leaders Academy, one of the things they said was the toughest for potential and first time presidents to convey or learn is how to get used to not working in a silo, when you're used to being an academic affairs person, or an enrollment management person, and when you are president you have to cut across all those. When you are in development you have to cut across all areas too. So the issue of breaking down silos, I think the community college development office is absolutely incredible training ground for the presidency. But we have to convince the world that it doesn't always have to be the academic side of the house...The thing I keep saying to people is, Why do you need two academic vice presidents? If you have a good one, why do you need the president to be one too?

The president and provost have deliberate distinctions in purpose, as the DevPres indicated.

In addition to the roles being different, the provost might not always have exposure to what the president is doing or even access to the CEO. One DevPres shared the reason behind an unusual structure of having satellite campus provosts report directly to the president rather than the provost on the main campus:

I was a provost and I did not like not being able to have the president's ear. And I vowed to myself that if I was ever a president, the provosts would report to me. So that doesn't mean maintenance and all those other issues come to me. I ask them to work through the VPs. But if they've got an issue or idea, I want them to have my ear.

Again, it was not just the AAPres differentiating the roles. Half of the DevPres had been in a leading academic affairs role, including the provost position, and they also saw the limitations of the role in preparing for the presidency.

Both cohorts agreed the academic, or "internal" preparation has limits for preparing for the presidency, whereas "external," particularly fundraising experience, is important for functioning in the presidency. How those skills and knowledge are gained, however, differs according to previous roles.

Backgrounds Determined How Fundraising Experience Was Gained

When asked how they learned about fundraising or gained fundraising experience, the presidents widely differed in their responses, exposing one of the biggest differences between the cohorts. As a whole, the AAPres did not have previous fundraising experience—they had to learn those skills in the presidency. Of those who did have fundraising experience, three had raised funds in prior roles as department chairs of new or struggling programs. When pressed for further explanation, one admitted that the experience was confined to grantwriting. The other two also depended on grantwriting but had to raise support from various sources. Their comfort

in fundraising because of previous experience—even though it was out of necessity and not through their choosing, necessarily—extended to their involvement with fundraising in the presidency. They are now two of the AAPres overseeing more sophisticated and successful fundraising operations as presidents, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Another AAPres had been given oversight of advancement after success in public fundraising, securing millage support.

Two other AAPres attempted to gain fundraising experience specifically to position them for a presidency. In their previous roles as top academic officers, they deliberately went on a few “asks” or solicitations for gifts to gain experience. Even so, the experience was limited because the ask amount or purpose was rather small, in their view, or they did not make the actual ask for a gift—the president did.

Learning fundraising from a president is the way another AAPres gained an understanding of fundraising, though not firsthand experience. He sought the active mentorship of a retired president who lived in his region to gain a comfort with fundraising principles and operations and even visited with the previous president’s development office still in place to educate himself.

Nearly all of the presidents from both cohorts also intentionally sought fundraising training when they assumed a presidency and spoke highly of the Council for Resource Development (CRD). Even so, the presidents often recognized their limitations in development.

As previously stated, the provost position does not usually provide exposure to fundraising, and as this president explained, external activities can be to a president’s liking or play to a president’s strengths. Another AA Pres believes that some natural ability or inclination encourages external success:

I do think the president has to be primary sales person and that if you have a president who is not comfortable, gregarious, I guess, social and, you know—I am an extrovert—so I get crowds and I get excited... Still I am sure I could have more training, but I do think your natural—if you are an extrovert and you enjoy people, you will do a lot better. Even if you have all the training in the world and you are not comfortable with people, it's probably not going to be a very good fit.

Indeed, the AAPres all talked about *comfort* or lack thereof in fundraising, even as they acknowledge that fundraising is a skill that can be learned. Several AAPres even felt positive about their external activities, saying things like.

And frankly, it turned out, I had not done any fundraising myself, but it turns out I'm very good at it and I like it. The external part of what I do, at any given time, occupies about 70-80% of my time. I enjoy that, that's what I enjoy.

Comfort with fundraising goes beyond natural inclination, though, as the presidents agreed. It is still a learned skill. "I don't think that's some innate skill I have. It's acquired," one AAPres maintained.

Some AAPres find the external work particularly challenging, though. For one, it is the interaction with the wealthy and powerful. Said an AAPres, "When approaching other people, presidents and owners of companies, sometimes for me that has been a little intimidating." Another AAPres acknowledged that he probably should be more involved in advancement, but he did not see that occurring because of his discomfort. He explained, "It's just that I am not very good at it. You ask somebody for money and they say, 'Well, I can't help you.' I say. 'Oh, okay.'"

Although DevPres feel more comfortable with raising money, it should be recognized that they did not all begin in development, nor did they all seek a development position intentionally. Their backgrounds widely varied, from faculty roles, to student affairs roles, to

aspects of advancement that did not initially involve fundraising, such as marketing or grantwriting.

At some point, however, as this DevPres illustrates, they came to understand the importance of fundraising to furthering the mission of the college:

I began to really understand the link of internal operations to the perception by the community, the dependence on the community to accept and embrace what we do as an institution. To get me to do the foundation, [the president] said to me, I want you to do exactly what you've been doing with recruitment of students, but at the end of the speech instead of saying send me your son or your daughter to [XCC], it was, We'd like for you to support us. And it was really kind of an "aha moment" and I thought, wow, what more could I do than to bridge both helping kids to be successful and also bringing the community to us for support. Now I watched him and I realized that's really a combination of what a presidency includes.

Although backgrounds before their development roles varied, the DevPres were united in eventually holding a development position that was very high-level and comprehensive. They were responsible for all aspects of advancement, including grants, and most had been the initial creators of fundraising operations for the college, including designing or building up a foundation and its board of directors and working with these key volunteers. They managed staff and often handled sizeable budgets. A DevPres illustrated:

So I eventually shifted from the administrative services side of the equation to the academic affairs side of the equation in terms of grant writing, which that over time began to involve into strategic planning also and a number of other professional development and planning. If it was in development, my name was on it—facility development, student development, program development—anything innovation driven that needed funding, knowing full well that most community colleges didn't have additional resources to do great things.

These great needs for the college could also be great opportunities for people who were willing to try new challenges and to embrace fundraising. This is exemplified by the career of another DevPres who advanced quickly:

I grew from admissions into the marketing office and became essentially director of marketing then that position expanded to include a new foundation that the college created...And I was on the ground floor of identifying the first trustees and writing the bylaws and getting all of the incorporation papers. I was a part of the first annual campaign. It was combined with public grants, so I was writing grants, balancing that with marketing. Then very quickly was at the right place at the right time on a number of critical projects with the president who kind of took me under his wing.

The comprehensive nature of development roles is the very reason DevPres justified their prime positioning for ascending to the presidency, as suggested by this comment:

I think almost every element of what I had done in terms of the development side of my experience—from understanding how to cost out things, to building teams, to strategizing, to engaging in problem identification and measuring the outcomes of initiatives—I can't think of anything from my development background per se that did not prepare me for the presidency. Even the government relations, the corporate relations, all the various elements that you need to engage in as president—those were all in play.

This same president also speaks of the development officer's role in a community college much more eloquently and philosophically:

I had come to the realization that the work that development offices were doing, or in community colleges in particular where restricted revenue was generated to shape innovation and change at the institution—development officers were probably functioning as change agents...They were the catalysts that poked and prodded the institution to change either in response to an RFP or people would come to the development office seeking resources to the relevant innovation and change. So they would serve as catalysts, they would serve as relationship builders on the campus to try and bring disparate groups on the campus together for building comprehensive planning and initiatives that would change the way the campus operated.

Seeking resources is positioned as a means of strategic change. This DevPres believes she continues to act as a change agent in the presidency.

Indeed, the leaders' backgrounds—whether in development or in academic affairs—did factor into their perceptions of fundraising as a presidential responsibility.

Backgrounds Influenced How Fundraising Is Regarded As a Presidential Responsibility

Another DevPres with one of the strongest academic backgrounds asserts that she draws upon all her previous roles and experiences, but that her position in advancement has been essential to the presidency: “I do think that the advancement piece of it is so much of what I do now—so much of what I did in [previous presidency]. So I do think that in the end if I hadn’t had that piece, I would have been more lost.”

Whether they intentionally took on the development role or were cajoled into it by a president, the DevPres view development as a way to impact the entire campus and to further the college mission. Even though DevPres maintained that the development role and its comprehensive nature, in contrast to the more circumscribed role in academic affairs, positioned them well for the presidency, the DevPres also did not want to be defined as fundraisers. They saw themselves much more broadly.

I never did see myself as a fundraiser, and yet probably, well, 20 years before I got the presidency, I had been in resource development, or in more common terms, a fundraiser. But it really is, for me, being passionate about the colleges that I work with, and the students that I work for, and sharing opportunities for others to join the students in the campaign on behalf of students in higher education...I’m very much committed to finding the recourses necessary so that institutions of higher education can be the very best that they can be, and now more than ever the need is tremendous.

The DevPres might not have all avoided being termed a fundraiser, but they all positioned development experience as much more comprehensive than just raising money, validating such claims in the literature (Burk, 2003; Payton et al., 1991; Worth, 2002). Again, it is the opportunity to effect change that was particularly appealing to the DevPres. It is the reason they were development officers and why they believe those experiences prepared them well for the presidency. As one DevPres offered:

What made me want to pursue a presidency was I found as a Vice President of Institutional Advancement that the sum total of my experience as a grants officer, the skill set of pulling together groups of people, working with groups of people, internal to the college and external, around coming up with a project, introducing a funding opportunity, I became aware early on that resource development really was organization development...I understood the connection between writing grants and the organizational development process. That continued with the work in the donor development side. And then eventually, I took on as the Vice President of Institutional Advancement, I took on the role of strategic planning for the college, and also the role of public relations and marketing, and government relations. When you think about what grant developers do, in terms of working with constituencies and then you think about foundations or private development, what donor development people do, in terms of working with external constituencies, I said, What better positioning? We really do have an ideal skill set to ascend to a general leadership position.

Securing resources is a way to develop and enhance the organization, and this entails partnering with external constituents.

Because these skills do entail leadership, a couple of AAPres admitted to seeking advancement experience to position for a presidency. The DevPres with the most traditional academic background conceded that she had had figured taking an advancement position would help with seeking a presidency, but she argued her interest went beyond that:

To be perfectly honest, other than grantwriting I did not have any advancement experience—but the vice president left and I asked if I could do it...I think because I always liked a new challenge. I did know I wanted to be president and I thought that would be great preparation. I thought it was a very creative field, a lot of sharing that went on, and it just really interested me.

The AAPres seemed to view fundraising and advancement activities in more concrete, or black and white terms. They were either comfortable with asking for money or not. They gained fundraising experience, they explained, by going on “an ask.” The DevPres viewed fundraising as more than just seeking funds. They explained it as being organizational development, acting as change agents, furthering the mission, or being creative.

DevPres insisted development is great positioning for the presidency, as did most of the AAPres. They, too, believe coming through the development side is a viable pathway to the presidency, as will be presented in the next chapter.

Even though it is preparation for the presidency, several of the DevPres insisted development is not why they were hired or what they were hired to do. As one explained:

I didn't come here, I would say, for development. I didn't come here for that to be a major part of my job, and it ended up not being because of finance. So I would say my understanding of managing a foundation budget that has over 10 million dollars, managing that budget was helpful to me in my budget experience with the whole college.

The president after several years is just now turning attention to fundraising. The DevPres' comprehensive backgrounds allowed them to be hired for more than fundraising, as another DevPres explained:

That wasn't really why the board hired me. They really had no expectations for I think I'd call it resource development and they were very traditional, very traditional. In fact there was very little public grants development and a very passive foundation, and no attention to auxiliary enterprises that could be profitable. It was a very traditional approach.

For several years, this president found resistance among the trustees to any move toward fundraising.

While the AAPres as a whole had little fundraising experience prior to the presidency, currently, more of the AAPres are much more actively involved in fundraising as presidents or even heading campaigns, as compared to their DevPres peers. So, DevPres were not necessarily hired because of or to do fundraising, and AAPres did not have much prior experience in development, but found themselves actively fundraising as presidents.

The Presidency Is Perceived to Required a Balance Between Internal and External Action

The differences in the cohorts' backgrounds also appeared to impact their views of the nature of their presidential work. As Brown (2012) asserts, "One of the most important challenges facing community college presidents is the need to spend more time away from the campus in order to solicit outside resources, advocate for policies, or tend to the 24-7 demands of supporting the mission of their institutions (p. 89)."

DevPres talked about "internal" versus "external" responsibilities as a continuum. For example:

When they interviewed me they were really looking for a president who would have a strong external focus. And that was truly what they were looking for. So they liked that part of my background—the fundraising and the external focus working with business and industry. Now what was really needed, in my opinion, that the board didn't know it at the time, was a president who could work effectively internally and then externally.

Notice that this president was able to establish the link between internal and external needs that required leadership, even if the board was not viewing the presidency that way. This ability to build relationships, whether internal or external, allowed the presidents to comfortably balance the internal and external demands of the role. Another DevPres explained:

I think that is the way I work within internal groups, too—a facilitating role—trying to lead through asking questions. I like having groups self identify and discover the direction. On campus, I think I probably am more candid, obviously than with the external community—there is a lot of selling that I am doing. And internally while I am selling ideas or academic redesigns, trying to sell the concept, I am also trying to build confidence, build trust—not that I don't do that with the external community but I guess I am more aware of that in my communications with the internal community.

This president was not alone in articulating the interactions of the president with various constituents in development terms. All of the DevPres discussed their ability to build relationships. In fact, fundraising language sometimes framed their responses: "I am very clear

about what I am interested in, what I want and push hard. I lobby. I convince, I *cultivate*. I *cultivate* faculty and the deans,” a DevPres shared.

Although the DevPres described a rather seamless ability to execute responsibilities, whether internal or external, they did acknowledge that they are often more physically present in the community. One DevPres believes his external activity and responsiveness has even turned the rest of his leadership team away from pursuing the presidency.

Some of them are scared to death of that because I’ll get calls wherever I’m at—I’m thinking about naming, here’s what I know, what do you think—just as a checkpoint. It’s constantly in flux. Now, they know that we’re in a campaign, they know that we’re into fundraising for the campaign and trying to build three campuses and on and on and on. So they know a lot of my time is out.

Especially in the initial months or even years of the presidency, an external presence is critical to building relationships. As another DevPres explained:

I think the first thing I did is I spent a lot of time in the community getting to know community members. I’m really committed to developing those relationships, so the first step really was, even before getting to know the college, it was really important... That doesn’t mean that I didn’t work internally, and on things with the institution, but I spent probably three years, just an awful lot of time, probably 60 percent of my time, in the community, serving on boards, being a member of all of the service organizations, doing that kind of work.

Another DevPres echoes the importance of continuing that community involvement throughout the presidency:

People universally are very respectful of the office of president, and I have a lot of experience in community colleges, so I meddle in instruction and in continuing ed, and I say try this, do this, but at some point that’s not what presidents do. We have to be out in the community, representing the college, so I go to everything I can go to—Rotary Club...the chamber of commerce... That background, doing a great deal of work in community agencies, is the single most important thing I think I’ve found to relate to people being in this office.

The DevPres were not alone in being out in the community. The AAPres also talked about the time-consuming demands of external relations. They also discussed these activities, but with concern about the challenge of balancing internal and external. An AAPres shared:

I spent a lot of time the first couple years in relationship building internally. I mean, walking around, talking to staff and I still do a great amount of that, but not as much because I'm off-site more. I'm gone a lot in the community and so I think I really spent a lot of time on that.

In fact, some presidents noted that internal constituents seemed to resent and not necessarily understand the time spent away from campus. An AAPres shared:

Do I take some heat from "Well, we never see Dr. [NAME]"? Well, you haven't because of what I've done. My assistant, sometimes she'll just say let me tell you what her week looks like, and they get kind of miffed at that. Now, when you're successful at raising money that can be plowed back into their program or advocating to the legislature so that we can give some kind of raises, then they start to connect the dots that what I'm doing does make a difference to them.

The external and internal can be viewed as competing demands until a connection is established.

Another AAPres noted that the time spent externally cannot come at the expense of time spent building internal relationships:

I think in the future more and more boards are going to get it and hire fundraising presidents, but how do you establish that plan and those relationships back on campus first? Because if you're out in the community telling a story and that story is inconsistent with what's really going on on campus, you will not experience success.

As suggested by this statement, AAPres' primary concern is still with the campus.

In general, while both cohorts expressed the need to balance internal and external responsibilities, the DevPres seemed to feel more comfortable with these activities as a continuum, while the AAPres expressed more concern about internal operations. These views

seem to correlate with their previous backgrounds, as largely responsible for either external or internal activities.

Overall, in keeping with these differences, there did seem to be a divergence in the scope of the presidents' orientation as internal or external. The AAPres discussed their backgrounds in more narrow terms, while the DevPres spoke of broad and comprehensive responsibilities.

Regardless, they both agreed that the presidential role is awe-inspiring in its nature and expectations, even in comparison to the chief academic officer position. As a DevPres elucidates:

You don't really understand the role until you are a president. The responsibility you have for budgets, for people, for programs, for managing a college, and for making the college move forward and have goal setting and work through that on a daily basis. And I'm pretty focused, I would have to say, but I don't think that's any different than any other president. I've always been very interested in people, with the idea that, get to know them. But as a president I realize that when I meet with people I want to know what they are doing.

The president must be more than a "people person;" results and outcomes must prevail.

In summary, "internal" or academic experience, including teaching and holding the chief academic officer position, was not limited to AAPres. Although academic experience is certainly important, that preparation alone—even holding the provost position—does not adequately prepare one for the presidency. At the same time, "external" or fundraising experience was not the exclusive purview of DevPres. Even some of the DevPres did not intentionally seek development positions, and some AAPres were forced to fundraise as heads of struggling departments. Fundraising is regarded as a learned skill and all the presidents, regardless of their backgrounds, emphasized the importance of fundraising to the presidency today and learning how to raise money, whether from another president or through training programs such as those offered by CRD. DevPres considered themselves to be more than fundraisers, and several DevPres stated they had not been hired to or been able to fundraise in their presidency. Instead,

the comprehensive nature of their backgrounds allowed them to function effectively in other areas. This concept will be explored more fully in the next chapter, as will the need for current presidents to raise private funds, regardless of backgrounds. AAPres sometimes enjoyed the external nature of the presidency, although they expressed concern about balancing that with internal presence.

To reiterate, presidents believe they need both internal and external experience. The “internal” and “external” experiences gained were often in context. Some AAPres had previously fundraised for program support for their academic unit, for example. Other AAPres sought out fundraising as intentional preparation for the presidency. Similarly, some DevPres did some teaching to round out their resume.

This chapter on the pathways to the presidency has explored what presidents did before they were hired and how their backgrounds influenced their perception of the presidency as a role they wanted to attain. The final section explores the presidents’ understanding of why they were hired and how they view connections between their backgrounds, the environment of the institution that hired them, and their perception of the presidency today. The following chart (Chart 4) summarizes these findings.

Chart 4. The Presidency Evolves

Key Finding	Representative Quote (Different president in each example)
AAPres and Operational/Cultural Change (All)	I got to the college and realized we didn't have things like, and I'm being serious, faculty job descriptions and we didn't have a salary scale and compensation or evaluations. We had nothing. –AAPres
DevPres and Board Concerns (More than half)	I came into the presidency following a president who I think had a philosophy of telling the board as little as possible and my philosophy—and I think it overwhelmed the board at first—was to share everything. –DevPres
AAPres and DevPres Agree on an Outward Presidency (ALL presidents: every DevPres and every AAPres)	<p>A lot of folks when I got here kind of looked with blank stares, I realized, when I started my vision. I said, "Oh boy, we are starting at square one." –DevPres</p> <p>When you look at the outside aspects of a college, you can either look at it passively—you know, going to the [state capitol]—you sit in committees, you beg and leave. Or you can be a lot more politically active in that you are creating legislation, lobbying for things, bringing together the other state community colleges. That's what I do that is very different than what [my predecessor] did. He was simply [XCC] focused. –AAPres</p>
	<i>Presidents address challenges from the college culture at their hiring by drawing upon their backgrounds and viewing the presidency as a changing role.</i>

THE PRESIDENCY EVOLVES:

Presidents Address Challenges from the College Culture at Their Hiring by Drawing upon Their Backgrounds and Viewing the Presidency as a Changing Role

Presidents were asked for their perspectives and understanding of why they were hired and the institution's culture and history at the time of their hiring as president to determine whether institutional needs contributed to the type of leader hired. Their responses reveal that the presidency presents challenges, especially for first-time presidents, and also illustrate that sometimes even hiring boards are not aware of institutional problems. Several of the presidents followed a problematic leader. All of the presidents interviewed brought a different style and direction than the president they followed.

The following table (Table 6) summarizes, from the presidents’ perspectives, the college’s state of the union at the time of their hiring. Many presidents are now in their second or third presidency, but were asked to speak to their first presidency. This was based on the assumption that presidents learned from their initial experience how to evaluate an institution as well as gained more knowledge about what they personally needed for a “fit.” The situations for all the presidents in their first presidencies will not be described individually. Rather, this table serves to illustrate patterns, which will be discussed in depth below.

Table 6. Institutional Problems/Challenges for Presidents

ACADEMIC		DEVELOPMENT	
Pseudonym	Issue	Pseudonym	Issue
<i>Jenkins</i>	Insular	<i>Glidden</i>	Insular
<i>Hurst</i>	Good situation	<i>Baker</i>	Financial-Illegal
<i>Olsen</i>	Insular	<i>Bettendorff</i>	Lack of systems/structures
<i>Perry</i>	Insular	<i>Ross</i>	Faculty resistance to administration
<i>Duncan</i>	Followed fired pres/Insular	<i>King</i>	Financial-Insular
<i>Unser</i>	Safety/risk issue hidden by past administration	<i>Siegel</i>	Financial-Illegal
<i>Walsh</i>	Followed fired pres/Financial-illegal	<i>Daniel</i>	Good situation
<i>Wooten</i>	Culture/Financial-Insular	<i>Croft</i>	Good situation (had pres w/bad comm rel two pres before)
<i>Frank</i>	Lack of systems/structures	<i>Paulson</i>	Good situation
		<i>Dabundo</i>	Enrollment declines/Insular

Institutions that are labeled as “good” draw from the president’s description of the institution. That does not mean the college does not have challenges. The “good” label is more of a relative term to indicate that the problems are not at the dire or crisis stage of others (e.g., illegal or financial challenges that could shutter the school). Operations can still be enhanced, as will be described.

Interestingly, the three DevPres who are in “good situations” feel they were not hired for their development backgrounds or to actively fundraise but instead were hired because of other experience and to perform other responsibilities. The AAPres in a self-professed, “good

situation,” was hired to fundraise (and is one of few AAPres with that experience). Unprompted, three of the four presidents in good situations brought up how they had evaluated colleges at the time of hiring, though. As the AAPres said:

I’ll tell you when I did my interview, the college was nice, and I had a great time with the staff...my interview was with the board. I was interviewing the board. They thought they were interviewing me, but, you know, it’s never the jobs you don’t take that hurt you.

Two of the DevPres in positive situations had also carefully evaluated their institutions. One explained:

That’s the one thing when you’re assessing a position is you look at are there opportunities. You don’t want to go in and just maintain the status quo. I’m not saying you should go in and stir the pot. But are there opportunities to use your skills sets in a way that will enhance the institution.

For the other DevPres, this assessment helped her to make a decision between institutions:

When I started interviewing at two different institutions, I got a quick sense of what it felt like to be somewhere where you feel like you belong...and the institution had to have some assets, not financial assets, but I had to feel like it had opportunity to move forward. There are lots of institutions that don’t have those assets.

These DevPres have enjoyed long tenures as well as mostly positive experiences.

For the majority of the presidents taking on leadership of colleges with challenges, issues the presidents discussed were either resolved or are actively being addressed, with progress to date. Several of the presidents in the study are either on a second or third presidency and were asked to speak primarily to their first institutions because as seasoned leaders they were more wise and selective about their next post, as the president quoted above demonstrated. As a whole, the study sample holds rather lengthy tenures, so even if the leaders are still in the first presidency, they have had time to address the issue discussed.

Differences did emerge between the two cohorts. The AAPres reported issues related to basic operational challenges or the need to change the culture.

AAPres and Operational/Cultural Change

Some of the AAPres faced challenges with previous presidents who had been problematic in legal ways. An AAPres who followed a dishonest president had the struggle of proving her integrity with a skeptical board: “I followed someone who had been fired...I suffered a lot from that, because they expected me to cheat them and do things, and since I didn’t, but they still, yeah, it was a very difficult first six months here.”

Another AAPres admitted that she did not consider the ramifications of following a problematic president:

There was a huge surprise in that the president had literally been run out town and I don’t know that I even thought about that. Because I was into the competition, I was promoting myself and your ego gets pretty big. I hate to tell you but there were some decisions that turned out to be okay here but as I look back on them at first it was all about me. I had competed, I had won—it was all about me. But coming here—the community, it was a disaster—and I did not know that and I am glad I didn’t know. I would have come but it was just as well I didn’t know because she had been literally been run out town and the local newspaper: letters to the editor, get her out of town.

This AAPres honestly acknowledged that her ego prevented her from thoroughly understanding the operational and cultural challenges she would encounter. Another admitted that she was too naïve to recognize that all places would not run as effectively as had the college where she was a prior vice president:

I had never ever been in a situation where people didn’t have standards up to here, and I’ve never worked anywhere where this was okay. That was my first thing. They do things differently. Now, I didn’t have time for buy-in, because the place was going to close. I had to pass a millage. Their contracts were going to expire. So, it was just incredible.

Working for a successful institution did not automatically prepare the president for implementing success. The presidency was difficult and did not last long.

Other presidents also did not anticipate challenges they would face, especially regarding very basic operational items. For example, one AAPres said, “I got to the college and I realized that we didn’t have things like, I mean, and I’m being serious, like faculty job descriptions, and we didn’t have a salary scale and compensation, or evaluations. We had nothing.” Another president reported a similar shock: “And well the most basic things—like there were no bands for jobs....” The presidents overcame the basic challenge but not without substantial time and effort.

Implementing systems and structures to address operating efficiencies also proved to be much more challenging than the presidents could have anticipated. Another AAPres actively trying to move toward more efficient operations organized around student-centeredness explained that the process of changing a culture is slow and must be intentional and deliberate:

So, I started in my first speeches, I think the first year, I’m trying to think, I was just trying to catch my breath, second year I would get the whole thing on change, and how important we have to change...and I kept saying toward the future and that kind of thing, and then another year I did that...whole spirit—we gotta change, we gotta change, we gotta be different. So anyway, I really tried to do that, to change the way they, to bring them up to that, and then it finally got to we had a movie of what the campus could possibly look like and I started showing that to show the vision. You just have to repeat your message over and over ad nauseam, and in different ways, and that’s where I just think it’s really important for presidents to be creative, to come from the creative side, or have creative people around you.

The process of change takes several years of persistent yet creatively different efforts, the seasoned president maintained.

The AAPres talked about the challenges they faced operationally or culturally and how they as presidents addressed them. The DevPres discussed challenges more directly from the board of directors' point of view.

DevPres and Board Concerns

As a whole, the DevPres talked more at length about their interactions with the board, even dating back to the hiring process. One president explained how she viewed the institution's challenges in the hiring process after reviewing the financials, the strategic plans, the accreditation reports, etc., as part of the interview process:

This was a college that had a declining enrollment for a few years and my predecessor's strategy was to continually decrease the cost to attend in the hopes they could stop the down spiral and that just eroded the availability of resources actually... I said to the trustees I'm not telling you anything you don't already know: you need to increase your enrollment to balance your budget. But then having said that the question was then, Do you have any thoughts on how we would do that? Because they knew they were struggling. I said, well, I had noticed that you have one branch for the most part and only satellite operations at night in your more remote parts of your service area. There is an under utilized 21st century facility, a learning facility, within a 40 minute's drive from this campus, it's in your service area and is operated by the Department of Defense and from all I understand is under-utilized. I said I don't know what the potential would be to locate a community college in partnership with the DOD in the same facility but I sure as hell would want to pick up the phone and talk with the congressman to see if we could work something out. What that signaled to the trustees was that I was not afraid of thinking outside the box, that I had experienced strong relationship with congressional people, that I could think strategically, that I was willing to take some bold moves if necessary.

The president presented a contrast to her predecessor, and relayed this in terms of the trustees.

The DevPres' approach to changing the culture included enhancing interactions with the governing board. One president who uncovered dire financial problems at the institution discovered how the issues could have gone unchecked for so long. He explained:

I remember I hadn't been here very long and one of the vice presidents said, well now, how do you want us to deal with the board, what do you want us to tell the board? And I said, You tell them the truth. You tell them absolutely...you're asked a question you have to answer.

Strickland: And that hadn't been the culture before?

No, not from the senior administration. Not from the president or the finance person, and other folks were afraid to say anything.

The president believed changing the culture started with changing the culture of working with the trustees. Another DevPres dealt with a similar situation, where the board had also been distanced and uninformed by the prior administration. She shared:

I came into the presidency following a president who I think had a philosophy of telling the board as little as possible and my philosophy—and I think it overwhelmed the board at first—was to share everything. And then to back off and have the board help me to determine what their level of comfort was: what they needed to know and what they don't need to know. We work with a policy governance model. That may sound like it is contrary to policy governance but I think it is part of the process a new president has to go through with their board, too. You can't just come in as a new president and say, I am going to use the policy governance model. You can say that is the vision you are getting to, but there is still the messy middle of getting from wherever the practice you are inheriting to getting to policy governance.

The president viewed working with the board as essential from the start for achieving success.

Working with the board is a process, and the next chapter delves deeper into board relations. The point here is to illustrate the attempt to change the president-board dynamics from those of a predecessor. Indeed, the DevPres challenges also illustrated differences in style and operations from their predecessors, which was a common theme between the cohorts.

AAPres and DevPres Agree on an Outward Presidency

Although the cohorts related different challenges facing them initially, the common theme uniting them (see Figure 3) is confronting an “insular” culture by operating with a more outward focus than their predecessors. The presidents often used this term, so it has been

employed here to cover a wide range of context. Insular covers a spectrum—from institutions that had become complacent and were continuing programs, processes, and behavioral patterns without any analysis of their effectiveness to institutions that operated as more isolated environments unaware of greater external advances. This descriptive did not just apply to troubled institutions. As an AAPres explained: “We do very little externally...we’re doing very well by the way, but we’re like a little college.” And this is not a small institution but one that has been confined by its own limited views and conventional operations.

Figure 3. Only Finding for “Pathways to the Presidency” with Unanimous Agreement

The finding of an Outward Presidency represents total agreement among ALL the presidents: every DevPres and every AAPres.

The ability to move forward is the capacity to move beyond insular operations. Even in the “good” situations, the presidents while not describing their institutions as insular still indicated that the colleges needed to be more progressive and that they were working on adjustments in personnel, processes, systems and structures to position the college more effectively and progressively. An AAPres explained how his leadership of the college differs from his predecessor’s:

When you look at the outside aspects of a college, you can either look at it passively—you know going to [state capitol], you sit in committees, you beg and leave. Or you can be a lot more politically active in that you are creating legislation, lobbying for things, bringing together the other state community colleges. That’s what I do that is very different than what he did. He was simply [XCC] focused.

The AAPres was aware of the greater environmental context and the need to proactively position the institution.

Focusing solely on the institution as the presidents' predecessors had done was usually problematic. Another AAPres similarly contrasted his approach: "My predecessor was afraid to start new programs. I think we started about eight or nine new programs in the last eight years." Service to the community requires being present in the community. A different AAPres offered an extreme example of isolation. The college's former president literally did not get out into the community because of being physically unfit to move around. By contrast, this president is "kind of a walker and I go to all the counties and talk—for some reason everybody thinks that I can talk on any subject...." The AAPres found an external environment eager for connection to the campus.

Moving beyond an insular culture does not just mean extending into the community, however. It also means encouraging people on campus to be open toward broader views and external considerations. Another AAPres provided an example:

We have a lot of dialogue, and they've never had dialogue... it was all about what [the former president] thought and how he thought it was important and how it would be done. And you know, he did pretty good for being a one-man show. He really did. So, now I come in and I have to take a team that worked for a one-man show, that was told to do every single thing, to now a president saying, you tell me. You know, what are your thoughts? I'd like to hear where you think we should be.

The president expects the leadership team to know and understand best practices outside the institution, but is having to build that mindset of external awareness, even among the top executives.

Overall, the AAPres seemed to follow autocratic presidents or long-time presidents where an insular culture had become the norm with a focus only on the college itself. That was really the traditional way of the presidency. The primary challenge for them was to improve

communication all around and to become proactive and contemporary. They needed to set a new example—a new way of doing things—and be an externally focused president.

Compared to AAPres, DevPres seemed to face more challenges related to board relations. It may be that the boards did not know about problem situations before the DevPres' tenure began because of little communication or because there was outright dishonesty. Even so, it is interesting that DevPres would uncover these challenges and be working with boards when the prior presidents—all of whom were academic affairs predecessors—left problems unnoticed or unchecked.

Overcoming any of the challenges either cohort initially encountered required the presidents to have solid communication skills, including understanding and translating finances to various constituents, and an ability to be visionary and to grow and build rather than maintain. It does not seem coincidental that the presidential study sample as a whole has overcome and enjoyed long tenures because of exercising these *externally* focused skills. The next chapter will explore management of the presidency itself in more detail, including culture change.

In summary, as Table 7 below illustrates, the presidents believe every experience matters. They report drawing upon a range of experiences beyond previous roles in their presidency and believe a broad background is necessary preparation for the presidential role. It was more than the previous roles they served in that prompted leaders to consider the presidency. Many factors, particularly mentoring by current presidents, impact careers as the pathway helps to picture the presidency. Although the literature positions backgrounds as academic or non-academic, the presidents believe both internal and external perspectives are necessary: the presidency requires a holistic view. The presidential role has also changed and will continue to become more outward, the presidents believe, as the presidency evolves.

Table 7. Summary of Findings for Pathways to the Presidency

EVERY EXPERIENCE MATTERS:

Leaders believe they benefit from a broad and varied range of experiences prior to the presidency.

- Misleading titles
- A broadened focus by circumstance
- Seeking responsibility or challenge
- DevPres' connections to academic paths
- Atypical backgrounds

THE PATHWAY HELPS TO PICTURE THE PRESIDENCY:

Leaders considered the presidency because of their comprehensive attributes, not just previous positions.

- Commitment to community colleges
- Presidency or else
- Aspired to leadership
- Presidential push/mentorship
- Family considerations

THE PRESIDENCY REQUIRES A HOLISTIC VIEW:

Presidents believe they need both "internal" (academic) and "external" (fundraising) experience.

- DevPres consider teaching experience important
- Academic experience does not fully prepare for the presidency.
- Backgrounds determined how fundraising experience was gained.
- Backgrounds influenced how fundraising is regarded as a presidential responsibility.
- The presidency is perceived to require a balance between internal and external action.

THE PRESIDENCY EVOLVES:

Presidents address challenges from the college culture at their hiring by drawing upon their backgrounds and viewing the presidency as a changing role.

- AAPres and operational/cultural change
- DevPres and board concerns
- AAPres and DevPres agree on an outward presidency

DISCUSSION

The DevPres prior positions were broad and high level, all as vice presidents of advancement and/or executive director of a foundation, and often with responsibilities even beyond advancement (such as for student services or technology). All involved working with foundation boards; building teams, endowments, and structures; establishing relationships across the campus and in the community; and in some cases, implementing campaigns. Some had grantwriting experience but they also had full advancement experience as well, including often most importantly for their presidencies, experience in managing staff and large budgets. In addition, nearly all the DevPres also had teaching experience, and half had even served as

academic administrators, including provost. They brought more than a development perspective to the presidency.

The broad experience of managing staff, budgets, setting policies, etc. are all traits shared by the AAPres as well. The contrast in prior experiences is exposure to development. If grantwriting is taken away, then only three AAPres had prior development experience and they were thrust into fundraising out of need or crisis. Two others sought some experience, such as going on a solicitation, because presidential mentors who were grooming them for presidencies encouraged them to gain or provided fundraising experience. The academic affairs position is differently focused in scope. As the literature on the CAO position reveals (Eckel et al., 2009; Glass & Jackson, 1998), the position also offers very little exposure to external activities.

So, while most of the AAPres did not have prior development (“external”) experience, the DevPres had, even extensive, academic affairs (“internal”) experience. Fundraising experience can be gained by presidents on-the-job, and they can be successful and good at it—possibly even enjoying it, as one AAPres reported. Even though she was a seasoned academic, a DevPres maintains it was her prior development experience that gave her comfort in the presidency that she would not have had otherwise.

The traditional academic path is unlikely to offer exposure beyond just procuring money; skills and experience might include grantwriting, but not working with individual donors or boards, as the literature demonstrates (Eckel et al., 2009; Ullman, 2010). Academics are expected to be experts in their (narrow by comparison) field, whereas development officers tend to be generalists. Advancement officers must work with all constituents, including faculty, whereas full-time faculty and academics can be much more focused.

The AAPres who felt more comfortable with the external aspects of the role had broader backgrounds themselves. For example, one AAPres had training in a health care program with an outreach component rather than in a traditional academic discipline. Another AAPres had been a referee, and another had previous experience as an administrator for a state agency.

The development literature notes stereotypes and misunderstandings about the nature of fundraising and the misconceived role of personality (Scully, 2012; Worth, 2002). From the researcher's perspective (and one shared by the transcriptionist), the more lively, stereotypically dynamic personalities in this study were found more in the AAPres than in the DevPres, most of whom were more subdued and deliberate in their responses.

The development literature and this dissertation suggest that development is more than a personality trait. This study illuminates the core competencies of development found in the literature (Bornstein, 2003; Burk, 2003; Caboni, 2008; Peet, Walsh, Sober & Rawak, 2010; Worth, 2002). Development is about more than procuring money; it is not just raising funds but more comprehensive resource development, organizational development, or "change agency" (in the words of a DevPres). The next chapter will delve further into advancement operations.

Development is thus not opposed to academics. In fact, development furthers the academic mission, plus it also provides a set of skills helpful for various aspects of the presidency beyond fundraising. Dev Pres must still have developed required competencies to attain the presidential role and to function effectively in it, as the next chapter will explore further.

It does not appear that a personality disposition naturally attracts one to the development field. One DevPres sought the advancement position because she was attracted to it as a "creative" field. Three other DevPres only transitioned to development positions from other

areas of college administration once they were convinced the role was furthering the academic mission they had already been advancing in other areas of the institution.

AAPres might not have been exposed to development before the presidency, but when given the opportunity to learn and do it, they can thrive, as some of the AAPres illustrated. The AAPres who had previous fundraising experience had to build fundraising skills to begin or continue an academic program; perhaps people who are drawn to building a program from the ground-up have an entrepreneurial drive that translates well to development.

The need to fundraise also overrides whether someone likes it or has the “people personality” for it, as passion for the mission takes over. One of the DevPres eloquently described how she can do the work only for this reason, as she still does not consider herself a fundraiser after decades in the field.

One might assume that financially struggling institutions hired development officers because they were more willing to take chances on a nontraditional hire to help confront financial challenges. However, sometimes not even the institutional leaders realized how bad a situation was at the time of hiring, as with two DevPres who could have fundraised but really had to spend the majority of their time for years on other academic and fiscal matters.

By contrast, stable institutions hired someone with the primary goals of fundraising and community relations, but chose a president who had not held a prior development position, as with the case of three AAPres. So, DevPres reported they were not hired to perform development and had to manage much more—sometimes they were not even able to focus on fundraising because of other areas requiring attention. And AcadPres were often hired to fundraise.

Both groups encountered challenging situations at their hiring. Though the problems varied somewhat, they primarily revolved around a culture being insular, with a prior president

focused almost solely on the internal, and without an external check or balance from even the governing board. The presidents interviewed felt they could definitely take operations to the next level, even if the institution was “good,” because the prior president had not pushed the envelope. The president had been only internally focused, which is in keeping with the literature on a traditional, typical community college president (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Eddy, 2010). The only finding with unanimous agreement from all the presidents interviewed is that they operate as more outwardly focused presidents than their predecessors.

The DevPres faced operational and cultural challenges as AAPres did, but talked about them more from a board perspective. Given their backgrounds, they would have a comfort level with external boards initially that AAPres would unlikely have.

The details that emerged regarding contexts of the institutions as well as the backgrounds of the presidents could only be uncovered through a qualitative study. The interviews yielded much richer information than could be found merely through reviewing documents such as CVs or institutional histories, or even through a survey that might have asked about roles or cultures. For example, a survey querying about past roles would not show the wide variance in people’s actual experiences and preparation before becoming president, and perhaps more importantly, their intentions and reasons for their career choices.

The rich insights into the actual responsibilities that people held in prior roles were often well beyond what a title might imply, illustrating the problem of categorizing the experience of presidents only by title of previous roles, as the current tracking systems do (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Cook & Kim, 2012; Weisman & Vaughan, 2006). The extent and context of their roles is much more complex than having held a certain position.

The factors leading up to the presidency are much more complicated than following a positional pathway. Although they were not asked about family, *all* DevPres (in contrast to only three AAPres) talked about their families (in explaining their career decisions, including taking on the presidency and when). This context of connections, of course, goes with the core objective of development—building relationships. But it also, combined with academic backgrounds, shows why DevPres are probably more comfortable with diverse constituents. This is likely due to a couple of reasons: (1) Because of their high-level development positions, the DevPres would understand the demands and commitments of the work—weekends and evenings—and the extent of community involvement and those demands on family. The next chapter will talk more about the public demands and scrutiny of the presidency; (2) While academic demands are also never ending—grading, research, and so forth—much of it is self-driven, that is, one has more control over one’s own schedule and the external demands are less. So, it is possible that AAPres did not focus on the challenges for a president to balance family and work demands, like the DevPres did, because the AAPres had not previously experienced the work-family stresses associated with externally-focused positions in the same way that their DevPres counterparts had.

The educational backgrounds of the two groups also differentiated them. One would expect that AAPres who navigated the academic chain of command would have followed a rather traditional academic path of attending good undergraduate colleges and then immediately pursuing graduate studies at other prestigious institutions. This was the case for most of the AAPres.

In contrast, nearly all of the DevPres followed an atypical academic path. Even if they had gone through a traditional academic undergraduate experience, they delayed graduate school until later in life and juggled it part-time with family and work responsibilities. Several noted

they were not the best students themselves initially, usually because of family, background, delayed development, or a learning disability. Eventually they really succeeded, some because of a community college education at some point. The DevPres are connected firsthand to the community college mission, and furthering the mission is at the heart of fundraising success.

This connection to mission likely explains why several DevPres cited the community college mission as a reason for pursuing the presidency. While AAPres are undoubtedly as committed to furthering the mission, they are not as likely to consciously frame activities and explicitly convey the mission to an external audience as their DevPres peers would be (and the one AAPres who cited mission is also the most active fundraising president).

The presidents were not asked about family, nor were they asked specifically about their academic backgrounds when asked to talk about their path to the presidency. But several of the DevPres shared their educational experiences and related them directly to their career decisions and more specifically to their commitment to the community college mission and wanting to become a president.

Valuing peoples' stories is also an essential development trait (Caboni, 2008; Peet, Walsh, Sober & Rawak, 2010) and perhaps that is why all DevPres started with the personal. One builds relationships by sharing family, history, and educational experiences. All of the presidents in both cohorts, however, seemed very comfortable with relationships. They kept up relationships with past colleagues. They were passionate about their communities. They felt a sense of responsibility to other presidents/future presidents. They even asked and cared about the researcher's future. In other words, collectively, these successful, long-tenured or repeat presidents are skilled at externally-oriented responsibilities. This orientation will become even more clear in the next chapter.

Both cohorts reported that a president had mentored them for the presidency by giving them opportunities outside of their actual duties. Some had functioned as a president when the one they worked for was not functioning effectively for various reasons. Presidents in both groups cited their mentors as factors not only in their initial hiring but also for maintaining a current reliance upon them and other presidential peers.

Given the more limited population of DevPres, it seems especially critically for them to mentor others into the role from development, as some of the DevPres had experienced. Establishing strength in numbers avoids concerns of isolation or being treated as an anomaly, and sends a collective message about the potential of the development pathway. Presidents in both cohorts acknowledged the importance of and need for continued training, such as that available through the Council for Resource Development.

The presidents agree the role is awe-inspiring, comprehensive, and complex. They also agree that broad previous experience is necessary and useful. DevPres must know how to do more than fundraising because they are hired for more than that—and they might not be able to actively fundraise anyway because they need to manage other areas of presidential concern. Similarly, AAPres need to learn external skills, including fundraising, and they can enjoy and excel at those skills.

CONCLUSION

The presidents agree on the need for a broad background. Although there are differences in their pathways, particularly around fundraising, their backgrounds are not as different as might be expected because *all things in community college development are also academic in nature*. The DevPres assume their positions not only with experience in and an understanding of the

academic mission, but also with experiences related to the core competencies required in the role today. AAPres can gain external experience in the role, and can be successful in and enjoy those activities, but they must develop fundraising and related external skills that their DevPres colleagues will already have experience in and a comfort level with before becoming president.

This chapter examined the pathways to the presidency, including the institutional context or culture presidents faced at hiring and why they sought the presidency to begin with. The findings underscore the influence of changing environmental forces and conditions as well as leaders' characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds on how the presidency is perceived. How role perceptions influence the presidents' functioning in the role itself around core responsibilities—management of the presidency—and whether differences emerge between the cohorts serve as foci of the next chapter. The concluding chapter will then discuss the findings from both chapters in context of the conceptual framework and describe the implications.

CHAPTER 6—Managing the Presidency

This chapter examines the way presidents carry out the various core responsibilities of their role, including their perspectives on these functions, and whether the cohorts differ in their management—thereby investigating the remainder of the study’s research question: *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?* The last chapter presented findings related to a broader understanding of what constitutes an internal or an external background, a dichotomy established by the literature. The following table (Table 1) illustrates the concepts of internal or external.

Table 1 (repeated). Expected Internal and External Orientations by Background

INTERNAL/ACADEMIC ORIENTATION	EXTERNAL/FUNDRAISING ORIENTATION
Primary concern is campus	Primary concern is beyond campus
Dealings primarily with internal constituents, such as faculty	Dealings primarily with external constituents, such as donors
Focus is on all matters academic: curriculum, faculty, students, classroom space, etc.	Focus is on all matters to support academics: funding, buildings, scholarships, etc.
Top academic position (provost/CAO/DOI/VPAA) typically achieved by advancing through academic ranks as faculty member, department chair, dean and then top role	Top development position (VP for Advancement, CDO) does not have defined career path. While lower-level development position might precede it, CDO can come directly from private sector background
Limited exposure to volunteers/boards	Extensive exposure to volunteers/boards
Thinks in terms of the college	Thinks in terms of partnerships
Academic skills required	Interpersonal skills required
Ability to relate to faculty	Ability to relate to community leaders
Teaching experience presumed	Teaching experience not presumed
Might not be expected to represent college in community	Expected to represent college in community

To determine if presidents were managing the presidency differently based on their backgrounds, it was necessary to focus on common responsibilities as well as to probe management areas where one cohort might have an advantage over the other because of previous

experience. The variable of interest, management of the presidency, was defined as duties that would be pertinent to any president regardless of institutional size, location, etc. This standardization would provide a level basis for comparing the cohorts and how they function in the presidency. Questions about the common management dimensions also sought to provide a balance between expected “internal” and “external” capacities. The dimensions of management and leadership were derived from mutual constructs in several sources: the literature, the AACC Leadership Competencies, and presidential evaluations, including various institutional samples as well as shared criteria from both the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Questions about management of the presidency explored the executive team structure, areas of operations that are delegated, how the community college story is conveyed to external constituents, how often and in what ways presidents communicate with board members, how presidents achieve buy-in for a strategic vision, and how they have addressed the challenging fiscal environment.

Based on the conceptual model, the questions on management of the presidency simultaneously sought to uncover a president’s sensitivity to the environment on both an institutional and a greater sector-level view and related role perceptions. For example, presidents were asked to respond to questions about core leadership and management competencies not only in terms of current approaches but also how they believed performance expectations have changed and whether they envisioned changes in the future.

Given the literature’s emphasis on increasing fundraising expectations for community college presidents and that rationale leading to hiring DevPres, it was also necessary to compare expectations for and execution of advancement activities by AAPres to scrutinize the connection between backgrounds and perceptions of and approaches to the external aspect of the role. The

remaining set of questions centered on advancement activities specifically, including expectations for their involvement with fundraising at hiring, whether such expectations have changed, and the college culture around philanthropy. These questions helped to uncover not only how that responsibility is led and managed by the president but how the president perceives that aspect of the role. Following the theoretical framework of a proactive or reactive approach to the environment, the questions also sought to uncover the presidents' understanding of philanthropy and any predisposition for responding to the increasing expectations for fundraising by community college presidents based on their backgrounds.

This chapter will present the results of the responses for each of the core management areas queried. The resulting data show two key themes that will be examined individually: (1) Management of the presidency is a matter of presidential perception; and (2) The presidential role centers on the community more than the campus. Rather than chronicling the findings by management function, the findings will be presented in order of comparison and then contrast. Responses in which the cohorts showed similarities will be presented, followed by areas of divergence. As the findings in this chapter will illustrate, differences emerged between the cohorts as well as between those presidents with more experience in and comfort with external aspects of the role—which are often a central focus of their current responsibilities, such as planning or conducting a fundraising campaign—and the other presidents.

The findings illustrate that the presidents often manage core responsibilities differently based on their prior experience. Differences are not as distinct between the cohorts, however, because of the other key finding that the presidential role centers on the community more than the campus. Both cohorts envision the presidency as an exercise in building a dynamic campus culture and partnering with the local service region as never before. As such, the presidency

itself is an “external” role, and presidents want to build a legacy of community engagement. The presidents are building for the future by diversifying resources. They delegate academics and structure their teams so that they can focus on the external, including educating their boards to function more effectively. They are trying to build a sense of community on the campus, which often had become disillusioned by years of having information withheld or being punished for creativity. Presidents must also build a culture of philanthropy on the campus that reflects and supports their efforts to proactively position the college within the community as an agent of economic development. The president is the chief fundraiser, but the focus is not on just fundraising but resource development: partnerships, strategy, and innovation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and why the cohorts did not differ as much in their management of the presidency as might be expected.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY IS A MATTER OF PRESIDENTIAL PERCEPTION

This study compared and contrasted how presidents approach the role in relation to their backgrounds in development and academic affairs, respectively. It assessed the manner in which they connect prior career experiences with presidential leadership and how they function in and perceive the presidential role. “Management of the presidency” was defined as the execution of duties that would be pertinent to any president regardless of demographical or other institutional differences among community colleges. Such responsibilities were determined as leading and managing an executive team, determining areas to directly oversee or to delegate, conveying the community college story to external constituents, communicating with board members, defining a strategic vision, and addressing fiscal challenges, including the approach to fundraising. Presidents were asked to describe these core competencies in terms not only of their current

approaches and perceptions but also whether they believed performance expectations have changed and any changes they envisioned for the future.

The following section will compare and contrast the cohorts' management of the presidency. First, areas of commonality will be presented. Responses were considered similar if a majority of presidents in both cohorts reported them. Then the findings will show areas of difference. Findings were contrasted if responses stemmed from only one cohort or from a group of presidents that could represent another pattern, such as those currently focused on fundraising campaigns. A synopsis of areas where responses were not strong enough by either cohort (only two or three responses) or where there was too much variance so as not to establish a pattern will also be discussed. Visual depictions for both similarities and differences will be presented individually and the section will conclude with a collective chart of responses for management of the presidency.

The cohorts showed several areas of similarity, as Chart 5 below illustrates. Each of the findings will be discussed individually. Presidents in both cohorts expressed a need for a strong provost, built teams under constraint, fostered a sense of community on campus, expressed frustration over board commitment, and took steps to overcome past complacency regarding funding by diversifying resources.

Chart 5. Management of the Presidency Is a Matter of Presidential Perception (Cohorts Similar)

Key Finding (Representing majority of presidents in each cohort)	Representative Quote (Different president in each example)
Executive Team: Need a Strong VPAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The VPAA has the trust of the faculty. So we have been able to do things that faculty would have really resisted if it were not for his leadership. –DevPres ▶ I bought him in as my provost so then I knew I was okay. –AAPres
Executive Team: Building Teams under Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ One of my biggest challenges in putting administrative teams together over the last twenty-some years is getting them to understand that they're different and they're different for a reason. –DevPres ▶ I was able to get my own team because I didn't immediately eliminate people. I worked through the issues. –AAPres
Leadership on Campus: Creating Internal Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We actually brought in our culture change expert last year; we called it a civility person. In any organization you deal with the issues of change and people spin out differently on those. –DevPres ▶ I don't have a three-credit course on how to get people to buy in other than just to lay it out: what is in it for them on an almost personal basis and what is in it for them as an interest unit. And then you try from the presidential standpoint to explain how those things are in harmony. –AAPres
Board Relations: Frustration with Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ One of our biggest challenges is having strong trustees... trustees are not strong financial supporters at community colleges. –DevPres ▶ So the role of educating the board about what their role is—how to proceed and how to take it forward in an institution—is probably one of the most challenging things. –AAPres
Advancement: From Complacency to a Diversified Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It used to be a real stretch for me to get a CEO from a large corporation on the foundation board. It is not anymore. –DevPres ▶ ...we had a really nice group of folks on the foundation board, but there was no leadership there. The director of the foundation reported to the board, there was not connection to my office at all, and they frankly weren't raising any money. –AAPres
<i>Presidents Can Manage Core Responsibilities Similarly</i>	

Executive Team: Need a Strong VPAA (Cohorts Similar)

Although the presidents could articulate the differences between the CEO and CAO roles, as discussed in the last chapter, they still highly value the provost position. Both cohorts conveyed the importance of the VPAA position and the crucial role the provost has in securing faculty buy-in and helping to achieve change. Presidents with a background in academic affairs or previous service in the VPAA role valued the role as much as their presidential peers without this experience. As a DevPres explained:

I recruited the new executive vice president for instruction. He is kind of a Renaissance man—he had been here from the beginning of the college... He had not had a lot of administrative background but he is the best at that role that I have ever seen because he is a very good, careful thinker. He's a good opposite to me: I'm right brain, out of the box, let's go do it—he's much more deliberative. But he has the trust of the faculty. So we have been able to do things that faculty would really have resisted if it were not for his leadership.

Similarly, an AAPres believes that she could not have implemented a controversial change in human resource systems without the confidence of faculty in her VPAA, a former faculty member who “had a lot of clout... If it hadn't been for her I don't know what would have happened. But she was well respected, hard worker and she changed everything.” The presidents saw the provost position as essential to achieving faculty buy-in for presidential initiatives.

Although several had replaced the VPAA position, one Dev Pres approached the search very collaboratively:

The [VPAA] retired after my first year but announced it to me within six months. So we began thinking about all of that and I met with faculty and staff to talk to them. I met with them personally to find out what they were thinking, what they would like to see in the next vice president for academic affairs. Based on their input we put together a job description, and our new VPAA began working for us and has worked out beautifully.

As the literature review and conceptual framework chapters illustrated, the development process requires collaboration and strategic planning. The DevPres followed this process in hiring for the provost position.

Changes to the executive team structure in general often correlated with a president's background or priorities (the advancement team structure specifically will be discussed in the final section of this chapter). For example, a DevPres who had been a director of student services restructured that division's leadership structure. Another DevPres who had been in admissions similarly did some creative restructuring in that area.

The presidents often felt constrained in the hiring process, as they respected the needs and particularities of the campus culture.

Executive Team: Building Teams Under Constraint

Sometimes presidents were sensitive to the unique needs of the college at the time and let them dictate the structure, such as an AAPres who recruited for a vice president who had experience in both human resources and student affairs so that one person could oversee both areas—a unique pairing—because the institution could not afford to hire two individuals. A DevPres provided another example of not being tied to preconceived positions:

I have done crazy things: I hired a vice president for student affairs and in the midst of the search, there were two really good candidates. I offered the vice presidency to one candidate and the second candidate I called on a whim and said, I was very impressed with your interview and I do need an associate to the president for planning and institutional effectiveness—would you come for that position?

That second person is now a valued member of the DevPres' executive team.

The presidents voiced a commitment to growing their teams and grooming their vice presidents for presidencies. They provided them with opportunities and training and took pride in

citing former direct reports who were now presidential colleagues. The presidents have high expectations for performance. At the same time, they have had to act decisively with problematic team members.

It was not uncommon for presidents to inherit executive teams where one member had tried for and been denied the presidency. In these cases, sometimes the new president could encourage an exit plan for the person, such as retirement. But sometimes things became divisive, as it did for an AAPres who had to fire a VP and pay off her contract three months into the president's tenure.

It is essential, however, for presidents to assert their role as the primary leader. One AAPres explained, "I had to be so careful, because the board, if they're not happy with the president, they start to rely on the vice president." In one extreme example, a DevPres learned quickly the importance of follow-through on decisions regarding executive team roles:

The vice president for finance and administration—who was called the chief business officer—had been here for thirty two years and after six weeks I had to go to the board and recommend termination, which was a big defining moment. But it was a very popular decision and I did not realize it was going to be such a popular decision with the college community. I had stumbled on it; it could have backfired. I called the personnel committee of the board together. I was only here six weeks and I said, there can only be one president of the institution and it is either me or [VP]. And I said we are early in this relationship, so it is fine with me if we separate and figure out a gracious way to separate, but I can't continue to lead this institution this way...there were board members he was reporting to—these are things that you don't hear about....And the personnel committee chair put her gavel down and said, Ok, Dr. X just said that it is either her or [VP] and if it is her then we've got to fire [VP]. So let's have a vote. She did it very quickly. They wanted me to fire [VP] immediately. It is one of those things: be prepared to execute what you put on the table. So then I had to figure out how to do that. That quickly accelerated my move into [a new] vice president structure.

This remains a defining moment for that president, now well into her second decade as president. It underscores that while vice presidential roles are important—particularly the VPAA role—the presidency is supreme.

An assertion of leadership becomes a balancing act of also empowering teams. Both cohorts mentioned the confidence and trust they have in their executive teams as a whole. Eddy (2010) suggests that today's effective leaders demonstrate a shift away from purely hierarchical leadership to a leadership based on relationships and strong teams. Even so, the president still has to maintain a healthy distance with direct reports, as a DevPres illustrated:

I have an incredible executive team and, at least on the surface, they are extremely supportive. But, you know they do report to me. There is a certain level of vulnerability that you have when you sometimes have to take a subordinate aside and say "I am unhappy with this." So, when you are at the vice presidential level you can have friends and colleagues; when you're at the president's level, you can have colleagues and you can be friendly with them, but they are not friends.

Building that trust is challenging and takes time. One seasoned DevPres well into her second presidency reflected:

I don't think you start feeling comfortable, I don't even want to use the word comfortable because that's scary. But I don't think you can really gather your team around you who you can truly trust and feel you can put your head on the pillow at night until about five years in to the presidency. There are slings and arrows that you have to figure out, the dynamics of your group. You don't want a bunch of yes people, but at the same time you have to have them focused on the direction that you want the institution to go.

The majority of presidents in both cohorts had reached a point in their tenure, as did this DevPres, where a good team was in place. Even so, unexpected events such as terminal diseases or family issues had caused disruption in the ideal teams that several of the presidents had finally created. Because of a sensitivity to the campus history and culture, nearly all of the presidents from both cohorts had team structures or people in roles who did not represent the leader's ideal vision for the team.

Building the team becomes especially challenging because it is not always possible to create the ideal executive team. Both cohorts confessed they had kept roles in place or people in

roles out of respect for the culture or the people in them. The views of a DevPres exemplify this reasoning:

And I am telling you this because I know it is anonymous—I think there are still changes that need to be made but one can only make so many changes in a given period of time. For me, especially once I assessed the culture at [XCC], I think it is very traditional and I really think the culture at all colleges is probably very similar in that our institutions talk about change but resist it once it happens. Because change is a threat to individuals. So I made changes that I think were enough to keep the college moving forward but not so dramatic that they threw us off of our mission. I didn't want disruption in the organization. I wanted change that would be evolutionary but at a faster than usual pace. That is what I was trying to do, really balance the changes with the need for people to have a sense of stability. People feel unstable. Every change that is made, even if it is a remote change not affecting their particular area of the college, they hear about and they start thinking that things are unstable. And I can appreciate that.

The presidents shared a sensitivity to change in general, as this DevPres articulated, as well as a respect for the unique culture and history of the institution. An AAPres explained of her executive team, “That is not a cookie-cutter model, but that is the model at this point in time. Where the college is, it's a good structure to have.” In a less-than-ideal structure, presidents could adjust their expectations instead. An AAPres explained, “One of the things you do is to understand them as individuals. You have to pick and choose their strengths and weaknesses and adjust your management style to some of that. I tend not to ask people to adjust to me, but I do some adjusting to them.” Whatever the approach, the presidents respected the college culture.

Because they implemented change at a measured pace, presidents also revealed that they sometimes opted to wait for staffing transitions to occur naturally. Through attrition in their executive teams, the CEOs would eventually be able to build the ideal structures with people they recruited to the roles rather than inherited. An AAPres summarized the benefits to this approach:

One of the mentors that I've met over the years, he walked into a very similar situation as I did, and I said, “How did you manage all of that? You have so many options as

president.” He said, “I just focused on the strategic plan and people will engage as they can engage and many will recognize when the ship is moving too fast for them and they’ll make their own decisions.” I didn’t come at it from a big, blow it apart, everybody’s bad, they need to leave and I need to bring in my own team, and all of that. And at the end of five years, I looked around and my whole cabinet had changed.

Waiting for natural change avoids disruption to the college culture and anxiety engendered by change in general.

Sensitivity to the campus culture is in keeping with the presidents’ shared emphasis on enhancing the campus culture.

Leadership on Campus: Creating Internal Community (Cohorts Similar)

An important element of leadership with campus constituents is communication. Presidents used communication tools to affirm positive behavior, to encourage improvement, and to share a vision for strategic change. Communication can take the form of written or electronic communications, such as emails or newsletters, of which both cohorts gave examples.

Presidential speeches, or annual state of the college addresses, can also be used effectively as venues to demonstrate leadership and encourage strategic change. A DevPres explained how her approach to this seemingly simple task also underscored differences from previous leadership and the resulting impact on the campus culture:

I do a speech every year called the State of the College and it is given in August when the faculty come back right before the semester starts and it may be the hardest thing I do all year because that is where I set the tone. I had some wonderful feedback recently when someone said to me, “We remember when the president would get up and scold us in that state of the college: You did this wrong, you did this wrong.” I try so hard to get up there and talk realistically about what our challenges are and why I think we can do it. I think there is a way to hold people accountable but also tell them when they have done a good job. And when we got the warning from [accrediting body], I was really critical. I was very pointed with the faculty and I said it is *your* responsibility. You had a lot of time to work on this and it has to get done: I don’t care how often you have to come in, it has got

to get done. But when we succeeded, I gave them all the credit. I think it is really important to compliment people when they do the right thing.

The positive emphasis was enabling the DevPres and others also using speeches to promote change and to foster a participatory culture.

Both cohorts offered examples of bringing a new approach as president that was not hierarchical or authoritarian like their predecessors' style had often been. Rather than past presidents who had been highly critical of staff and faculty, the study presidents differentiated their leadership in trying to positively encourage change. They spoke of the need for "civility" and for implementing change at a respectful pace as they tried to change the culture, as all presidents in either cohort had done or were still doing. One AAPres termed this as "building internal capacity," that there must be an understanding of the change process required to have staff more effectively function in teams.

In addition to leading the campus culture to a more positive and respectful culture, several presidents from both cohorts had to overcome an environment where people had actually grown fearful of sharing ideas and opinions. This fear occurred even within the highest levels of leadership. For example, an AAPres described the campus culture when she arrived:

I called it a bunker mentality...I had been in higher ed and the academic world all my life where you throw an idea out and everybody would just discuss it. I'd throw an idea out and nobody would say a word. I'd say, please, if you have ideas I'd love to hear it but we are going to move forward, so if you don't like this idea, now I'm giving you time to tell me. But it has taken a few years to get people open enough to know—and I have said publically, you will not be punished if you just disagree with me. It is not the world from which I have come. I like a great debate. And even with our cabinet—now they do it all the time too, but at first it was like, what is this about? The best ideas come from the debate. So we don't make a decision until someone convinces everyone else in the room that this is the best idea. And I think we have had mostly good ideas. But again it is kind of the academic way, and people now behave that way. But it was a disaster: people were unhappy.

The process of building an internal community was a long and intentional process, the AAPres reported.

Both cohorts discussed the importance of considering and gaining the perspectives of *all* campus staff. They cited examples, such as having to learn the views of areas like maintenance and to take them into account in decisions and plans, especially because neither cohort was likely to have prior exposure to all support staff roles.

For this reason, presidents emphasized the importance of internal communications in terms of rallying people around a vision. An AAPres talked about repeating the visionary message “over and over ad nauseum,” trying to give everyone the opportunity to be part of a strategic change: “The vision stuff I do in my four speeches a year and I’ve been doing it since the very beginning...that’s where I just think it’s really important for presidents to be creative, to come from the creative side, or have creative people around you.” Changing the culture requires new approaches and ideas.

When asked how they achieve buy-in for a strategic vision, presidents shared the communication strategies above, as well as an understanding of when to be realistic. At some point, the presidents often had to make peace with not achieving full buy-in on the campus. A DevPres illustrated this balance of trying to achieve consensus around culture change and strategic visioning while also recognizing when to forge ahead:

Now, you can’t do it overnight and I think you have to surround yourself with folks who are visionary. So that most of it is their ideas that you’re seeing and tweaking. You’re trying to get people to understand their roles. And the communication is just critical. You just can’t share enough information with people and engage them enough. And they’re still going to say no one told me or why wasn’t I asked. I think you have to roll out opportunities for volunteers but you also have to then show the people who are not willing to volunteer that here are the decisions that have been made and here is the direction we’re going in and why we’re going.

As another DevPres explained, since not everyone will be convinced, a president must move forward with those who are engaged and stay focused on the positive momentum:

I think one of the hardest thing in any leadership position is not to get bogged down – on this campus it is a very, very few unhappy people—and it doesn't matter what you do, they are always going to be unhappy. I realized I was spending so much time trying to make them happy and they don't really want to be happy. So I'd rather give all my support to people who are determined to be happy. And they know that. People have seen where I keep singling out people who make the contributions and the people who are doing the extras. At every board meeting if I have it and I often do, I read something that came from a student or somebody from the community complimenting somebody inside. And I also do that at faculty assembly, Oh, look I got this that so and so is a wonderful teacher and this college has changed her life and so we really keep trying to set an example. These people haven't asked to be recognized, but I want everyone to know.

Thus, the president must remain visionary and must have the ability to persuasively convey that to all levels of campus employees and trust the message has been communicated effectively, even if it is not universally accepted or implemented.

Interacting with trustees requires even more sensitivity and patience, the presidents reported.

Board Relations: Frustrations with Commitment (Cohorts Similar)

When asked how often and in what ways they relate to the governing board, an interesting finding was having nearly all presidents from both cohorts cite their weekly emails to board members—and proudly presenting this idea as being unique. In one case, a president noted the idea came from a mentor, but the AAPres still seemed to think he had brought a unique practice to the institution. A lack of understanding about common or best practices with board relations reflects the hesitancy one AAPres described of talking about those to whom you report:

They are your bosses and you don't want to divulge things that may be unethical. How do you handle them? How do you handle personality conflicts with one board member and

another board member when they are your bosses and you can't really intercede and maybe you don't have a strong chair who's experienced?

These electronic communications are certainly important and there are some variations, such as an AAPres who asks for questions one week and answers them in the next week's email.

Although these are common, face-to-face interaction is certainly less so.

Aside from this amusing commonality, however, the cohorts did agree upon more serious concerns regarding board relations. The presidents expressed a shared frustration over a two-fold lack of commitment by trustees: a deficit of knowledge regarding higher education in general and community colleges specifically as well as a lack of trustees' personal investment in fundraising.

Board Knowledge

A frustration shared by both cohorts is that their board members "just don't seem to get it." Whether the boards are appointed or elected, presidents expressed frustration with board of trustee members who do not really seem to understand higher education in general and community colleges specifically. Brown (2012) concurs that trustees are not normally education or policy experts. As a DevPres confided:

I say this to you depending on the confidentiality—the local board, they may be outstanding in their own fields, several of mine are, but they don't know higher education. That's what they hire a president for. And so the way I think about it is they have a great deal of confidence in me, so they leave it up to me. That's great but, number one if I get it wrong, they have shirked their responsibility. And it adds to that isolation in that the board even after [several] years doesn't really deeply understand what we are trying to do here. What I have to do is to constantly show them things they understand so that they maintain confidence, but they don't understand the big picture of the transformation that is going on in higher ed and what we are trying to do instructionally...the big aspirations...our board really doesn't understand it yet. They trust me. I've tried to explain it on multiple occasions and they just kind of glaze over and go, we trust you—go do what you need to do.

Despite the board support for the presidency and the positive working relationship, the DevPres recognizes the need for more knowledge and engagement from the trustees to truly advance the institution.

The lack of understanding can even border on the ridiculous. Another AAPres provided this rather humorous example:

We had a brand new board member and his comment was, “My god, I had no sense of what a college was like or what presidents do. Here in one week you’ve sued somebody and won, you are drilling for oil in the back yard, you are trying to start a new program, you are trying to get the baccalaureate degree, you are doing these other things. And as he said, he had an image of presidents with the patches on the sleeve and a pipe, sitting at a fireplace, reading the great books. As much as that sounds silly, that’s kind of where a lot of heads are about college presidents.

This example did not appear to be an isolated one. Another AAPres expounded on not taking for granted even basic knowledge of board functions and processes when relating to her local board:

A lot of it is meeting with [the trustees] in the beginning and helping them figure out what their role is because they sit on other boards where they can really delve into personnel matters. So, why wasn’t my cousin hired for a secretary, or so and so should have been hired as a faculty member...[meeting] in the beginning to make sure they get what their role is and what governance acts they need and policy making and that their job is not to delve into day-to-day operations. My job is to hopefully get them oriented to that from the beginning. Even in understanding what confidentiality is. I know this is hard to believe, but a trustee might say something to his or her spouse that is then out in the community. It’s small so I can usually track it down to say confidential means no one. This is what happens and then they go, “Oh!”

Although this president attributed such challenges to a rural context, challenges in a board understanding of their service responsibilities and college knowledge emerged regardless of the college size or locale.

Board Fundraising

In addition to a lack of knowledge, another frustration presidents expressed with board members is their lack of involvement in or support for fundraising. Both cohorts expressed appreciation for boards that have 100% participation in giving, although that was not universal; many presidents had worked diligently to achieve that goal.

Beyond trustees' own giving, however, presidents see the need for more direct involvement in fundraising efforts by the college's governing board, not just the foundation board. Ultimately, it will be the president who must encourage this fundraising focus among trustees (Chappell, 2010). The trustees can be helpful, as one DevPres explained, "but they haven't actually raised any money." An AAPres shared that his board approves of him asking for money, but that they would not get personally involved or assist him. Another AAPres actually challenged his board to take action after tiring of only hearing board members saying they would help with fundraising:

They always ask me after my evaluation what can they do, and I said, "You know, what you can do? Everybody sign up for a month: bring somebody on campus that can help us in some way." About half of them [did it]. And that's interesting because they've always wanted to be involved...but it's making that shift.

Making the shift to have governing boards support fundraising is "not something that they have been used to doing. It is something that I continue to work on. Because they just haven't been asked. And, so that is sort of an ongoing *education effort*," an experienced fundraising AAPres urged.

Indeed, it is not the history of community college trustees to be involved with fundraising (Brown, 2012) and this has big ramifications for their continued success. As one DevPres eloquently stated:

One of our biggest challenges is having strong trustees. Strong trustees typically are appointed in a number of ways, usually politically. And universities get really strong trustees, which means they get strong support. Often their trustees are alums and very highly regarded, business leaders, community leaders who have personal treasures that they can share with the institution. Community colleges tend to get middle managers, lower level people and so from a fundraising perspective, trustees are not strong financial supporters at community colleges.

Even though trustees themselves might not be fully invested in fundraising, they do expect that fundraising will be part of a president's responsibilities.

Advancement: From Complacency to a Diversified Future (Cohorts Similar)

Again, questions about advancement constituted their own concluding section of the presidential interviews. This area of management was measured separately, as it corresponds most closely to the conceptual framework of presidents who proactively approach partnerships with philanthropy. Presidents from both cohorts resoundingly agreed that securing private funding is increasing in importance for presidents in terms of their ability to secure alternative resources and the way they spend their time and meet trustee expectations. All presidents believe that the ability to secure additional resources—not just fundraising but true resource diversification—is important in today's challenging fiscal environment. The presidents agreed and differed on their approaches to advancement. The areas of similarity, which will be presented in this section, include making changes to the development staff and altering the foundation board composition or operations.

Changing Development Staff

With three exceptions, the presidents in both cohorts had hired new staff or made changes in the development director/foundation executive director role. Of the three exceptions, two

DevPres explained that they did not have resources to create that role but were taking steps toward development by actively promoting fundraising themselves and by pushing existing staff, faculty, and board members to all become involved in development. The other DevPres explained the college already had “one of the best development directors in the country on board,” but the president did add staff members and resources to the advancement area.

The majority of presidents made changes in development or foundation staffing because of problematic staff they inherited. Both cohorts offered examples ranging from the rather benign—staff who were ineffective—to the extreme of staff in violation of financial or legal regulations. Less dire examples include a DevPres who inherited a faculty member with no background whatsoever in advancement who was serving as an interim foundation executive director. The DevPres took her time finding the right permanent director but also “literally probably co-ran the college and the foundation when I first arrived.”

In one of the more extreme examples, an AAPres disclosed a situation where the executive director position had been eliminated by the former president but the person kept reporting to work, despite also stating “that she would rather pull out her weapon and say give me your money.” In the other extreme example, a DevPres had more than one reason for terminating the development director. The president explained that the board did not want an interim leader, so the outgoing president of the institution left on a Friday and the DevPres started on a Monday. Very quickly she learned of a problematic situation:

Over the course of my first two weeks I found that the president appointed a director of development in the person of a 24-year-old, drop-dead gorgeous blonde. Faculty and staff told me he called her “Barbie” privately ... A lot of our donors were concerned about it. This is the most interesting part: he was paying her out of stimulus funding. Yes, ridiculous, we all had that infusion of non-recurring funds and most institutions made a deliberate decision not to use those non-recurring funds for personnel because obviously we either had to institutionalize the personnel—take them on our institutional budget—or

let them go. So he paid for her position out of the stimulus fund, and that at least gave me the opportunity to let her go with impunity, without any danger.

As evidenced by this situation, the previous, long-term president did not understand or appreciate development, the DevPres stated with sarcasm.

Altering the Foundation Board

Nearly every president in either cohort spoke of concerns regarding their foundation boards. In nearly all cases, the foundation boards, as the presidents originally found them, were ineffective in raising any money. The AAPres with the most fundraising experience recounted, “When I first got here, we had a really nice group of folks on the foundation board, but there was no leadership there. The director of the foundation reported to the board, there was no connection to my office at all.” Another DevPres recalled:

The foundation was very disorganized. The board only met once a year. Can you wrap your head around the idea of a foundation board that meets once a year? It was a small cadre of individuals, five men, who were the executive committee and they met quarterly and basically took the portfolio and made decisions on how to invest the money. No focus on development work, no focus on brochures, marketing, planning, cultivation of donors. We didn’t even know who the donors had been. It was a mess.

In addition to wanting simply to make investment decisions, as the president’s example illustrated, many of the foundation boards did not raise any money because members just wanted to award existing scholarships.

Grants represent a way to meet targeted needs, and both cohorts cited grants as a growing portion of development and as examples of success in diversifying funding. Whether the grants function reports through the development office varied, but grants were a part of the overall resource diversification strategy and were also tied to leveraging other sources of support.

Indeed, nearly all the presidents professed increasing expectations and plans for growing development. The one exception was an AAPres who admittedly is not good at fundraising—“I know I should do more”—but he is involved in sophisticated public-private partnership initiatives. Presidents from both cohorts talked about increasing revenue streams, not just from philanthropy but from a variety of partnerships, as will be detailed in the final section.

The next section explores differences in the presidents, largely by cohort with a few exceptions of those with the most external experience or fundraising expectations regardless of cohort. As Chart 6 illustrates, the presidents also exhibited differences in management of the presidency. Presidents with the most external experience or a current fundraising campaign underway empowered their teams so the presidents could function externally. They also saw the need for talent management, positioned trustees as partners, and promoted fundraising within their institutions and communities. Differences by cohort emerged also regarding leadership in the community and comfort in working with trustees.

Chart 6. Management of the Presidency Is a Matter of Presidential Perception (Cohorts Different)

Key Finding (Pattern noted)	Representative Quote (Different president in each example)
Executive Team: Empowered for External (Presidents from either cohort in active fundraising campaign)	▶ I need my vice presidents to really be vice presidents. –AAPres
Beyond Executive Team: Talent Management (Several DevPres and one most external AAPres)	▶ I think something for the future is the whole idea of talent management. I don't think we do a good job of that in community colleges. –DevPres
Leadership in Community: Passive (AAPres) or Proactive (DevPres)	▶ ...we really ought to position our community colleges as engines of economic development. –DevPres ▶ We're very active in things where we're raising money for somebody else. And I think those things are helping us. –AAPres
Board Relations: Positioning Trustees as Partners (Presidents with most fundraising focus)	▶ You gotta have the personal interaction, and you just gotta make that happen. –AAPres
Board Relations: A Surprising Challenge (AAPres)	▶ I was totally unappreciative of the amount of labor that was involved in the care and feeding of the board. –AAPres
Advancement: Promoting Fundraising (All DevPres and three AAPres with most fundraising experience)	▶ I have been pretty hands on. With the director of development I set some pretty high goals for her that I think she was not accustomed to. –DevPres ▶ We need to have a plan for development...we have now developed an alumni group. We need to have a database for it. –AAPres
<i>Presidents Can Manage Core Responsibilities Differently</i>	

Executive Team: Empowered for External (Cohorts Different)

Given the considerations for structuring executive teams discussed above, the main difference that emerged about team structures was not a difference between the cohorts. Rather, it was that the most externally focused presidents in either cohort—essentially those in a campaign or gearing up for one—have leaner and/or non-traditional executive team hires or structures as detailed in the next section. The most unique example of an executive team structured for the president to function effectively externally is an AAPres with only three direct

reports. This AAPres also has the most external experience of the cohort and is preparing for a campaign utilizing this management team structure:

I have a senior VP, my provost—that's all of the academic stuff plus institutional effectiveness and research, and then an administrative senior VP is over finance and HR and all of that stuff, and then I have one other direct report, who is my VP for foundations and public relations. And that was on purpose, well, except my executive assistant, because I'm shifting that responsibility of day-to-day operations of the college. We're just starting a [sizeable] campaign.

Another externally focused DevPres has frequently made changes to her executive team and signaled that she could do so again as she heads into a campaign. She states, "I think sometimes your structure is more of an artificial structure. You want structure to facilitate the desired outcome, but sometimes getting the right people in the right box means that you have a nontraditional structure." The presidents are positioning hires strategically rather than following structural conventions.

More than being responsive, the mark of an externally-minded president is an executive team structure that is visionary and allows the college to truly move forward. Another DevPres illustrated this attitude in the context of discussing the upcoming retirement of a college vice president: "In fact, my team is going into retreat next week with this change of leadership and where do we want to take the institution next. We need to think about: are we organized as effectively as we need to be not just for today, but for where we anticipate we will be in five years?" Again, a vision for an end goal dictated the structure rather than a traditional structure mandating hiring.

To plan for a future of a presidency that is external, a president must have the ability to move forward with an executive team that is empowered to run the operations of the campus, the internal. Brown (2012) asserts that contemporary presidents need a strong presence on campus

but must delegate more to their executive teams so that they can be equally present and visible beyond campus. An AAPres conveyed this emerging concept:

I think it's very true, over the next ten years, and I know I'm starting to do this, I've got to educate my board a little bit more because I'm moving to this, I don't want to say instinctively, but to some degree is, that I need my vice presidents to really be vice presidents. My time needs to be spent on developing and facilitating the strategy for the college. And then being in the community cultivating and securing funding outside of the state and county... and communicate more about what I'm doing and why I'm not as visible on campus as I was when I first arrived.

The president recognized the need to move in this direction especially because of a fundraising campaign.

The presidents must have confidence in their teams in order to be out in the community, in order to be the external faces of the institution now required of the presidency. At the same time, they must find a way to maintain a campus presence, particularly through communication of their vision and plans because internal constituents make judgments about institutional vitality through presidential words and actions on campus (Eddy, 2010). As the last chapter also explored, the presidents view a connection between internal and external responsibilities.

Presidents were asked to discuss what aspects of the role they keep close and what they can delegate. The DevPres claimed they were able to delegate anything but the external responsibilities, particularly board relations, because of the trust they have in their teams. As one DevPres shared: "Presidents should be able to delegate anything. I don't feel like I have to be here. Maybe that sounds crazy, but when I'm away, I don't have any problems because the team's good." Another DevPres echoed this with a useful analogy for understanding the presidential role in leading operations:

I feel really comfortable with my staff, and being able to delegate day-to-day operations and decision-making. I really view my role as being somewhat of an air traffic controller. We're working on the strategic plan. We see the whole picture, we see all of the planes

flying into the airport, and I'm helping direct and guide and make sure that they are safely landing, but in terms of actually flying the plane, I like to leave that to the people who report directly to me. I do meet with all of them weekly, so that I stay informed about initiatives and things that are happening, so I don't have any trouble at all delegating operationally those things that need to happen.

The analogy to the big picture and strategy was also used to explain when to get involved in an activity and when to remain in more of an oversight role. Another DevPres contrasted the tactical from the strategic to illustrate when she delegated and when she worked more directly with the vice presidents: "At the point it comes to needing to make decisions about moving things forward that require either policy or dollars or board involvement, then I am pretty hands on. There are some tactical issues which never get to the board."

The AAPres also agreed that aspects of the role related to the board they keep very close. But they were not as hands off with other responsibilities as the DevPres were. Several AAPres responded that they liked to stay very involved with finances. That does not mean the DevPres were not interested in finances. In fact, three of them for large periods of their presidencies had to focus almost exclusively on dire fiscal situations. Rather, it seemed to reflect a difference in backgrounds, more of a separation between continued involvement in internal operations and shifting focus to the external.

The DevPres in particular demonstrated a commitment to the internal campus, however, by their concern for staff development.

Beyond the Executive Team: Talent Management (Cohorts Different)

Not only did they all speak of trusting and empowering their teams; many DevPres brought up talent management and staff training and retention and talked about their focus on this rather extensively, in contrast to only one AAPres. Several DevPres and one AAPres gave

examples of talent management efforts ranging from investing in professional development, to involving lower-level middle managers in special sessions with the executive team, to employee teams of faculty and staff formed to implement strategic goals. One of the most advanced examples entails a two-tiered leadership training program, which a DevPres created:

Within my own institution, I established a president's institute about six years ago for 18 employees a year. Not necessarily leadership but just 18 employees learn about the college and learn about themselves, we do the Myers-Briggs and the whole nine yards. And then out of that there was more ambition. And I established the president's leadership institute. That's five people and they have to be graduates of the president's institute. And this year they worked on a phone application, an iPad application for our institution. So, it's things that they can do that my staff didn't have time to do, and it gives them an opportunity to show their leadership skills.

AAPres might also have talent management programs, but only one brought up staff training and retention, as compared to several of the DevPres.

In addition to a concern for the internal community, presidents demonstrated a concern for the external community. Their approaches to external relations differed, however.

Leadership in Community: Passive or Proactive (Cohorts Different)

Different themes emerged in the data between the cohorts when asked how they convey the community college mission to external stakeholders, including the local community. As previously outlined, compelling storytelling and effectively communicating the mission are elements of strategic leadership. All presidents are chief storytellers, but the findings illustrated that some take a more passive approach by conveying how the community can connect with the college, while others proactively shape the story of how the college can advance the community.

AAPres gave examples of getting things done for the community and delivering on promises. For example, an AAPres noted that the local chamber of commerce director refers to

the institution “as the ‘yes college’ because she says anytime there’s anything she needs or asks, we always get it done.” The ability to deliver results in a basic fashion also helped to win over skepticism, as another AAPres shared: “The community perception was they are incapable of getting anything done there—just typical higher ed bologna. It was like actually getting things done made the biggest difference, made people believers.” The colleges were seen as responsive and reliable.

The AAPres also gave examples of corporate visits when asked to explain their community relations strategies. The AAPres were the only cohort to mention that they raised money for community organizations, for example: “We volunteer a lot, too, in the community. And I think it’s paying back. I was the United Way chair here a couple years ago... We’re very active in things where we’re raising money for somebody else. And I think those things are helping us,” an AAPres claimed. This commitment can be sizeable. Another AAPres shared that the college’s efforts to organize faculty, staff, and students in charitable activities in the community, such as runs/walks to benefit issues like breast cancer, had raised close to one hundred thousand dollars during the previous year. The direct return to their organizations on such activities was not as quantifiable. Such strategies represent a potentially effective approach to community relations but a passive one in the sense that the institutions become dependent on others to return support because of goodwill rather than taking agency by directly exercising the influence of the community colleges on the community to create partnerships.

By contrast, a DevPres’ response to the question about community relations best summarizes the collective view of the DevPres cohort, who place a proactive emphasis on economic development:

I speak more the language of economic development and historically community colleges across the country have been seen as reactive, reacting to the needs of the employer

community. You know, coming up with the programs, career and technical programs, and the transfer programs that meet the needs of the economic community as it evolves...we really ought to position our community colleges as engines of economic development...none of the communities in which our community colleges are located have ever used the presence of a community college as a reason for attracting businesses to a region. And now we're beginning to get there.

The most seasoned DevPres paralleled the changes in his own focus on economic development with the changing times and opportunities for community colleges. He explained that he had always been involved in economic development activities, but not to the extent that he was involved now:

And I think the community college president of the future, too, is going to be tied directly to the local community economic development groups—which is either helping recruit businesses to come in, or you're finding ways to make the businesses that are there survive, not just survive but be successful. And that's another key component that is going to play out at the community college, as opposed to a university.

The president affirmed the increasing importance of the community college given the challenge of preparing, attracting, retraining, and retaining an educated workforce in today's changing economy.

In addition to placing more of an emphasis on community relations, the DevPres gave examples and talked about community activities and outreach that were not *as passive* but *proactive*. They interacted with companies and the community not to showcase the college but to seek input and build trust and collaboration. For example, a DevPres gave an example of holding “periodic community forums at each campus and we invite folks from the community to come in and kind of give us a grade if you will on a dashboard of what we're doing and what they'd like us to do differently.”

They sought community input not only on what they were already doing, but also what they could be offering. For example, another DevPres discussed the process of determining what programs or services to offer in a new facility the college had been given:

So we will have our third meeting with members of our community, and talk about if money were no object, what would we be offering the folks here at this downtown facility. Different groups, each time, have been invited to participate. We'll bring all of that information back to our faculty and staff who will then work on a plan for what we do in terms of additional outreach at this facility.

Another DevPres talked about recently implementing what she recognized was a deficit in serving the community:

We are in a primarily agriculture area and I don't think we do enough with that. We just put up a wind turbine because I didn't think we were doing enough with the environmental issues and that's critical in this area. So community college missions tend to be very similar, but I think what sets community colleges apart from one another is where they are and how they respond to their service region.

The AAPres certainly served their communities as well. The difference in responses and approaches to that service is what emerged in the data, with the DevPres proactively seeking input.

The DevPres also gave examples of driving the regional economic development agenda. Part of that comes from being fully engaged in the local community, which they discussed. A DevPres illustrated the importance of advisory boards, chambers of commerce and civic club meetings as ways to build linkages:

So it's a situation where you really have to make sure that you are in the community or that your staff is in the community enough to be at the table when decisions are being made, or that they immediately think of you: How can [XCC] help get this company here or make sure that we don't lose this company, a variety of things. You just have to be nimble.

The economic development responsiveness depends on the heightened ability of a community college, unlike other higher education institutions as noted in the introductory chapter, to be responsive and act quickly.

The DevPres led conversations on campus about how to be engaged in the community, and they also led conversations within the community. Another DevPres provided an example of working with workforce leaders in a regional consortium:

We are trying to do common training where this group of thirty employers that are in a consortium would work together to identify the training, and then workers, into shared training so that we are not going out and doing different customized training sets...I facilitated the meeting and the chamber leader wanted me to facilitate the meeting.

The DevPres had responded to a request not to deliver on a basic request for service but to facilitate an emerging economic development initiative.

In further contrast, the only AAPres to mention proactive positioning of the community college as an economic development driver is the one with the most external focus and experience. Not surprisingly, this president is also at the forefront of a national movement on public-private partnerships.

We're going through a process now to identify potential developers using a consultant that works through the National Council of Public-Private Partnerships to help get the potential land owners developers and then we will work with them and a consultant to develop a public-private partnership agreement and arrangement. There's very few community colleges in the country that have reached out to this group and we're very engaged with them.

Again, the other AAPres when asked about community relations also discussed academic programs and access, more traditional offerings, but not the same proactive economic development emphasis as this one AAPres and the DevPres.

Similarly, when the presidents were asked how they “tell the community college story,” a DevPres best articulated a subtle difference between the cohorts. She and other DevPres shifted the language from what the community can do for the college to what the college can do for the community.

When I’m advocating for the college, I am not talking about the needs of the institution, I’m talking about the needs of the communities that we serve. This is not about what the college needs, or an opportunity to support the college, it’s much more about what can we do to strengthen the communities that we are serving, and to exceed the expectations of our current students as well as our future students.

As they tell the community college story and articulate the mission, presidents could articulate a traditional mission of transfer and training or position those same goals as part of a broader economic development driver.

Some presidents demonstrated an understanding of how external relations could be enhanced by partnering more closely with trustees.

Board Relations: Positioning Trustees as Partners (Cohorts Different)

The presidents from either group who are most experienced in or involved with fundraising (as in a campaign) were the only ones to also stress that electronic communications could not replace interpersonal interaction with trustees. For example, an AAPres cautioned that electronic messages are “only a stopgap.”

You’ve got to have the personal interaction, and you just gotta make that happen. Again, some board members like more frequency than others. I meet with our board chair every Tuesday morning, for about fifteen minutes. She comes to our campus, she’s a doc so has appointments at 8:30, so we usually go from 8 to 8:15 or so, just kind of talk about what’s going on and I’m sensitive to find out what their expectations are, too.

Another AAPres who now has extensive fundraising experience and is in a campaign also prioritizes personal interaction with board members:

Usually it's at budget time, we do a one-on-one with the trustees to go over the budget, which usually happens in early May. And then in December I usually go out to them and sit down with them for about an hour and go through "here's where we are, here's what we're working on." And that gives me a chance to talk about any challenges, anything that I couldn't do. I don't do enough of it, frankly, but it's difficult in this environment. It may be one of the biggest challenges that a president has with a local board. You can't communicate enough with them.

This president enjoys a strong working relationship with her board, which has changed composition considerably during her long tenure.

Indeed, board relations is very time consuming. As one DevPres explained, though, it must be viewed as part of a change strategy:

It is a big board and I have five different committees that meet monthly and the board meets monthly. If I added up the hours I spend in preparing for these board meetings, which I actually think is part of the process of moving forward strategy and projects! I try not to get frustrated with that amount of time and just say this is part of the process of moving things forward. This is how we build momentum. This is all part of the project management. That keeps me sane.

This president utilizes her vice presidents for committees but shared that collaboration required time and training also, to position her VPs for interacting with the board.

Training board members can help to counter a lack of knowledge, which was a shared frustration. Orientation is an important part of this training, but it was not a given that such board education systems were in place. As another experienced fundraising AAPres alleged, "So the role of *educating* the board about what their role is, how to proceed and how to take it forward in an institution is probably one of the most challenging things." Pierce (2012) maintains that trustees "have not been educated about the significance and scope of their responsibilities. They

are generally unaware of the complexities of running a college or university today” (p.62). The presidents emphasized that trustee education requires an ongoing, strategic emphasis.

More DevPres than AAPres offered training ideas they had instituted for trustees. A DevPres discussed implementing a formal board orientation, including giving a tour of campus that she facilitates because “that is a great opportunity for me to begin knowing and having trustees know me a little better and more importantly know the college.” Another DevPres explained how board meetings had been turned into more intentional educational sessions:

We have what we refer to as a workshop before maybe 50 percent of our board meetings, and if we have a particularly challenging issue, or one that the board will have a lot of questions on, we do that in an open public forum where the people involved on campus can sit and have dialogue with the board. The board can ask questions in an informal setting and feel comfortable with that kind of dialogue. The board meetings are so formal, with minutes being taken and all that, so sometimes it’s harder for the board to ask the hard questions, so we take care of that in these workshops that happen probably five or six times a year right before our structured board meetings.

This session was also open to the public. Presidents were careful to note that their board meetings and interactions were in compliance with open meetings acts. Other board training opportunities included retreats and attendance at state or national meetings.

One way to help counter this is to encourage, when possible, people who understand fundraising to become trustees. This point represented another divergence between the groups.

Half of the DevPres brought up the relationship between the foundation board and the governing board and how they were actively trying to recruit trustees from foundation members. One DevPres maintained, “I think that the foundation board is a good breeding ground on which people show their commitment and then you get to build a relationship so that is a good place to look for board members.” The only AAPres to bring up this connection was the most experienced, fundraising-oriented AAPres in the cohort.

Both cohorts discussed the board challenges outlined above, and it did not matter whether the boards were elected or appointed. In fact, several presidents had experience with both types and maintained that while they represented some different elements, board relations remained a challenge overall.

Board Relations: A Surprising Challenge (AAPres)

When asked to describe the surprises or challenge of a presidency, though, only AAPres cited board relations (and five of them at that). An AAPres confessed, “I think one of the challenges that presidents have and one that is much more time consuming than I envisioned and that graduate school and your doctorate work does not prepare you for is the interactions with the board of trustees.” In fact, another AAPres expounded that if he “was responsible for instructional programs in higher ed, I would definitely have students in the program go out and actually interact more with boards, and evaluate them: look at the different types of systems, such as local governance versus state or governor-appointed boards, and the dynamics that go there, and harder stuff, the policy numbers versus the direct involvement.” Other AAPres noted the time required and “the amount of labor that was involved in the care and feeding of the board” came as a surprise.

Many presidents found that promoting fundraising is also a time-consuming activity but one that requires presidential involvement.

Advancement: Promoting Fundraising (Cohorts Different)

While the presidents agreed on more basic aspects of fundraising, including changing development staff and altering the foundation board, differences emerged between the cohorts on

taking those operations to the next level. All DevPres and the AAPres with the most fundraising experience took an active role in overseeing fundraising staff and operations, provided structure to create a basis for fundraising, acted as chief fundraiser, and sought to build a culture of philanthropy on the campus and in the community.

Pushing Development Staff

Even in situations where presidents kept existing staff or reorganized internally, with the exception of the DevPres who inherited an exemplary development director, presidents found it necessary to push staff, to be directive with the advancement staff. For example, a DevPres conveyed, “I have been pretty hands on with the director of development. I set some pretty high goals for her that she I think was not accustomed to, not actual fundraising targets but just certain kinds of activity to get done.”

Yet it was not just DevPres who were very involved with fundraising. The two AAPres with the most fundraising experience were also pushing fundraising staff. One described his plan of keeping annual giving strong but “moving more toward planned giving-wills, bequests, and trusts” as “an enhancement or an addition to the college. And our director of advancement’s been very receptive about all that.” Notice that the AAPres is setting the fundraising agenda and that the existing staff member he kept on is responding to the president’s fundraising leadership. The other experienced fundraising AAPres was also being directive with her development director:

I have been trying to send our director of development to some professional organizations—CASE, CRD—and that is something that wasn’t being done before. Also, encouraging reading some of the professional journals. I have also encouraged her to go and visit some other development offices, some of the ones that I think are really awesome; go spend some time with them.

The president seemed to convey more knowledge and interest in development than the staff.

The lack of qualified development staff relates to the historic lack of investment in community colleges over many years. A DevPres voiced the challenges of fundraising in the two-year institution: “We have such slimly staffed development offices. It is hard to build continuity and it is very, very hard to build the building blocks that are going to help you set a lasting, sustainable development program.” This same DevPres also decided she wanted to take steps toward ending such ongoing challenges by truly investing in staff. The college was hiring for a major gift officer and the vice president for development reported that people who fit the salary range had no experience and those who were qualified were turned off by salary. So the president determined in response:

If you find somebody that is really going to fit that you are certain can make a difference, we’re going to stretch— we’re going to make the additional investment. Because we just can’t afford not to be building capacity and continuity and succession within that unit. We are small and probably every college community development office is small and we turn over people, good people we lose because we can’t keep them because of [low] pay. We have to understand that we must have a strategic plan for building continuity and stability. Donors don’t want to see a different development director every two years.

The president understands the long-term impact of short-sighted staffing decisions.

Providing Structure for Fundraising

The focus on pushing development staff is similar to the other key contribution presidents made to the advancement area: providing structure to fundraising operations. Examples ranged from setting goals, to meeting regularly with development staff, to establishing systems and policies for processing gifts and thanking donors. For example, a DevPres explicated the rationale and plans for a centralized database system:

You have silos on campus, and that was particularly true and still is, to some degree, here on the corporate relations side. So you have people who are looking to do job placements with the students, both in terms of internships and graduate placement, and the people in

the placement office don't talk to the development office that may be looking to develop funding strategies with the corporate community. And they don't talk to the academic side of the house that is reaching out to business and industry to be on advisory boards to inform their curriculum, who doesn't talk to the non-credit side of the house that is trying to shape contract training with the business and industry world. On any given day you could have four different people from your campus tripping over each other outside a corporate CEO's office and they don't know what each other are doing. The president is being blindsided in the course of that, instead of being able to say to a potential business—we want to thank you that John Doe is on an advisory committee for IT, or I was really delighted that a number of our students were able to be absorbed into your business last year. So, a lack of information across the board. We began to use the Blackbaud Database Management system to begin to put together more communication to try to build a more effective corporate relations plan. We are still working on that. The marketing side of the house needs to be integrated into this as well.

The president had a comprehensive vision for development and recognized the fundamental need for effective systems, human and electronic.

Successful development operations require more than good staff, however. From hiring and overseeing staff to providing the structure for advancement operations, it clearly emerged from both cohorts that the president must be the chief fundraiser for fundraising to be effective.

Acting as Chief Fundraiser

Two of the DevPres stated this explicitly. “I do think it's very important that the president be the primary fundraiser for the campus. The president should be the face of the college. The president should be very involved with local communities and organizations as well as workforce development and economic development,” one DevPres asserted. Even working with a good development director closely as a team, the other DevPres expressed: “at the end of the day, breaking into certain areas requires the president to do it. Nobody else can do it no matter how good they are or how good their relationships. They just don't have that access.”

The president's role as chief fundraiser is perhaps most significant in terms of foundation boards. The president had to help push the foundation to view its role as not only more than awarding scholarships but also raising money for more than scholarships. For one reason, the college's needs go well beyond scholarships, as a DevPres explained:

Here the foundation is one for scholarships for students. That's been their primary purpose since the beginning is raising funds for scholarships, but at this college 80% of our students are on Pell grants, so scholarships, while important, can be expanded. So my work at the foundation is there are other ways that the foundation can help the college, and when asking for gifts, to ask for gifts that aren't tied to scholarships, that are just for the college would be helpful so we can have funds in areas where, that we don't have state funds for. So that's been an education process.

The president is educating the foundation board about truly effective fundraising. Another DevPres aimed for her foundation board to do much more also, as she explained.

I kept saying raising scholarships for low-income, bright kids is low hanging fruit. Who's not going to give to that? What I really need for us to do is to think about how this foundation can help us solve the problems of the community and to shift their mindsets that it's not about [XCC]; it's about what [XCC] can do in the community.

Campus needs should not dictate the fundraising agenda. Campus outreach—what the campus can do for the community—should drive the external partnership, the DevPres articulated.

Such a partnership requires a broad agenda with accountability that truly focuses on comprehensive fundraising and demands presidential involvement. A DevPres described the college's cyclical success in fundraising: "I find that my attention directly correlates to results on the private side, not on the public side. On the private side, my results correlate to my attention to it. I could map it." Regardless of the effectiveness of the foundation executive director, the presidents still had to lead the efforts to build or rebuild and nurture the foundation boards. Being the chief fundraiser means devoting a chiefly amount of time and attention to development operations.

The presidents all illustrated the literature findings that community colleges have only recently looked to private support. The presidents gave examples of fundamental gifts and building an effective foundation board when asked to describe advancement achievements under their tenure. Several presidents in both cohorts offered examples of successfully securing named gifts, by asking for the first time in the institution's history. The DevPres and the more fundraising-experienced AAPres had implemented successful faculty/staff giving campaigns. They offered examples of increasing growth in these areas, even during the last few years of recession.

The presidents were all largely building fundraising operations, and thus did not necessarily have impressive successes to share. The challenge of building a foundation for advancement should not be underestimated as a worthy and challenging endeavor, however. As an AAPres declared, rather incredulously, "It really has been fascinating, this notion: No one's ever asked." As a result of the rather fundamental emphases, successes are harder to quantify. As a DevPres asserted, "I think more importantly we've raised the right money—money for the things that we needed to be focused on. And so the amount of dollars has been less important than getting dollars for certain specific needs."

Two of the more interesting examples of fundraising successes came from two of the most seasoned fundraisers, a DevPres and an AAPres. The AAPres offered an example of successfully working with a donor to realize a gift that was unique and meaningful to the college, rather than the expected scholarship:

You have to be creative. You also have to have really good communications skills. That is up at the top because part of it is being able to determine how does this person really want to leave a legacy? A woman whose husband was very wealthy set up scholarships in his name at another institution where he was employed for a while locally, and so she assumed that she should take that money and do the same kind of thing here that she was doing there. Then as I talked with her, I said, you really like the arts—she is an adjunct

here—you are doing so many neat things in that area. Have you thought that he would really want to spend that money that you have right now the way you want to spend it? You helped him earn it. Why don't you just do something that you want to do that may set a legacy for yourself—something in the arts. I said, I have been thinking I'd love to have a sculpture walk here. Does that interest you at all?

The donor was excited by this new opportunity, and a sculpture garden now figures prominently on the campus. The DevPres offered an example of creativity in raising funds and the importance of presidential leadership in the initiative. The DevPres explained:

We took a derelict digital plant across the street from us and converted into a technology park with a small business incubator and the development office led the development of the resources for a capital campaign to make that happen and put in place the entrepreneurial curriculum to feed it and all those other elements. While it was not my responsibility to lift it, it was my responsibility to strategize how to lift it, to serve as a catalyst, as the leader of the leadership team... So a lot of what I did in my past life I pull from that.

Again, past development experience helped in this case with fundraising success as a president.

The most focused examples for increasing advancement derived from DevPres and the more externally-focused AAPres. They include plans to create or enhance alumni programs. One AAPres stated this goal: "I'd like to expand. We don't have an alumni connection yet. I'd like to put alumni affairs or an alumni advancement type model together to fit with our endowment." A greater emphasis on planned giving was also an ambition for several presidents. A DevPres expressed, "In my mind it's important when there is an occasion to celebrate a person's life or a person's work is to be able to give to the foundation." As previously noted, faculty/staff campaigns had enjoyed success and were a goal for continued growth in the future, including cultivating retirees for planned gifts.

Beyond these specific vehicles for giving, all the presidents have plans for comprehensive resource development, as the next section will explore further. This involved a

more focused approach to partnerships and funding options. For example, a DevPres explained that his time has been focused on building connections with the community, “forming some very important strategic partnerships we didn’t have before with our area industries.”

The strategic approach will likely entail changes in staffing structures as well. One of the AAPres in a campaign illustrated this concept, still yet to be fully realized:

But going forward in the future, and this could be in the next few years, [a college will be] quite likely to have a vice president of, I don’t even know what—a community something, but it would be the foundation and grants and workforce...I’ll give you a great example. The community college right next door, [the president] is phenomenal. She just hired the most visible, successful entrepreneur in the county and made him, I want to say, it may have even been an executive vice president or senior vice president, and he took on workforce development, foundation, grants, and their auxiliary services, like you know, the bookstore and vending. Anywhere you can make money: that guy’s in charge of it. He’s come from the private sector. He’s the second highest paid employee, you know, next to the president and fairly close to the president, I understand. I think that’s going to be the model, I really do. I think that’s going to be as regular, in the next 10 to 15 years, that’s going to be as regular as academic, student and administrative VPs.

Similarly, a DevPres explained the strategic goal of her college in a way that has yet to be fully realized. The entrepreneurial, comprehensive approach to resource development involves a different mode of operations. The DevPres explained:

I guess if I had to say it in a way that was politically correct, figuring out how to fund our own destiny: you know, sustaining a funding model for the future in the wake of declining college money, including a big piece of that, this private fundraising piece and building our own ancillary enterprises. We are starting a new culinary campus that is going to be truly self sufficient, with no public support.

The alternative funding sources include but are not limited to philanthropy, but the same skills in building relationships and partnerships apply.

Although both cohorts are building philanthropic operations, the ideas offered and the confidence in moving forward to realize them corresponded with the president’s comfort level with fundraising. DevPres definitely knew more; they had successfully built fundraising

enterprises in previous development positions. Similarly, the AAPres with external experience offered more sophisticated examples of successes in and goals for funding.

In contrast, other AAPres seemed to rationalize that they were still in the process of learning fundraising themselves. When asked whether the expectations for presidential involvement in fundraising had been met, an AAPres explained, “Probably not. Part of it is, I’m still learning myself.” Another AAPres who was just starting to have some fundraising success cautioned, “It’s new; we’re kind of learning as we go.”

Certainly, fundraising can be learned. As the most seasoned fundraising AAPres articulated, external skills can not only be developed but also mastered:

I was not a fundraiser. I was in the academic world...I didn’t know I would like fundraising and I didn’t know if I’d be good at it. And you kind of want to have those things: if you don’t like it, you’re not good at it. But, I realized that I am good at it. I’m very passionate about what we do here at the community college—changing people’s lives every day. So, I come alive when I can talk about students and how, if you give a gift, this is going to impact these students. I can put it in front of them and show them the impact.

Building a Culture of Philanthropy

Another aspect of presidential leadership in fundraising is trying to improve the institutional culture for fundraising by involving faculty and staff. A DevPres offered an example, charging a faculty member with fundraising for a new center the college is developing:

I just gave the faculty member half-time release to direct that and a big part of what he needs to do is fund raising. He had a sabbatical to see another institute like what we envision and he said, well, you know that director she has to spend so much of her time fund raising—well, yeah, so are you. So what I am doing is giving him half time, making him the director, giving him a year...And I said this is your chance to try it out. You may find that you hate it and you want to go back to being a faculty member and that’s fine. Then we will just have to find a way to hire somebody.

The president is introducing fundraising into expected academic leadership responsibilities.

Another DevPres has built fundraising training into faculty leadership training, “working with our deans on that now, especially around development, grantwriting, and being entrepreneurial.”

Fundraising thus becomes a way to continue fundamental operations of the college, and an essential focus of all campus leaders. An AAPres also explained trying to shift the culture:

I think the biggest change that we have had to work on in the organization is realizing that raising money isn't one person's job, that we do these things because we're cultivating. And that's been the biggest change: it's a team effort... You don't just walk in, you've got to have the relationship there.

Instilling a team approach to philanthropy involves helping all staff and faculty to understand they are “ambassadors” for the college.

The presidents spoke of changing the culture on campus as well as changing the community culture toward fundraising. For example, a DevPres expounded on helping to move the community toward philanthropic support of the college:

It is developing the culture of doing fundraising...it is also developing the culture saying you want to get things done. There is not a lot of money out there but banks have to give money to their communities. Let's make sure we get our share. It's a challenge to get to the retired people that are enormously wealthy people on the shore...we have started to do that. Our foundation board—I'm using them. This Sunday we are having a lunch at one of their houses with a group of people from one of the counties. It's not fundraising; it's testing out the case and seeing what would make them connect to us.

An AAPres explained the challenges of bringing the community, both the campus and beyond, toward an understanding of philanthropy:

In small rural communities, typically they are not very philanthropic. Farmers tend not to be—and I am a farm kid—so this community is not particularly philanthropic. It is a learned behavior. You have probably worked in places where—where I last worked—everybody gave to the United Way and gave significantly because it was an expectation. At first you may be taken aback, but it becomes a part of the culture. And I would say here it has become lots more, but we have a ways to go.

The culture includes both asking for money and building an awareness of the very need to

fundraise. The presidents must educate the community, both internal and external, about the importance of philanthropy.

Sometimes changing the culture required overcoming a sense of complacency. An AAPres explained that for many years the campus had enjoyed the benefaction of a committed local foundation. Given changing times, she recognized the need to look beyond that support, as well as not to take it for granted. She explained, “I think one of the things that I brought to [XCC] when I came was that I saw the importance of—we needed to beef up our grants and going for other kinds of resources because we had gotten used to courting just the same old, same old.” Complacency was both relying on the same supporters as well as the same types of finding, like scholarships.

Education of the importance of fundraising includes building more sophistication around funding needs. A DevPres correlated her ability to help build such connections from her past experience, which she has continued as president:

A lot of times people would come into the development office and would say we need a computer lab. My job as a development officer was to say, What will be happening differently if we get a new computer lab? How will this place be different? Then I can build a needs statement. If we have a new computer lab we will be able to offer this, this and this. So I would take a wish list and turn it into a strategic proposal that could be shopped to someone for funding. And I think that same skill plays out now as president. There are competing needs on campus and so my response to people when they say we need a new computer lab is to say, Oh, that is exciting—tell me how we will be different as a result of it. And from that perspective I’m able to get a better sense of what the vision is of the individual who is asking because it is not about a computer lab—it is about the ability to shape a better delivery—or a better modality for instruction—or the capability to add a new curriculum area. And they think it is about a new computer lab because no one asked them what they were going to do with it if they got it.

Rather than just stating a need, development officers understand it is essential to explain why a building, program, or fund is needed in terms of what it will do, its impact.

Another DevPres correlated her experience with building relationships to respecting relationships in the community and using those same relationship-building skills to seek other support. As the Dev Pres explained:

We had just finished a capital campaign for eight million dollars for a new allied health sciences building, and in this little community, we needed to sit back...as far as capital campaigns and soliciting our community for support. There are a lot of tremendous needs in this community, all of which belong to the community college and are related to education, and so I really felt like we needed to honor all other organizations in the community and to look for other kinds of support. It's all about relationships, and building those relationships, and whether you're working with an individual donor or a grantor or a state agency who wants your services, it truly is about gaining their trust, and being authentic and genuine in what we say we can deliver and then we need to deliver it. And in some instances, because it is a stretch, it's really causing us to be more creative and think out of the box, and to be pretty aggressive in terms of our working with these state agencies.

Skills for procuring philanthropic support can help with garnering other sources of funding as well.

The president must also understand the impact of the college's role in the community when launching fundraising initiatives. An AAPres who is expected to fundraise has to reconcile that expectation with the reality of the community preparation:

You know, it's a small community and what we realized was there had been very little cultivation. My predecessor certainly knew everybody, and everybody knew him and the college was well-loved, but there was never any cultivation that positioned people for an ask. And that was the biggest surprise.

The following chart (Chart 7) summarizes management of the presidency by the cohorts, the comparison and contrasts between their responses. Again, the findings were based on a significant amount of responses so as to warrant discussion: similarities shared a common response by a majority in both cohorts and differences represented views by only one cohort or a group of presidents united by another characteristic, such as having external experience.

Some other findings, while interesting, involved responses by only two or three presidents in either cohort. These findings were not presented but will be summarized as follows. Subtle differences emerged between the cohorts when a few DevPres talked about strategic planning in terms of data and broad constituency input. Some of the DevPres had implemented rather dramatic shifts in the strategic planning process as compared to their predecessors. Both cohorts provided a few examples each of how their institutions did not tie their budgets to planning. One of the AAPres and four of the DevPres spoke of *educating* staff about the budget and empowering people and holding them responsible. They emphasized the need for transparency in finances. A few presidents in both cohorts provided examples of having to cut programs and being more intentional about evaluating program effectiveness given today’s tough financial climate. They also expressed caution in hiring, even in filling vacant positions, until it was clear a position would remain. The presidents confessed the high-stakes of being responsible for people’s livelihoods and a community’s well-being. While the ability to handle finances is certainly helpful, presidents in both cohorts emphasized the ability to delegate this responsibility and affirmed that finances cannot dictate operations.

Chart 7. Management of the Presidency Is a Matter of Presidential Perception—Synopsis

Cohorts Similar	Cohorts Different
Executive Team: Need a Strong VPAA	Executive Team: Empowered for External (Presidents from either cohort in active fundraising campaign)
Executive Team: Building Teams under Constraint	Beyond Executive Team: Talent Management (Several DevPres and most external AAPres)
Leadership on Campus: Creating Internal Community	Leadership in Community: Passive (AAPres) or Proactive (DevPres)
Board Relations: Frustration with Commitment	Board Relations: Positioning Trustees as Partners (Presidents with most fundraising focus)
Advancement: From Complacency to a Diversified Future	Board Relations: A Surprising Challenge (AAPres) Advancement: Promoting Fundraising (All DevPres and AAPres with most fundraising experience)
<i>Presidents Manage Core Responsibilities Based on Perceptions of Presidential Role</i>	

In summary, management of the presidency is a matter of presidential perception. The presidents empowered their executive teams while also respecting the college culture. Regardless of their own backgrounds, presidents rely on the provost position. The most externally-minded presidents have empowered their executive teams so the presidents can function more externally. Leadership on campus—that is, building the internal community—remains important. Yet presidents must also exercise more leadership in the community. Community relations can be passive or proactive, wherein presidents position the colleges as drivers of economic development. Presidents are striving for more transparency and alternative revenue sources in the colleges as they strategically position them in the community. Board relations, interacting with both the governing and foundation boards, emerged as a challenging aspect of the presidency. Presidents must have the ability to educate trustees about their roles and to encourage their involvement in fundraising. The president is the institution's chief fundraiser, leading the foundation board, pushing development staff, and building a culture of philanthropy on the campus and in the community.

Questions about how the culture had changed in terms of advancement under their leadership also caused presidents to reflect on changes in the presidency overall. Data on changes to the presidency in terms of its increasing external nature had also emerged when the presidents discussed their backgrounds, and they expounded on these views as the interview ended, often referencing and building upon earlier statements.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ROLE CENTERS ON THE COMMUNITY MORE THAN THE CAMPUS

The first part of this chapter presented findings on how leaders function in the presidency. The remaining section explores how the leaders feel about the presidency, both their own presidency (their current one in particular if more than one presidency) and the role in general.

The final set of findings emerged from statements made during different times in the individual interviews. When queried about their backgrounds early in the interviews, the presidents were asked specifically how the presidency had changed since they were hired and about surprises or challenges they found in the role. They also discussed the presidency, their own and their views on the role in general, as the interviews concluded. They often returned to earlier statements as the interview progressed, building upon their responses and making connections to other topics.

Both cohorts talked about “loving the position” of president, even with the incredible responsibility it entails. One DevPres summarized that “It’s an awe inspiring experience to be in the place where the buck stops.” Another DevPres articulated the tension between what the president can and cannot control:

Most of the time I love my job. There are days I go home and don’t sleep well. Most of the time when I put the students on the side of the equation, I do sleep well. But the areas that I don’t sleep well on are when the political pressures come down and things that are outside of my control and the bureaucracy impinge on the ability of the college to move on to the destiny that we think is appropriate for our community.

It is this focus on the president’s intentions and actions combined with external forces and pressures that will be explored in this final section. The presidents agreed there are changing

expectations, both for the role of the presidency itself and for their individual colleges and community colleges in general—now and in years to come.

Legacy of Engagement

The presidents were asked to reflect on their roles, with most presidents now well into their tenure or even in a second or third presidency. They were asked what accomplishments they hope will define their presidency (the current one, if holding a presidency previously). This question, ultimately about legacy, resonated with the presidents perhaps more than any other, with nearly all stating it was an interesting or great question and many saying they had been reflecting on this question themselves as they approached retirement. The presidents' responses demonstrate that the community college presidency centers around the community.

The table below (Table 8) illustrates the impact the presidents hope to have on the institution and the areas they have emphasized or prioritized. In the final two DevPres examples, the responses are indicative of responding to problems in the institution and redirecting or repositioning the college in more stable and promising ways of operating. Therefore, their accomplishments are not necessarily what the two presidents would want but what was required and what will be remembered of their tenures—still important actions in the history of their colleges.

Table 8. Legacy: The Way the Presidents Wish to Have Their Tenures Remembered

ACADEMIC		DEVELOPMENT	
Pseudonym	Legacy	Pseudonym	Legacy
<i>Frank</i>	Becoming major economic player in region; serving community and business & industry partners	<i>Paulson</i>	Connection to the community; academic excellence when started but insular
<i>Olsen</i>	Changing the culture and way the community regards the college; providing new programs	<i>Glidden</i>	Transitioning to a modern community college
<i>Perry</i>	Business systems & intelligence and facilities for the future; improved finances	<i>Ross</i>	Being a leader in environmental issues; academic issues; assessment
<i>Duncan</i>	Academic program excellence; improved student centeredness	<i>King</i>	Better teaching and learning
<i>Unser</i>	Sustainability; better service and access for region	<i>Siegel</i>	Creating a new model for community colleges
<i>Walsh</i>	Buildings; atmosphere service; community connections	<i>Daniel</i>	Opening two full-service campuses; access; affordability
<i>Wooten</i>	Impacting community though new educational opportunities	<i>Croft</i>	Students are <i>really</i> successful; improved community relations
<i>Jenkins</i>	Serving the community and preserving access	<i>Dabundo</i>	From insular to broadened reach; access; community relations
<i>Hurst</i>	Fine arts as service to the community	<i>Bettendorff</i>	Implementing data-driven systems, strategic planning, key performance indicators
		<i>Baker</i>	Financial stability

The AAPres cited primarily community relations activities, while the DevPres cited more academic accomplishments. Neither cohort offered an example of raising money as a legacy, even though this is often the way presidential accomplishments are captured in bios and promotional materials. Even if a success was made possible through securing funding, it was not the resources themselves but what they accomplished that presidents focused upon as defining their legacies.

Although what occurs on campus is important, the common theme among the presidents as a whole is the emphasis on serving the community in a greater way than before their presidency. The way presidents want to be remembered, and the way constituents will likely

evaluate their legacies, involves an enhanced emphasis on actions and impact beyond the campus.

External Skills: Increasing in Demand, Lacking in Preparation

In addition to reflecting upon their own accomplishments, the presidents were also asked to describe how different aspects of their role, such as leadership in the community and advancement, had changed during their tenure. They responded by expressing views of how the presidency itself had changed, particularly around the external demands of the role (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Finding with Near Universal Agreement for “Management of the Presidency”

All but two of the presidents in the study believe that fundraising as a specific strategy for raising alternative revenue has become an increasingly important expectation for presidents.

The AAPres nearly all suggested that fundraising specifically—not just alternative resources to public funding—has increased in importance for the presidency. As an AAPres stated:

I think anybody going into the presidency is expected to fundraise now. I would say if you are not into that at all, it might not be the right job for you. It used to be you could be something else, or you could sit in your office a lot. I think it is getting tougher and tougher to do that.

Another AAPres echoed this view of a change from the historically traditional internal focus of the community college presidency:

The old understand the curriculum and make decisions about what classes are offered—those days are over. Advancement is probably going to be, if it's 30% now, or 40%, it's going to be 80% later. It's just going to be even more so, and it's friend raising and fundraising. The pathway, I believe right now is through the endowment side, foundation, fundraising. I think you have to need to have an understanding of the academic side

because that's what we're all about, but, more and more, it's important to understand the endowment, foundation, and advancement side.

The president contrasts the academic with external responsibilities, and the external prevails.

Most of the AAPres, while noting the increasing role of fundraising, still cautioned that those skills alone are not enough for the presidency. As another AAPres argued:

I think advancement definitely is important for a President. There is such a difference between a person who just comes through the traditional path and a person who's well rounded. I think an advancement person has to also know how to run a college. I do. Not an expert in every area, but at least an understanding.

Advancement skills alone cannot compensate for a foundational knowledge of academics.

In fact, one AAPres questioned whether advancement experience is important for the community college presidency. He has spent decades at the same institution and does not consider himself skilled in development. Yet he did offer an interesting perspective:

I think it is especially true if you're in a four-year institution—especially the four year institution that is private—development is an absolutely excellent route to the presidency. In community college environments, I think it is less crucial except [his distinction] for the personality attributes that you see in most good development people. They are good communicators; they remember names and places and faces. They are good at communicating the story—those are the elements...because you are selling internally just as you are externally, trying to get people on board.

The AAPres raises an important point about whether it's the experience itself or the abilities of development officers that matter.

Two DevPres actually expounded upon the importance of the critical skills involved in successful fundraising. One explained the realizations gained by reading a book called *Now Find Your Strengths* and taking a "Strength Finder" test as part of the AACC Future Leadership Academy: "I think when I took that psychometric test it reaffirmed for me what my strengths were: very strategic, very visionary, I'm an optimist, I'm an actualizer, an achiever... And I

think those are key qualities of development people.” The other DevPres explained how the advancement responsibilities of the presidency balance the academic focus:

I have always heard there are presidents that don’t like that part of it [fundraising], and I love it. And I love sitting with faculty and living in the sort of world of ideas. But then ultimately I am an action person and it drives me crazy when it comes to that. I’m like, okay now it is time to do something. I think what I like about the advancement function is you don’t sit and talk about ideas forever. It is immediate and you have to make it happen. And I just like that: I find it very, very creative.

Notice that this president does not neglect academic responsibilities; they are just not the sole focus of this DevPres’ presidency.

The other DevPres also maintained fundraising was becoming increasingly important to the presidency and talked about it in terms of boards—that trustees were becoming more savvy about the need to hire for development experience. “More and more boards are looking for presidents who have that kind of experience because funding is really a huge issue,” one postulated, a sentiment echoed by several DevPres.

The DevPres also related this increasingly important focus of fundraising with an increasing complexity of the presidency. As one explained:

Trustees see that to get resources in the future, colleges are going to have to be externally focused on fund raising, on friend-raising and in collaborating with businesses. And those skills again have always been there, but they are more important than ever. The job of the community college president is more complex than ever. When ninety percent of our funding came from the state—you know, originally it was a hundred percent—it was a much simpler job.

The complexity is due to the increasingly competitive nature of fundraising itself. Another DevPres illustrated:

It’s become more critical than ever that there be a foundation/development background. Because we just cannot rely any more on just the state appropriations. Because now that there’s the competition with the proprietary schools, it’s an era of you’re out there in the community seeking partnerships, and workforce, and investments...Many more trustees

are savvy now to what kind of work can you do to help enhance the institution because we're going to need help financially.

Another DevPres summarized the changing role quite simply: "I don't think that there is any board now across the country that would not have the expectation that the president would be really engaged in private fundraising."

Two of the most fundraising-focused AAPres also expressed concern that current and future presidents are unaware of or unprepared for the increasing external expectations. As one confessed:

I don't think I could have predicted this development piece, in the way that it's come to take form. I knew it was going to be an increased responsibility, but I didn't, I don't think anybody could, just with the economy and the sad economic state of so many of our states—it's been a fundamental change or shift that's occurred. So, that's been a bit of a surprise.

The other AAPres echoed the concern that the external demands of a presidency would surprise many people:

My concern is that folks that are looking at presidencies, and even people that are in presidencies at the community colleges—and the universities are better at this than us—they just don't have a clue what it takes and that it's going to be mandatory. I would argue with the way that public funding is now, if you can't fundraise or you don't like to fundraise, you don't like to be an external president, you're going to have a real difficult time. That's why I do as much consulting as I can with new presidents. And I sense that there's a real gap there. I mean, you've got the executive leadership institute, you've got the AACC institute or whatever, but none of them—I went through all of them—really get in-depth with fundraising, to me.

This deficit in awareness and preparation becomes even more critical because the environment is still changing. As a DevPres explained: "...it really means staying on your toes all the time, just because you're solving the problem for today doesn't mean you have the solution for tomorrow, and I think that's one of our biggest challenges...The old models don't work."

The DevPres in particular illustrated that new models for community colleges involve having a vision for tomorrow. One DevPres explained being relentless in pursuing opportunity as the reason for success: “Because we didn’t rest on our laurels. We were always looking ahead even in the most difficult, constrained arenas.” Another echoed this by stating, “We are constantly moving entrepreneurially.”

A Future Orientation Fosters Resource Diversification

This constant movement and looking to the future centers around being entrepreneurial and finding ways to diversify resources in the face of declining traditional sources of revenue. The AAPres with the longest tenures had instituted visionary entrepreneurial initiatives at their colleges that had been firsts for the state or had even been nationally recognized, such as pioneering sustainability programs and leasing college space for commercial enterprises. A seasoned AAPres now early on in his tenure at another institution promised, “We’re getting ready to do some things that hopefully have some national implications.” Nearly all the DevPres also gave examples of innovation. Both cohorts were entrepreneurial and sought to diversify resources.

The way they discussed these efforts differentiates the cohorts, however. DevPres talked less about what the college initiatives were and more about the partnerships involved. They also provided more detailed examples of *how* they were working with others to diversify resources rather than just citing college-driven initiatives. For example, one DevPres talked at length about the college exploring its other options, with state funding at 1999 levels, yet an enrollment three times what it was at that time and a mandate not to increase tuition, “so we began to think very seriously about what are our other options, and to think out of the box in terms of looking at our

resources.” The president did not want the college’s need to be at the expense of the community, which had really supported its last building endowment drive:

I really felt like we needed to honor all other organizations in the community and to look for other kinds of support, not through an increased tax base, not through more donors, things like that, although they have continued to come. We’ve received some extraordinary gifts in the last three years, so I began to look at options in terms of resources, and we’ve been very fortunate in that we actually are working on several state contracts ... the state contracts are giving us equipment. In some instances they allow us to fund new positions on campus, at least for a year or two, which will be enough time to get them incorporated into the operating budget, so they have been a tremendous blessing, and it’s kind of an unusual way in which to do resource development. It’s working for us.

In fact, this same DevPres detailed a three-year initiative involving several community leaders who worked together to create a “replicable model” for a renewable energy power plant that has a variety of objectives, including providing a hands-on learning experience, servicing the energy needs of the community, and serving as a small business incubator.

Another DevPres also related seeking alternative revenues as a new way of doing resource development, using the same skills required for securing gifts:

In order to grow the enrollment because we have limited physical space, we had to look to strategy to create a new physical space in the more remote areas of our service area. We needed to find partners out there who were interested in having a community college to serve a community that was underserved in terms of their education access. So we worked with the business community there to the point that they were eager for us to come in and put a campus there...But it was using a lot of development strategies— the relationship building piece with the community, the ability to convey to the potential landlord the value of an in-kind donation with less revenue on the lease side for the first two years to build a stronger position mutually moving forward, where he would be in a stronger position as we became stronger. So it was a lot of the same problem identification, problem strategy, objectives, goals, outcomes, measures that one would normally do on the development side of the house, but also the private sector conversations about how do you build relationships in the community.

The DevPres correlated their ability to foster other types of partnerships and public-private initiatives with their prior development experiences.

Figure 5. DevPres' View on Future Impact of Technology and Generations

Only the DevPres—and half of them at that—highlighted the changing generational mix and its implications for technology.

Continuing in the realm of broad reflection, the interviews concluded by asking whether there was anything else not yet discussed that should be known about the contemporary community college presidency. Only the DevPres—and half of them at that—brought up a changing generational mix, both in students and staff, and the related increasing role of technology and its implications for those mixed generations (Figure 5). The following statement summarizes the views expressed by these several DevPres:

Obviously, the era of technology now has created a new environment for institutions through the social media, and Twitter, and we're instantaneous for our folks. We're struggling a bit, as I think most institutions are, with the generations and differences in learning styles and teaching. We're almost in a one-room schoolhouse now when you look at the different generations in the classroom. Faculty have been adjusting to the different learning styles people bring and differences in expectations students have. I think just being cognizant of that and knowing if you focus on enhancing student learning outcomes regardless of the methodologies, then you're doing your job. And your faculty are engaged.

The DevPres also positioned these challenges as opportunities. Brown (2012) maintains that the new presidential skills required to meet today's challenges include "navigating new technologies—to support campus operations and services while adapting to rapidly changing students learning styles" (p. 85). The DevPres' statements demonstrated an awareness of these skills, just as they reiterated the importance of a future orientation and resource diversification to meet these changing technological and generational needs as well.

In summary, the presidents demonstrated that, for today's community college leaders, the presidential role centers on the community more than the campus. Presidents hope their own personal legacies reflect leadership in engaging the community like never before. The presidents had experienced changes in their own roles, and beyond themselves, they foresee community college presidents now and in the future primarily functioning externally. Because the presidents are attuned to the changing environment and building for the future—not just their personal legacies but the extended impact of their colleges on the surrounding community, they are diversifying resources.

DISCUSSION

A general conclusion gleaned from this research is regardless of the presidents' backgrounds or the characteristics of the colleges they lead, community college presidents all share a common set of core responsibilities. How they choose to execute those responsibilities can vary, however.

Leading an executive team is a primary presidential responsibility. The presidents in the study had all recruited, replaced, or confirmed keeping the previous administration's provost, so that they all had the utmost confidence in this key position of the vice president for academic affairs. The provost is the primary conduit to the faculty and achieving credibility for internal actions involving the faculty and academics.

One might suspect that DevPres would rely more on the VPAA role than AAPres. That was not the case, probably because the DevPres had academic experience, including holding academic affairs positions, even provost (as the last chapter detailed). The findings demonstrate that AAPres equally delegated oversight of the academic function and relied just as heavily upon the provost position to help implement change as did the DevPres. In doing so, the presidents

also differentiate the role of the provost from the presidency and affirm the DevPres' statement from Chapter 5 that a president does not need to be a second VPAA.

When evaluating the presidents' administrative teams, the provost role had the most standard set of defined responsibilities and a clear relationship to the presidency. Beyond this key position, however, the presidents did not necessarily have their ideal executive team structures.

Both cohorts provided examples of keeping roles in place or people in those roles out of respect for the college culture. Many had dealt with problematic vice presidents, usually candidates who had also vied unsuccessfully for the presidency, and the presidents acted decisively in removing them. Making changes to the executive team when members were not problematic—perhaps just less than ideal—did not entail such swift action by the presidents. Several leaders had waited for people to leave through natural attrition so they could finally assemble teams they wanted. In other cases, a position was structured to meet an institutional need, not necessarily the president's ideal structure.

For these reasons, it became difficult to evaluate presidential leadership based on the executive team structure. The main difference that emerged between the presidents was not between cohorts, but between presidents from either cohort who were primarily focused on functioning externally and the remaining presidents.

The externally-focused presidents usually were preparing for or were conducting a fundraising campaign and, as a result, their leadership teams needed to be empowered for the president to truly function externally. The presidents expressed confidence that the campus could run effectively without their presence on campus.

To focus on external responsibilities, a president must lessen demands on his or her time for managing the executive team and their operational areas. The president must be able to delegate and be assured that time can be focused on being out in the community. Thus, in addition to empowering the vice presidents so that the president could be active outside the campus, these executive team structures were leaner and sometimes had people serving in unusual roles or ascending to that position from unusual backgrounds—done with a focus on the external and the future.

The focus on the external concerns does not mean neglecting the internal culture (Alfred, Shults, Jaquette & Strickland, 2009). The presidents recognized that the campus must be on board with the vision the president is conveying to an external audience. Effective contemporary leadership is about visioning and inventiveness (Alfred et al., 2009). Given the insular nature of most of the institutions, as was discussed in the prior chapter, the presidents' role on the campus is to communicate the strategic direction of the college and encourage buy-in among all constituents. The presidents stressed that the views of all staff must be accounted for, often citing maintenance and other operational areas as perspectives to consider.

Half of the DevPres and the one most fundraising-focused AAPres also cited a need for talent management. This could stem from a lack of a career path and limited resources in community college development offices in general, so the DevPres would be aware of the need for more attention to recruitment, training, and retention efforts for staff. Additionally, talent management, along with the other issue that only DevPres mentioned—the impending generational mix in the classroom and the related impact of technology—also demonstrate an awareness of market conditions. Development officers must be attuned to the marketplace and maintain a focus on the future.

Presidents must have a vision for the institution's future and communicate this effectively. Both written and oral communication methods were discussed by both cohorts and these methods are critical for building community. The presidents also discussed having to foster a more participatory culture. Presidents function as the chief storyteller and must communicate their plans creatively and compellingly. The president must also communicate the college story to an external community.

Community relations became one of the areas of difference between the cohorts. When asked to share their community relations strategies, the AAPres provided examples of meeting community needs and of raising money for community organizations. They cited corporate visits and improving their responsiveness to requests. By contrast, the DevPres offered more proactive approaches. They spoke of community relations in terms of economic development. Only one AAPres, and the most externally minded one at that, spoke of community colleges as drivers of economic development, as did all the DevPres.

AAPres were certainly active in their communities and also had executive team members involved and represented in civic organizations like the DevPres did. The difference is that AAPres presented these connections as ways to link the community to the campus. The DevPres and the one AAPres exception viewed these linkages as conduits for the college to drive economic development for the community.

The AAPres also offered examples of raising money to serve the community. These activities, such as sponsoring employee participation in nonprofit fundraisers, probably do foster goodwill and extend name recognition of the college. Perhaps DevPres were also conducting these same activities, but they did not offer such examples. The direct return from such service activities is hard to quantify, however, whereas the DevPres provided examples of leading

economic development discussions where decisions about the college's role were central. And program development and support usually followed.

The difference in community relations emerges from a more passive approach by AAPres and a more proactive strategy by DevPres. Given the external experiences and context of the DevPres' backgrounds, it should not be surprising that partnerships are viewed strategically. Conversations about mutually-beneficial actions are also central to fundraising success.

The most significant difference between the cohorts emerged in board relations as summarized below, which is not unrelated to community relations. Both share the common element of relating to an external audience. All the presidents shared that they send weekly emails to the trustees, but the presidents presented this activity as if it were something special that they did. Several mentioned that they had instituted the practice, so perhaps that is why the practice felt special. Yet the lack of knowledge about a common or best practice is likely indicative of a greater issue of presidents not feeling comfortable sharing information about board relations. The trustees do have presidential hiring, firing, and evaluation as a core responsibility.

Fostering a good relationship with the board must go beyond written communications in between meetings, however. Although both cohorts talked about supplementary phone conversations, at least with board chairs, it was only DevPres and two AAPres experienced with fundraising that also stressed the importance of face-to-face communication with board members. In fundraising, interpersonal, face-to-face interaction is critical for building effective relationships at the highest levels, so this approach is in keeping with the presidents' backgrounds. Working with boards also requires a level of confidence and sophistication that can come from experience interacting with community and business leaders.

Given the likely lack of exposure to and experience working with boards in academic affairs, it is not surprising that only AAPres cited board relations as one of the biggest challenges and surprises of the presidency. An AAPres with fundraising comfort, who was in his second presidency with a board he claimed was one of the best he had ever encountered, still maintained that he would change doctoral programs to provide exposure to working with boards. He had intentionally cultivated that skill and cited the importance of several presidential mentors more than any of the other presidents in providing such key experiences that helped groom him for the presidency.

To summarize, differences in the cohorts emerged in board relations views, with externally focused presidents prioritizing face-to-face interaction; only DevPres and the one most fundraising-focused AAPres discussing the connections between trustees for the foundation and governing boards; and only AAPres citing the challenges of working with the board as a surprise to them in the presidency.

Both cohorts agreed on one aspect of the board—expressing frustration, at differing levels, that governing boards do not seem to really understand higher education or even more specifically community colleges. Although a board might operate on a policy-governance model, it was clear this was a process that still had to be negotiated. Presidents expressed that trustees did not seem to really understand their roles, nor did they understand college operations.

Brown (2012) discusses the role of trustees extensively as an issue community colleges must address more effectively. Brown puts the onus of responsibility for education on the trustees, but the president must help lead this effort: “Community college boards need to embrace continuous education and trustee development programs to achieve higher levels of effectiveness if they are to be strong partners in helping colleges navigate the chasm between

demand and resources” (p. 114). More of the externally focused presidents had instituted board education programs, from instituting orientations to having educational sessions before meetings.

The trustees’ role as it pertains to fundraising also emerged as a challenge. The president must help lead the shift toward trustees becoming more involved with fundraising (Babitz, 2003; Chappell, 2010). One of the most experienced fundraising AAPres even referred to encouraging board involvement with fundraising as a process of education.

Although it is more of a long-term solution, one avenue for leading the governing board toward an understanding of fundraising is to bring in trustees who have that knowledge—trustees such as former foundation board members. Another difference between the cohorts emerged in this regard, as only DevPres and then the one most experienced, fundraising-oriented AAPres in the cohort mentioned that they were actively trying to position their foundation board members as potential governing board trustees. From their backgrounds, DevPres would know that development is a team endeavor and that top leadership must be involved in the effort.

Given the challenges with the boards—and the fact that the president alone reports to the board—it is not surprising that board relations was one area presidents agreed they would not delegate. DevPres reported that they were comfortable delegating anything else except the key external responsibility of being the “face of the college” to the external community.

Positioning the campus as a worthy investment for the community—and developing the campus culture to support fundraising—divided the cohorts, with all the DevPres joined by three AAPres with the most fundraising experience. Development is a newer activity for community colleges. Presidents had to create structure for development operations by developing processes, procedures, and systems. For the two DevPres whose colleges have not had development professionals and cannot yet afford to hire them, the president is indeed the primary fundraiser

for the institution. These DevPres maintain they were not hired for fundraising but want to push their colleges toward it.

Given the historical inattention to fundraising operations, another issue nearly all the study presidents faced was problematic or underperforming developing staff. This issue reflects the historic lack of resources to community college fundraising and the resulting lack of staff competencies until more recently. Nearly all of the presidents in both cohorts had made development staffing transitions. In cases where presidents had kept an employee out of respect for the campus culture, the presidents had to push existing development staff, setting goals and educating the staff about fundraising.

With the attention required to staffing and structure, presidents could not just delegate fundraising responsibilities. Presidents needed to have developed fundraising skills themselves prior to the presidency to truly act as a chief fundraiser; the development staff could not necessarily assume that role. In the one case where an AAPres has not embraced fundraising, and admitted the college could do much more with its foundation, the president had led other successful public-private funding initiatives to position the college well financially.

This AAPres still recognized, as did all the other leaders, that the president is in effect the chief fundraiser because often the president alone can open doors and have access to prominent people. In addition, leading constituents—community leaders, legislators, and donors alike—expect that they will be dealing with the top leadership of the institution.

Prominent people comprise the foundation boards at community colleges. The high-level caliber of members does not mean the boards operate effectively, however. All of the study presidents discussed problems with their foundation boards. In many cases, these, too, could be attributed to a lack of staffing, attention, and structure to the foundation area. Problematic

foundation boards help to explain why community college fundraising remained flat for decades even after foundations were created. Many presidents in the study inherited foundation boards that had not changed in composition or operation since their founding.

As it was with development operations, it was again the presidents alone who ultimately had to engineer a more effective foundation board. Hiring an effective executive director of the foundation is important, but the president must be the chief fundraiser in the eyes of the foundation board as well.

The challenges in development operations indicate the need to build a culture of philanthropy on the campus, as well as in the surrounding community. The president must convey the importance to all faculty and staff of acting as ambassadors of the college. Expectations must be set for academic leadership to actively engage in fundraising. Externally focused presidents had successfully implemented thriving faculty and staff giving programs as well.

Because the presidents were building operations and changing the culture, they did not yet have many fundraising successes to share. Yet helping to plan and build for philanthropic partnerships by instilling a culture of philanthropy on campus and positioning the college within the community as a viable funding opportunity represent ambitious goals in themselves.

Presidents are engaging in the community in ways their predecessors had not. Taking the college to a new level of service and integration in the community was a common element of the legacy presidents in either cohort wanted to have. Even more so than the DevPres, who cited more academic achievements, AAPres stated they wanted their presidencies to be remembered for building stronger ties with the community.

This emphasis on community engagement as a supreme presidential goal is not surprising if the current presidency itself is now recognized as being primarily externally oriented. All but two of the study presidents indicated how fundraising as a particular external skill had become more important to the contemporary presidency. Beyond just fundraising, both cohorts saw the president's external role as being focused on securing alternative resources. The DevPres in particular connected their abilities to build philanthropic relationships with effectively nurturing other types of partnerships.

Most importantly, building alternative resources was not reactionary. The presidents who had achieved some entrepreneurial successes, the AAPres with the longest tenures and several of the DevPres, were not content to rest on those achievements. These presidents were continually moving forward and being innovative. They had foreseen changes in funding structures well before the recession hit and were taking steps to diversify their resources as state and local funding had started waning several years prior.

Having a future orientation extended beyond just diversifying resources. The DevPres also demonstrated their focus on anticipating future change by highlighting impending generational and technology needs. During the span of the interviews, only DevPres mentioned projections for classrooms filled with several generations of learners and increasing needs for technology. The DevPres' positioned these potential issues as opportunities by emphasizing relationships: the DevPres were contemplating how different generations could interact with one another, how technology could help span those generations, and how faculty innovation in incorporating technology into the classroom could facilitate connections.

Dev Pres were also the only ones, with the exception of the one most externally experienced and focused AAPres, to cite the need for community colleges to focus more on

talent management. Literature affirms this issue: “College and universities have been slow to adopt the idea of transforming institutional culture through strategic hiring and development of staff” (Alfred et al., 2009, p. 110). Although other presidents might have programs to attract, retrain, and develop staff and faculty, only the one most externally-minded AAPres and several DevPres highlighted their importance.

Such distinctions between the cohorts are not as significant as one might expect, based on their different backgrounds. Board relations provided one of the biggest differentiations between cohorts, as might have been expected based on the literature review alone that claimed development officers are used to working with boards and that an academic affairs background provides little exposure to board relations. This study provides empirical evidence to illustrate how advancement presidents have enhanced preparation in one of the most important and contentious areas for presidents to navigate: working with boards, both the governing and foundation boards.

Disputing the Dichotomy

The comparison group structure of the study followed the dichotomy established by the literature, which positions the traditional pathway to the presidency from academic affairs—an internal route of advancing through the academic ranks—against an emerging pathway through a nontraditional, external role of development. The findings of this study, however, dispute this dichotomy by demonstrating that internal and external presidents managed the presidency in similar ways. Their perspectives on and performance in the presidency did not consistently conform to predictions based on their backgrounds alone.

The cohorts' similarities in management of the presidency can be explained by the conceptual model. How the presidents perceive the role, which in turn determines their actions and performance in the presidency, is not determined solely by their backgrounds.

Environmental forces and conditions can bypass leader characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds to shape perceptions of the role directly. The environment was the determining factor in every area in which the presidents demonstrated similarities and in which backgrounds did not emerge as significant. The following section will detail the connection between environmental forces and conditions and the cohorts' similarities in management of the presidency.

► *Executive Team: Need a Strong VPAA*

This finding is shaped by external forces that are differentiating the presidency to be more external rather than a traditional educator role. This leads to a differentiation between the provost and president positions. The president no longer functions as the lead academic but delegates that role to the provost.

► *Executive Team: Building Teams under Constraint*

This finding is shaped by external forces that have shaped the campus culture. Presidents reported that changes needed to be paced to avoid unnecessary disruption, and needed to be made with an understanding of institutional history. They still made changes but at a more measured rate.

► *Leadership on Campus: Creating Internal Community*

This finding is shaped by the need to overcome an insular culture or a culture of mistrust. Community colleges had a history of a more bureaucratic and hierarchical leadership style that

largely focused solely on the campus. Contemporary presidents still had to overcome resulting issues.

► *Board Relations: Frustration with Commitment*

This finding is shaped by the historic lack of prestige for community colleges as compared to other higher education sectors. Community college trustees have not been held to the same standards of accomplishment or performance that governing boards of more prestigious institutions have had, particularly around an expectation for trustee fundraising.

► *Advancement: From Complacency to a Diversified Future*

This finding is shaped by environmental forces that have fundamentally altered traditional revenue streams for community colleges. Presidents must identify other alternative funding and, while philanthropy represents potential, a basis for fundraising must first be established as efforts have been complacent for many years.

The findings that constitute similarities can be summarized as constituting the foundational elements for managing the presidency according to a changing role perception based upon external factors. Environmental forces and conditions impact role perceptions, which in turn affect management of the presidency. In areas of similarity between the cohorts, the leader characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds were in effect bypassed. Background factors do, however, contribute to cohort differences in management of the presidency.

The findings that constitute differences can be summarized as representing the next steps required for managing the presidency as a more outwardly-focused role. These next steps representing differences between the cohorts can be correlated to the more initial steps represented by the similarities. The following connections will demonstrate movement toward management of the presidency as an increasingly external role.

Executive Team: Need a Strong VPAA → **Executive Team: Empowered for External**

The next step in perceiving the presidential role as an external one that is differentiated from the traditionally academic role is to empower other members of the executive team to manage the campus so that the president can focus more on external activities. One primary indication of the external focus is that the primary internal function, academics, is fully delegated. AAPres and DevPres equally valued the provost position and delegated the academic function to the VPAA. Both cohorts relied on the CAO to build and curry faculty support for presidential initiatives.

Presidents conducting or preparing for campaigns—a function likely to become even more common in the future, according to literature projections—were also empowering the rest of their teams, in the eloquent words of an AAPres, “for vice presidents to really be vice presidents.” Presidents are functioning primarily externally by delegating responsibilities for internal operations to their executive teams.

Executive Team: Building Teams under Constraint → **Beyond the Executive Team: Talent Management**

Rather than just responding to environmental conditions, the next step in managing an executive team is to directly shape the employee environment by establishing programs to recruit, train, and retrain staff. Presidents can thus promote their expectations for effective leadership rather than perpetuating the existing culture.

Leadership on Campus: Creating Internal Community → **Leadership in Community:
Proactive**

Once the internal culture has been nurtured, the campus can more effectively serve the community. By advocating a clear vision and encouraging collaboration, presidents help to ready the college to impact the economic development of the area beyond its campus borders in ways that are mutually beneficial.

Board Relations: Frustration with Commitment → **Board Relations: Positioning Trustees as
Partners**

Rather than reacting to frustration over current trustees, presidents can exercise their influence and power to educate trustees. Additionally, they can seek to directly change the composition of governance by positioning effective foundation trustees for governing board positions. The one most externally-experienced AAPres shared this view of the connection between the foundation and governing boards with DevPres peers, demonstrating it is possible to overcome the AAPres' view of board relations as a surprising challenge.

Whether the boards are elected or appointed, presidents feel the members seem to lack a true understanding of higher education in general and community colleges in particular, so presidents must spend considerable time educating the trustees. The presidents especially had to work with their governing boards to embrace fundraising. Even foundation boards required extensive time and education to focus their efforts on meeting the needs of the institution more effectively.

Advancement: From Complacency to a Diversified Future → **Advancement: Promoting Fundraising**

Once the initial foundational steps of changing development staff and altering foundation boards have been accomplished, presidents can proactively foster fundraising and philanthropy. They can take an active role in overseeing fundraising staff and operations, provide structure to create a basis for fundraising, actively champion fundraising, and build a culture of philanthropy on the campus and in the community.

These findings also demonstrate that it is possible for presidents from either background to manage the presidency in a more externally-oriented manner. While the DevPres clearly demonstrated a majority and an advantage in each area focused on a more sophisticated approach to the external aspects of the role, they were not alone. Some AAPres managed the presidency more like their external DevPres colleagues than internal presidential peers. These AAPres unequivocally perceived the presidency as a more external role. Based on the interview data, it appears this perception relates to a combination of other characteristics and experiences in the presidents' backgrounds beyond previous academic roles, along with sensitivity to the changing environment.

The presidents in this study had to guide development operations on campus, from replacing and pushing staff to building systems and processes. Presidents could not depend on a functioning development office to be in place because of the historic inattention to the development role at community colleges. Even with an effective development staff in place, the president must still function as the chief fundraiser because top constituents expect the president to be involved. Thus, the president must cultivate a culture of philanthropy on campus and in the community. Beyond just building for philanthropy, the presidents all recognized the need to

diversify resources in general by fostering partnerships and alternative revenue models for a changing future.

These connections can be drawn because of the data made possible through interviews. Existing analysis of presidential competencies is based upon quantitative studies that limited the scope of activity measured and did not determine linkage to a president's background. Qualitative methods allowed these timely findings about presidential leadership and management to be uncovered.

The cohorts appear to be more similar than different in their management approaches because backgrounds leading up to the presidency are not the only factor in how presidents function in the role. Findings demonstrate that those ascending to the presidency are not assuming a static position. The presidency itself is in flux and changing: the community college presidency is now effectively external.

The literature review had suggested this change, but most of these assertions were in news source or in scholarly works by experts in the field basing these predictions on experience, not empirical data. Beyond the presidents in this study voicing their opinions and perspectives on how the role has changed, this study's comparison of their management demonstrates that the role is now external through several facets just discussed.

The data concerning the presidents' hope for their own future—what they want their presidential legacy to be—might be the most useful measure for understanding how presidents manage their role because the responses indicate what the presidents value and where they likely focus. Usually presidential accomplishments are measured in terms of dollars raised and campaigns conducted, and this is what one might expect from DevPres in particular. The DevPres want to be remembered for success in growth and academic enhancement, and those

efforts are not all due to private funding. All the study presidents want to be remembered for enhanced community engagement, exemplifying the ultimate goal of development to further the mission, which, for community colleges, is providing education and service to the community.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examined whether the cohorts differ in their management of the presidency by examining how the presidents handle various core responsibilities of their role and how they view the presidency, both generally and personally in terms of their own legacies. Management of the presidency is a matter of presidential perception. Changing environmental forces and conditions shape role perception so that presidents can manage aspects of the role similarly, regardless of whether they have an internal or external background. Background experiences do impact management of the presidency in giving DevPres an initial advantage over their AAPres in external aspects of the role. The presidential role itself is perceived as changing, however, centering on the community more than the campus. Because of this change, some AAPres have developed effective external skills.

Every president claimed comprehensive resource development was becoming more important to the community college presidency. Nearly all believed that advancement itself was becoming a pipeline to the presidency. They acknowledged a “new presidency,” one that is external and focused on truly strengthening relations with and serving the community. It appears research has not yet caught up with this reality, particularly in tracking this pipeline. That is why this qualitative study was necessary, to document a new phenomenon, an emerging reality.

Presidents delegate academics and structure their teams so that they can focus on the external, including educating their boards to function more effectively. They are trying to build

internal community, including a culture of philanthropy, and they are proactively positioning the college within the community as an agent of economic development. The president is the chief fundraiser, but the focus is not just on fundraising but resource development: partnerships, strategy, and innovation. The presidents are building for the future by diversifying resources and want to build a legacy of engagement.

Although both findings chapters have concluded with a discussion, the final and concluding chapter of the dissertation will examine the findings collectively and in context of the conceptual framework. The implications of the study will be presented along with recommendations for both research and practice.

CHAPTER 7—Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

This final chapter begins with a summary of the dissertation, including the research question, data collection and analysis, and major findings. The key findings are then analyzed in the conclusions section. Limitations to the study are presented next. Recommendations are offered for research as well as practice before the chapter concludes with closing comments.

SUMMARY

In recent years, education experts have hypothesized that community colleges began responding to the changing funding climate by changing expectations of how the community college president would handle external affairs. These experts speculate that college presidential search committees now view candidates with external professional backgrounds as more viable candidates for the presidency because those external positions foster the sorts of external career experiences that college presidents now need. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether presidents with an “external” background of development perform differently in the presidential role than individuals with the more traditional “internal” background of academic affairs, a comparison designed to verify whether or not community college presidencies are truly developing a more external orientation. Specifically, this study explored the research question: *Are there differences manifested by community college presidents with external (fundraising) background experience compared to those with internal (academic affairs) experience in their management of the presidency?*

This comparative structure makes this study unique. The limited existing research on presidents from a development background focuses on the fact that presidents have been hired with a development background, not on how such presidents function in the presidential role. Presidents from academic affairs still constitute the majority of the presidential pipeline, so it was important to examine the functioning of development presidents in comparison to the norm of academic affairs presidents.

This dissertation was also purposely structured as a qualitative study in order to uncover a more comprehensive portrait of development presidents, including any correlation between how they function in their presidential role and their professional and personal background. In-depth interviews allowed for exploration of a given president's background and the leader's reasons for assuming the presidency. Qualitative methods also provided more insight into how "traditional" academic affairs presidents are operating today, which helped the researcher assess whether the role of the community college presidency itself is becoming more external in orientation. All presidents were interviewed about (a) their background, including career history prior to the presidency, reasons for becoming a president, and the relationship between prior experience and the presidency; (b) core presidential responsibilities, or "management of the presidency," including administration, operations, leadership on campus, community relations, and board relations; and (c) their college's advancement performance, including changes and successes under the president's tenure.

In total, 19 community college presidents were interviewed individually. These interviews followed a pilot study with three seasoned presidents possessing background experience in both development and academic affairs. Of the 19 presidents interviewed, 10 comprised the development presidents (DevPres) cohort, defined as those who had held a formal

development position in a community college before becoming a community college president. Nine presidents formed the academic affairs (AAPres) cohort, defined as those whose careers followed a more traditional, “internal” pathway through academic affairs. To preserve the anonymity of the presidents, findings were discussed in terms of the DevPres and AAPres cohorts rather than in terms of individual presidents. Data were analyzed both within and between cohorts. As a whole, the presidents demonstrated remarkable unity in responding as a “cohort,” in sharing similar experiences and opinions within their specific groups, as well as demonstrating continuity between cohorts, particularly surrounding the management of key presidential duties.

Findings for “Pathways to the Presidency”

Before comparing how presidents with external (fundraising) background experience managed the presidency in comparison to presidents coming from an internal (academic affairs) background, the study sought to uncover a more comprehensive understanding of what either background fully entails. An examination of data related to “pathways to the presidency” revealed four key findings, which will be summarized below.

Every Experience Matters

Leaders believe they benefit from a broad and varied range of experiences prior to the presidency. The presidents agreed that all previous experiences have consequence for presidential performance because a comprehensive skill set is necessary for a successful presidency. Sometimes the presidents had atypical backgrounds, such as starting in very low positions like a grant paraprofessional. Although education was not mentioned by the interview

questions, nearly all of the DevPres volunteered information about their academic backgrounds, particularly their undergraduate experiences. The DevPres' personal connections to community colleges were characterized in terms of the need to balance family and career, choosing to attend school part time, or pursuing degrees later in life as non-traditional students.

The study also found that DevPres' and AAPres' prior roles and responsibilities were often more complex and nuanced than the job titles or typical position descriptions would suggest. Presidents' previous positions frequently had a different focus or structure than such roles would normally imply, and these pre-presidential positions were often assumed because of circumstances and without comprehensive preparation for the role. Sometimes presidents had intentionally sought more responsibility or a new challenge in their previous position; in other cases, institutional demands required the individual to assume a "stretch" role or to manage a broader scope of responsibility than the position would normally entail.

The Pathway Helps to Picture the Presidency

Leaders considered the presidency because of their comprehensive attributes, not just previous positions. Beyond their previous professional experiences, the presidents also cited a range of extenuating circumstances that influenced their decision to take on the "top" role of president. For the DevPres, a key finding was their emphasis on commitment to the community college mission. DevPres and AAPres both demonstrated that they had reached a point in their careers where the presidency was the logical next step, and for nearly every leader interviewed, another president had pushed or mentored the individual toward the presidential role. In addition, some presidents had always aspired to a leadership position. For the DevPres

cohort and for three of the nine AAPres, family considerations factored into when and where a presidency was pursued.

The Presidency Requires a Holistic View

Presidents believe they need both “internal” (academic) and “external” (fundraising) experience. The two cohorts did not feel equally prepared for these responsibilities, however. In addition to their development posts, the DevPres as a whole had academic experience, including teaching, which they regarded as important. In several cases, the DevPres had held previous leadership positions in academic affairs. The AAPres, conversely, reported very little previous development experience. Before becoming presidents, three of the nine AAPres had been thrust into fundraising out of program need. Two others had sought exposure to development, such as participating in a solicitation but not actually asking for a gift, as preparation for the presidency. Although the DevPres had a broader understanding of and more comfort with fundraising, the AAPres could and did learn fundraising skills. Both cohorts clearly articulated that the presidency and the vice presidency for academic affairs (also known as the provost) are two very different roles, which makes the VPAA pathway to the presidency an incomplete preparation for presidential duties. In fact, more than half of the presidents in both cohorts believe academic experience alone is insufficient preparation for the presidency. The two cohorts further agreed that there is a need for presidents to balance internal and external responsibilities, even as external demands have significantly increased.

The Presidency Evolves

Presidents address challenges from the college culture at their hiring by drawing upon their backgrounds and viewing the presidency as a changing role. Revealing further common ground, the presidents all faced challenges when they were hired. Every AAPres reported facing operational challenges and difficulties with changing the college culture. Although DevPres also described such challenges, more than half conveyed these challenges in terms of the board's perspectives. Both cohorts shared the challenge of helping their institutions become less insular by attending more to external relations than their predecessors. In fact, the only finding for the "pathways to the presidency" data with unanimous agreement is that the presidents all reported their presidency as being more outwardly-focused than that of their predecessors, which was conveyed as insular and focused only on the college.

After gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the presidents' backgrounds, the study compared how the presidents reported viewing and managing key aspects of the presidential role. "Management of the presidency" was defined as the execution of duties that would be pertinent to any president regardless of demographical or other institutional differences among community colleges.

Findings for Management of the Presidency

Data for management of the presidency includes findings related to leading and managing an executive team, determining areas to directly oversee or to delegate, conveying the community college story to external constituents, communicating with board members, defining a strategic vision, and addressing fiscal challenges, including the approach to fundraising. Presidents were asked to describe these core competencies in terms not only of their current

approaches and perceptions but also whether they believed performance expectations have changed and any changes they envisioned for the future.

Analysis of this data yielded two key findings. One is that management of the presidency is a matter of presidential perception. The cohorts showed both similarities and differences, which will be summarized below. The other key finding is that the presidential role centers on the community more than the campus.

Management of the Presidency Is a Matter of Presidential Perception

The cohorts demonstrated several areas of *similarity*. In these cases, a majority of presidents in both cohorts shared common responses. Presidents convey the importance of having a strong provost who can curry favor with faculty and help to further the president's initiatives; they *need a strong VPAA*. As for the rest of the executive team, presidents report not always being able to build the entire executive team to their liking or in their desired timing because they respect the institutional culture and often keep people in place for that reason, *building teams under constraint*. This sensitivity to the campus culture is reflective of the presidents' need to overcome a history of hierarchical leadership and mistrust by *creating internal community*. The history of governance also poses a challenge for presidents, who report *frustration over the commitment of board members*, both their lack of knowledge and the lack of trustees' personal involvement in fundraising. This latter issue relates to a larger one of trying to alter the possibilities for advancement by moving from *complacency to a diversified future*, by changing development staff and altering the foundation board.

To recap, the cohorts were **similar** in the following areas, which represented responses by a majority of presidents in both cohorts:

- **Executive Team: Need a Strong VPAA**
- **Executive Team: Building Teams under Constraint**
- **Leadership on Campus: Creating Internal Community**
- **Board Relations: Frustration over Commitment**
 - Board Knowledge
 - Board Fundraising
- **Advancement: From Complacency to a Diversified Future**
 - Changing Development Staff
 - Altering the Foundation Board

In these same core areas of presidential responsibility, the presidents also demonstrated areas of *difference*. The differences did not always correlate to divergence by cohort. Instead, in some cases, a pattern of presidential responses could be established, such as those from either cohort with the most experience in fundraising. In addition to having a strong provost, those presidents in a current fundraising campaign and operating primarily externally had *empowered the rest of their executive team*. Half of the DevPres and the one AAPres with the most external experience also brought up the importance of *talent management*—recruitment, retention, and training programs—for the executive team and those in the next layer of management.

Community relations activity was considered important by both cohorts, but approaches to it differed. Only AAPres reported a more *passive* approach of raising money for community organizations and responding to community requests, while only the DevPres and the one most externally-experienced AAPres discussed a more *proactive* positioning of their colleges as drivers of economic development for the community and region. The presidents from either group who are most experienced in or involved with fundraising (as in a campaign) also sought to position *trustees as partners*. They discussed interpersonal interaction with board members, instituting and conducting training, and the connection between the foundation and governing

boards. Only the AAPres termed *board relations as a surprising challenge*, at least initially. Finally, all the DevPres and the AAPres with the most fundraising experience were actively *promoting fundraising* by pushing development staff, providing structure for development operations, acting as the chief fundraiser, and building a culture of philanthropy on the campus and beyond.

To recap, the cohorts were **different** in the following areas, which represented responses by only one cohort or by presidents representing a pattern as noted:

- **Executive Team: Empowered for External (Presidents in fundraising campaign)**
- **Beyond Executive Team: Talent Management (Half Dev, OneAAPres)**
- **Leadership in Community: Passive (AAPres) or Proactive (DevPres and One AAPres)**
- **Board Relations: Positioning Trustees as Partners (Presidents with fundraising focus)**
- **Board Relations: A Surprising Challenge (Only AAPres)**
- **Advancement: Promoting Fundraising (All DevPres & AAPres with fundraising focus)**
 - Pushing Development Staff
 - Providing Structure for Fundraising
 - Acting as Chief Fundraiser
 - Building a Culture of Philanthropy

When the presidents were queried about the core competencies of management to the presidency, they were asked to respond in terms not only of their current approaches and perceptions but also whether they believed performance expectations have changed and any changes they envisioned for the future. Analysis of these responses led to the second key finding for management of the presidency.

The Presidential Role Centers on the Community More than the Campus

When describing the legacy they wish to leave behind from their current presidency, the presidents expressed that they want their leadership to be remembered for engaging the community in ways it had not been before. The presidents had experienced changes in their own roles. They also believe that external skills will be even more important for community college

presidents now and in the future. In fact, all but two of the presidents specifically named fundraising as an increasing expectation for the community college presidency, even as they question whether future leaders will have those skills. The presidents believe resource diversification will become even more important and that it demands a future orientation.

Chapters 5 and 6 provided a discussion of the findings and preliminary conclusions. This final chapter will discuss both chapters' findings in the context of their stated significance in the introductory chapter, the literature, and the conceptual framework.

CONCLUSIONS

The stated significance of the study was to provide insights into how development presidents function in the presidential role and the advantages and challenges posed by entering through this pathway. The study provides insight into what the development career pathway entailed for current, acting DevPres and whether it is appropriate to talk about a “development pathway.”

➤ **Presidents from development can have experience, including academic roles, beyond just fundraising.**

The DevPres in the study all had academic experience, so the distinction between their academic and “non-academic” (development) experience proved to be less definitive than the study had initially assumed. The DevPres, with only one exception, all had teaching experience and felt that teaching experience was important for establishing academic credibility. Several of the DevPres had held academic affairs leadership positions. This experience was a combination of several possible scenarios. With a few exceptions of some career experience in private

industry, the majority of the presidents had devoted their entire careers to community colleges, so they had held a variety of positions. Many had spent a considerable career in community colleges before serving in advancement positions. Three of the DevPres had to be convinced to take on a development role, usually by a president who positioned development as advancing the college's mission. Thus, the development position became something that certain DevPres ultimately enjoyed and spent time pursuing, but only after serving the college in other capacities. After other academic affairs positions, two DevPres had actively sought a development position as intentional preparation for the presidency after deciding that was the next step in their careers. The DevPres had all pursued a doctorate, though several had pursued that while in other administrative roles they held before development. Collectively, the DevPres experience goes well beyond spending their careers in development positions and then ascending to the presidency.

Although it might be a prerequisite for development presidents to have some academic experience, this is not the way the literature presents presidents from development. They are categorized as if they have come out of careers only in development, which does not provide academic experience such as classroom teaching as part of expected responsibilities, nor is an advanced degree required even for top management positions in the field of fundraising.

These findings represent an important contribution that underscores the assertion from the literature review that tracking of presidential backgrounds in general is problematic. Even the primary source devoted to monitoring presidents from advancement, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), claims a president is from development if such a position has been held, without broader context of the career path. CASE also combines all

positions from advancement, and its database is not dynamic or accurate. For example, the researcher found mistakes and omissions in the listings.

Even so, the study purposefully followed the categorization from CASE and the Council for Resource Development (CRD), which has even more challenges with its tracking, and intentionally labeled presidents from development as “DevPres,” without investigating their backgrounds until the interviews. For this reason, the academic experience the DevPres turned out to possess came as a surprise to the researcher, especially because the literature on presidents from development and on development as a field has yet to fully portray the field as academic. This trend is emerging in some of the scholarly literature (Bloland & Bornstein, 1991; Caboni, 2008; Payton & Moody, 2008) but has not been integrated into the practitioner field (Sargeant & Shang, 2011).

In most cases, the DevPres had built the development operations at their institutions. All DevPres reported that their development positions had been high level with a broad scope of responsibilities, including establishing policies and procedures, managing budgets, creating positions, and hiring and supervising staff. Although these responsibilities were undertaken in service of development, they are all transferrable skills and management responsibilities that would hold true for administrative positions in other areas as well. In addition, development at community colleges is comprehensive resource development. It often includes responsibility for governmental or other types of grants, contracts, and partnerships beyond just philanthropic areas. Resource development officers, then, are not “siloed” into building only a specific skill set as they might in a university development position but must have a broad array of capabilities.

More importantly, the DevPres themselves did not view their development experience as non-academic. They positioned their experiences as academic in nature. They did not seek a

position that was valuing external skills rather than academic skills. In fact, they even downplayed the notion that they were hired for fundraising. The DevPres saw themselves as being able to perform comprehensive aspects of the presidency because of their backgrounds, including development experience. If they had not already done so, along the pathway to the presidency they acquired more traditional academic experience, such as teaching, and credentials to position themselves as fully qualified candidates for the presidency. It can only be assumed that the hiring boards shared this perspective.

Thus, positioning these leaders as solely “DevPres” is somewhat misleading. Nonetheless, these are the types of generalizations by background made in the literature concerning pathway and preparation for the presidency. The DevPres demonstrated an awareness of how development is perceived by academics in general and faculty in particular. DevPres questioned whether they could fully understand the faculty perspective given their backgrounds in development. The AAPres seemed to underscore such concerns when they emphasized how presidents must have a solid understanding of a community college’s core academic function even as external skills become more important to the presidential role. While development experience in and of itself does not appear to yield the entire preparation necessary for the presidency, fundraising has become an essential skill and expectation for community college presidents.

➤ **Development experience, skills, and responsibilities can also apply to presidents coming from academic affairs.**

All but one of the AAPres expressed the view that fundraising had become an increasing expectation of and responsibility for a community college president. In some cases, AAPres had

been hired explicitly to fundraise despite not having formal or extensive prior experience. In others, the presidents had realized that, in order to accomplish the change they needed and wanted to on campus, philanthropy represented an essential and important source of funding. In the other cases, fundraising had become a responsibility during the president's tenure if it had not been at hiring.

If AAPres did not have any previous skills or experience, then, the AAPres had to develop and hone external skills in the presidency, including responsibility for development. AAPres could learn to fundraise and reported coming to enjoy doing so and experiencing success in development endeavors. However, the AAPres acknowledged that learning fundraising on the job was challenging. Having prior fundraising experience, as all DevPres did, does appear to give DevPres an advantage in the presidency that an academic affairs career pathway did not typically offer. As one of the most academically experienced DevPres attested, all experiences are important to the presidency, but having prior experience in development provided this DevPres with the most comfort in the presidential role.

The AAPres who had previous fundraising experience had to build fundraising skills to begin or continuing an academic program; perhaps people who are drawn to building a program from the ground up have an entrepreneurial drive that translates well to development. The AAPres who felt more comfortable with the external aspects of the role had a broader background themselves. For example, one AAPres had training in a health care program with an outreach component rather than in a traditional academic discipline. Another AAPres had been a referee, and another had previous experience as an administrator for a state agency.

Although not a majority, these examples do illustrate that it is also misleading to assume that the academic affairs pathway is strictly an academic one. The provost position at a

community college should not be assumed to mirror the position at four-year institutions. For example, while at least 80% of provosts at four-year institutions hold a PhD, that figure drops to 41% for two-year institutions (Eckel et al., 2009). Like their DevPres peers, some of the AAPres had pursued their doctorates as they advanced in community college career paths.

The only finding regarding “pathways to the presidency” with unanimous agreement among all participants in the study was that the presidents described themselves as operating with a more outward focus than their predecessors. The presidents all reported having to overcome insular cultures and isolated institutions. Given changing environmental factors and conditions, presidents in the study could no longer concern themselves only with matters of the campus. While not necessarily fully external, categorizing the AAPres as only “internal” or “academic” is also misleading.

The factors leading up to the presidency are much more complicated than following a positional pathway. The presidents in both cohorts agree on the need for a broad background and believe both internal and external experiences and skills are necessary. The details that emerged regarding the backgrounds of the presidents could only be uncovered through the interview-based, in-depth qualitative study.

➤ **This study suggests that referring to candidates as having “traditional academic pathways” or “external affairs pathways” may be problematic.**

Most importantly, the study demonstrates that the current literature on pathways to the presidency is misleading and that tracking the pipeline is insufficient. The literature, which is largely from higher education news sources, misleadingly claims that development is becoming a pipeline for the community college presidency. The data show that while DevPres had all held a

formal position in development, the experiences preparing them for the presidency extended beyond that role and many DevPres had significant experience in other areas of the college. Even when a development position was taken on as a purposeful preparatory experience for the presidency, additional prior experiences helped presidents perform all aspects of their presidential role. DevPres reported that they were not hired as presidents just to fundraise, and perhaps just as significantly, AAPres reported that they *were* hired specifically to fundraise. Therefore, the surmised connection between a need for fundraising and hiring a former fundraiser as president does not hold up to scrutiny.

The data gained through this study's in-depth interviews also demonstrate that previous titles and roles are often misleading regarding the background experience a president gained in those roles. Current tracking sources only monitor the position immediately prior to gaining the presidency, and the tracking sources assume that career paths are exclusive to that point—in short, a career is construed as either all administrative or all academic. This study's data prove the fallacy of this approach. Furthermore, such tracking sources either lump all non-academic positions into one category or conflate positions into imprecise umbrella categories such as “external affairs.” The comprehensive nature of resource development positions in community colleges warrants more precise tracking of positions and their associated duties and responsibilities.

Finally, the literature asserts that today's community colleges have a more open pipeline to the presidency than in the past. This study's findings challenge that assertion by demonstrating that the skills and experiences of so-called “non-traditional” candidates are not necessarily distinctive from traditional candidates coming from academic affairs. Not only did many

DevPres have academic experience, but AAPres also described experiences outside of academic affairs that helped them to function effectively in their presidencies.

This study does corroborate literature suggesting that academic affairs offers limited exposure to external responsibilities, particularly to fundraising. The implicit assumption in the literature, however is that a background in academic affairs fully prepares one for the presidency. This dissertation demonstrates that all the presidents, regardless of background, distinguish between the provost position and the presidency, underscoring the different nature of the two roles.

➤ **Because DevPres and AAPres claimed they operate in a more outwardly-focused capacity than their predecessors and believe the presidency requires a balance between internal and external actions, it should not be surprising that the cohorts showed similarities in their management of the presidency.**

Development, as it is practiced in community colleges at least, is arguably academic because it directly links to advancing the institution's academic mission of access, opportunity, and service to the community. What appears to be important to today's community college presidency is true development, which goes beyond fundraising. The skills and traits of successful development officers, as portrayed in the literature (Burk, 2003; Caboni, 2008; Hodge, 2003; Pribbenow, 1997; Wagner, 2002), played out in the ways that both DevPres and AA Pres placed an emphasis on strategy, innovation, and building relationships. Both cohorts articulated the need to find alternative resources. They had made changes to development staff and foundation boards in an attempt to improve the capacity for fundraising. The presidents showed their respect for institutional culture in building teams and were focused on creating

internal community on campus. An external focus does not just start outside the institution; changing the campus culture is just as important.

Yet, the literature has not been fully developed for understanding the work of contemporary development professionals, particularly working with a new breed of donor. In place of empirical research, stereotypes often persist, perhaps none more so than the assumption that development professionals are just “people people” who have slick sales abilities. This study suggested that DevPres were not all “slick” personalities but rather that a development background encouraged DevPres to emphasize the importance of innovation, strategy, planning, and a reliance on data in their presidential role. DevPres talked more about these elements than AAPres, and DevPres consistently stressed the importance of furthering the college mission and achieving buy-in for a vision to transform the institution. This study’s portrait of the DevPres cohort helps to address deficiencies in the literature regarding the skills and function of development officers.

This study began with the hypotheses that DevPres would rely more on the provost position than AAPres; that DevPres would exhibit more confidence in fundraising abilities and creativity in development than AAPres; and that DevPres would be more comfortable in board relations than AAPres. Further, it was assumed that the AAPres would have greater comfort with the academic side of presidential duties. However, the study findings showed that the cohorts relied equally on the provost position and DevPres revealed a surprising extent of previous academic experience. Although AAPres did not possess DevPres’ level of development experience when they came into the presidency, many AAPres learned and honed development skills during their presidency and already had conducted, or were in the process of operating, substantial campaigns. These externally experienced AAPres could then rival their DevPres

peers in their fundraising approaches and in their board relations now. Even so, the DevPres did have an initial advantage over the AAPres in their early experience with board relations upon entering the presidency, the one assumption to hold true.

DevPres and AAPres' both rely on the VPAA to advance the presidents' goals, particularly by securing faculty buy-in. Contrary to what previous literature might suggest, the AAPres do not function as both provost and president; AAPres relinquish that provost responsibility, and thus perhaps temper the assumption that having served in a provost role should be a presidential requirement.

Indeed, rather than serving as an extension of the academic or "internal" function, the study demonstrates that today's community college presidents—regardless of background—are functioning more externally than in the past. This orientation had been suggested previously by news sources or in scholarly inferences, but this study provides empirical data to support that conclusion. Thus, the study fulfills another stated significance: illustrating and confirming the increasingly external orientation of the community college presidency.

➤ **Backgrounds, not by previous positions, but by other experiences and sensitivity to the environment explain differences in management of the presidency as a more external role.**

The presidents demonstrated differences in their management of the presidency less by cohort than by having a focus on fundraising or the presidents' comfort and experience with the external aspects of the position. Beyond this study's presidents stating and explaining how they believe the role has changed, the cohort's management approaches corroborate the external orientation of today's community college presidential role. First, beyond delegating the academic

function to the provost, the presidents delegated most functions besides those in which they had to exercise a presidential presence—that is, the external roles of working with the board and serving as the primary face of the institution in the community. In particular, presidents conducting or preparing for campaigns empowered their teams so that they could function primarily in their external roles: presidents functioned externally while the VPAA and other vice presidents conducted internal operations.

Because a culture of philanthropy must be cultivated on campus and in the community, the president must lead this strategic change as well. The presidents especially had to work with their governing boards to embrace fundraising. Whether the boards are elected or appointed, presidents expressed concern that members seem to lack a true understanding of higher education in general and community colleges in particular, so presidents must spend considerable time educating the trustees. Even foundation boards required extensive time and education to focus their efforts on meeting the needs of the institution more effectively. Presidents with the most fundraising experience and focus recognized foundation boards as a recruitment source for governing board trustees. The presidents also had to guide development operations, from replacing and pushing staff to building systems and processes. Presidents could not rely on a functioning development office to be in place and to delegate this role because of historical inattention to the development role at community colleges. Even when an effective development staff was finally in place, the president still had to perform as the chief fundraiser because top constituents expect the president to be involved in fundraising.

By illustrating the ways that community college presidents function as the chief fundraiser, the study also adds to the incomplete literature on community college presidents and fundraising. Much of that literature has been written by practitioners or community college

presidents who have a background in development; this literature usually aims to exhort peers about the importance of fundraising or prepare peers for fundraising. Because this study compares DevPres to AAPres, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how contemporary presidents execute fundraising responsibilities. The study affirms literature that suggests that a development background is helpful for presidential fundraising, and the study addresses a void in the literature by providing examples of how AAPres come to learn and embrace fundraising responsibilities.

The primary goal of development is to advance the institutional mission, and all the presidents want to be remembered for contributing to the ultimate goal of the institution: true education and service to the community. The conceptual framework provides a means for understanding the external presidency and community partnerships.

➤ **This research provides a new conceptualization of the community college presidency as it is perceived and enacted in today's environment.**

At community colleges, the presidential role centers on the community more than the campus. All presidents today need extensive external skills in addition to the foundation of academics. DevPres have already developed external relations skills in their prior positions, but AAPres can and do attain these skills on the job. Another reason there were not as many differences between the cohorts is because they perceive today's presidential role to be more external. The cohorts' backgrounds did not prove to be as starkly different once comprehensive data provided context for them. Presidential pathways might be changing but so, too, is the perception of the presidency to which those paths lead—and because of that changing view of the role, the management styles used by presidents is also variable and in flux.

The foundation of the conceptual framework is resource dependence theory (RDT), which acknowledges that the environment may place constraints on organizations but maintains that there are opportunities for organizations not only to react to such constraints but also to strategically take action. Possibility exists for organizations to alter their environments if they change and adapt in response to external forces through strategic decisions and choices. Yet, the literature largely positions the changing funding structure for community colleges as an unfortunate reality and the need to fundraise as a regrettable result.

In contrast to the negative view that the literature suggests, the presidents in this study have chosen to embrace the possibilities that greater external partnerships represent. They have actively taken steps to position themselves for fundraising success by hiring and pushing development staff, building up foundation boards, and instituting a culture of fundraising and philanthropy within the institution and in the community. The study does not measure success in these efforts, as the limitations will address, but it does portray presidents who are equipped for and prepared to lead philanthropic initiatives because they understand its possibilities.

The presidents thus exhibit another core aspect of the theoretical framework by pursuing mutually beneficial partnerships. The presidents consult community partners about how to structure and develop funding initiatives. They do not just seek gifts; they also seek input about how to make financial support a winning proposition for everyone involved. They demonstrate an awareness of other funding needs in the community, being sensitive to the timing and approaches of their campaigns.

Most importantly, this study's presidents view community colleges as agents of economic change in their communities and regions. Rather than lamenting the increased demands and decreased funding of today's environment, these presidents believe they have something of

importance to offer the community that can drive the local economy forward. These presidents are not reacting to the environment; instead, they are helping to shape the environment by seeking mutually beneficial partnerships between the college and the community. These presidents want the legacy of their leadership to be engaging their colleges with the community as never before. They work to transform their colleges from insular institutions that react to the environment into dynamic organizations that take pride in their mission to serve the community, improve quality of life, and support economic vitality.

The RDT construct of mutuality thus becomes a useful tool for understanding how a president can exercise strategic change by actively embracing partnerships. The dissertation's conceptual model accounts for the environmental context of backgrounds, skills and competencies, which comprise more than just experiences or personality traits. Although money represents power and diversifying resources through philanthropy amplifies that power, presidents also understand that fundraising is not a desperate ploy. Donors want to give and have a need to give, so fundraising is not begging but rather providing an opportunity for engagement and fulfillment. For the presidents, this includes not just philanthropy but all types of partnerships, including increased government grants and contracts and public-private initiatives. So, even the outlying AAPres who did not engage in philanthropy still exhibited this approach by pioneering alternative revenue sources through creative private financing.

Development also becomes more powerful as a demonstrated skill and experience, and such a background is recognized by DevPres and AAPres alike as becoming a more likely pipeline to the presidency in the future. The actual development experiences that are valued, as demonstrated by the DevPres' backgrounds and their correlation of previous positions to their presidential performance, are an enhanced focus on mission, an ability to effectively portray a

compelling vision and share the community college story, and a desire to engage in mutually beneficial interchanges. External actions like development can create connections that advance academics as never before, and in that sense, funding can be truly transformational. Externally-focused presidents who understand development go beyond seeking scholarship funding; they exhibit an openness to the possibilities of partnerships and seizing outreach as an opportunity that will lead to innovative academic opportunities.

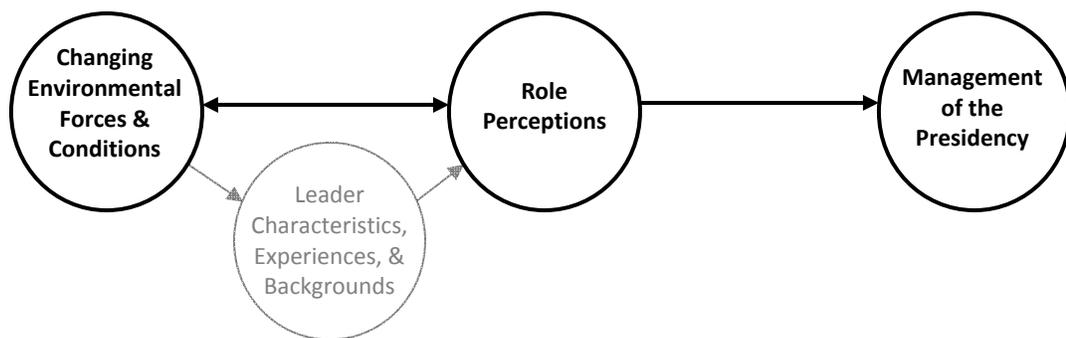
Perhaps trustees and hiring committees now expect presidential candidates to have both internal and external experiences and competencies. With few exceptions, both cohorts expressed this view of changing expectations for those entering the presidency today but maintain that such expectations were not the case for them even a few years ago. Rather, the presidents in the study pursued philanthropy, even if in a more limited way, because they were proactive. Recognizing the signs in the environment of a changing funding structure, the presidents sought to diversify their revenue sources before it became an expectation or a critical need. Not only did the boards not have such expectations for the presidents initially, some of the presidents faced hesitancy or even resistance to their initial efforts to embrace philanthropy. The presidents persevered in their efforts because they had a future orientation. They were not confined by their previous characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds in their perception of the role. The AAPres who actively embraced fundraising and sought training and experience to position themselves externally reported doing so because of an awareness of changing environmental forces and conditions. Rather than waiting to react to impending changes, the presidents proactively sought to alter their environments.

Rather than being influenced by backgrounds alone, it is the perception of the presidency that determines how presidents approach and execute the role. By accounting for the impact of

environmental forces and conditions, the leaders managed the role similarly on several levels. Those presidents with characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds that provided more exposure to and comfort with external activities then further differentiated themselves through their actions. They perceived the presidential role as primarily external and then managed it that way. They might represent visionary presidents, but in the future, the literature portends a continued emphasis on presidential fundraising. The study data affirms this view, so other presidents will have no choice in the future but to embrace the external aspects of the role.

The conceptual model can thus be revisited to demonstrate that ultimately leader characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds are less significant in management of the presidency because of the overriding impact of changing environmental forces and conditions and the intervening variable of role perception. The revised conceptual model (Figure 6) illustrates these relationships.

Figure 6. Revised Conceptual Model



The conclusions above could be drawn only because of the qualitative nature of the study and the usage of in-depth interviews as a particular method. Current perceptions of presidential competencies are based upon quantitative studies with a limited scope of activity measured and without connection to a president's background. This study contributes to various deficits in the existing research just as it challenges key assumptions in the literature.

LIMITATIONS

This study is limited because of its small sample size. The decision was made to limit the presidents involved to those who had been in office for at least a few years so that they would have some perspective on the presidency. While experience likely did provide them with such perspective, at the same time, experience represented a limitation because time could have influenced their recollection of details related to the college culture when they were hired or could have given them a perspective on handling difficulties that would not be representative of those newer to the role. Even so, seasoned presidents themselves maintained that they still faced challenges and that the role remained challenging. In fact, they reported the role was more complex now, a reflection they could only offer based on a lengthy tenure. In this way, the environment counteracts experience because the presidential role is still changing. For this reason, it is unclear the extent of any limitation of not including new presidents.

The researcher's speculation is that new presidents, who would still be forming relationships with trustees, would not have been able to offer the perspective of working with boards, which was a major issue. Even for the presidents in the study who had been president at only one institution, time in office allowed them to see turnover in their boards because of term limits and to be able to speak to working with varied trustees. The presidents at more than one institution could also affirm the view that board relations challenges existed whether trustees were elected or appointed because they had experienced both situations.

Having a sample that includes presidents who had held the presidency at more than one institution is perhaps a limitation. This aspect of the presidents' backgrounds did not factor into the selection process, however. They were selected solely on the criterion of their background as either coming from development or coming from academic affairs. In this way, having additional

experience as a president beyond the first role is not necessarily as much a factor because questions sought to examine the connection between specific non-presidential roles and entering the presidency, with the transition into the role as the focus. Because the questions probed what led to the transition from either development or academic affairs into the presidency initially, the researcher does not have a sense of career paths for the second or third presidencies, such as whether presidents then moved to larger or more prestigious institutions because characteristics of the colleges themselves were not discussed. Because family considerations were offered by several of the presidents, the researcher can infer this as a factor in such moves and also could make the connection that, for some presidents, the move to a new presidency also represented a return to their home state.

Differences in the number of presidencies held or the fact that all the DevPres have doctorates were not characteristics known or factored into the selection process. Rather, the presidents were selected solely based on criterion sampling. While that represents a limitation because of the resulting lack of parity on some characteristics such as academic credentials or offices held, the deliberate selection of “development presidents,” as they are thus tracked and reported by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as well as in the literature, allowed for conclusions to be reached regarding whether development should indeed be viewed as a non-academic pathway and whether development experience itself represents a pipeline to the presidency.

An additional limitation is also related to the selection criteria. To narrow the selection pool for AAPres, since academic affairs still represents the majority pathway to the presidency, the researcher focused on presidents with a connection to the researcher’s dissertation chair, who is well-known in the community college sector, as well as those within driving distance. As

noted in the methods limitations, because of the president's desire to please a colleague, participants might have sought to offer the responses they perceived the researcher was seeking or that might be helpful to the researcher. It is also possible that, because of personal connections, participants might have been guarded and potentially less forthcoming in their responses. To address potential participant reactivity, the researcher consciously sought to focus or redirect the interview away from personal or relational conversation.

The researcher speculates that limiting the pool by a connection to the chair might help to explain why the presidents in the sample seem to be "good" presidents. That is, many of the presidents in the sample have enjoyed lengthy tenures and report accomplishments and a sense of satisfaction in the role. Because the DevPres do not represent a common presidential officeholder, in fact many of them were pioneers for the field, it is not surprising that they, too, would be "good." To overcome any scrutiny or skepticism, they would have had to be effective. The regional focus did result in a pool that was more limited in geographic diversity, but several presidents interviewed during a conference increased inclusion from other regions. Because the study focused on background experience that did not correlate to geography (presidents often moved throughout the course of their careers) but to the role, and furthermore because the study focused on key responsibilities of the presidency that would be required of the role regardless of the type or location of institution, the researcher suspects the lack of geographic diversity probably did not significantly impact the data.

Self-selection to the presidency might be a limitation of the study, the idea that presidents positioned themselves intentionally for the presidency by gaining either academic or development experience to round out their experience. Because this study focuses on how presidents *perceive* the role, the researcher can posit that needing to have both internal and

external experience was not a view of the presidency held by either cohort prior to holding the role. The DevPres reported that they were not hired to fundraise, so they did not seem to consider that having the external background would be an advantage. In most cases, the academic experience and credentials they gained beforehand were related to other non-development positions they held within community colleges, where they first decided to aim for the presidency. Although they considered teaching important, this was reported as much a view in hindsight now rather than as a deliberate consideration they made to gain classroom experience before the presidency. AAPres reported a lack of comfort with fundraising, especially because expectations for it had changed during their tenure, so the majority did not position themselves for the external aspects of the role prior to the position because they did not anticipate it. As for the hiring boards, given the presidents' concerns with trustees' lack of higher education knowledge and commitment to fundraising, it should not be assumed that trustees are intentionally hiring a candidate who has experience in or even the potential to function effectively both internally and externally.

The study is limited, though, by not providing the perspectives of board members. It would be helpful to know if presidents were hired specifically for a certain expertise or skill set like development, how their backgrounds compared to those of other candidates for the position, and the background of the previous president. Although the presidents report it was not the case at their hiring, they do contend that governing boards now are increasingly valuing development experience, a view the literature supports. Because trustees' lack of involvement in fundraising was reported as a frustration by presidents in both cohorts, not providing board member perspectives is a limitation.

As noted, this study is limited because it examines development responsibilities and conceptualizes philanthropic partnerships, but the study does not describe many specific, successful relationships between community colleges and donors. The study also does not include the perspective of foundation board members or donors. Furthermore, the presidents in the study had taken extensive steps to build a culture of philanthropy, but because many presidents were just laying foundations in these areas, there was not yet much demonstrable success.

Another limitation is not exploring possible gender dynamics in the study. Some gender perspectives emerged in the data, and the sample is slightly skewed toward female representation. The study focused on the cohort as a whole regardless of demographic considerations, but because development is a predominately female field, not exploring potential underlying gender dynamics is a limitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the conceptual framework provides a useful means of understanding an increasingly external community college presidency and the viability of presidents with development backgrounds as leaders, the theoretical framework should be tested. Future research could study institutions where successful philanthropic partnerships have been formed and investigate both the president's background and perspectives on the partnership, as well as the perspectives of philanthropists and community leaders involved to see if the engagement is mutually beneficial.

This study provided more context for understanding the backgrounds and preparation of presidents with a development background, but further research should include more DevPres.

Since the interviews for this study were conducted, at least six presidents who could be considered DevPres have been hired by community colleges; three others had been hired the year before the interviews but were determined as too new in their tenures to possibly participate in the study. Because many of the presidents in the sample had been pioneering DevPres—meaning that they were initially hired some time ago and recognize themselves as having forged new territory—perhaps these DevPres were more intentional about developing or positioning their academic experience and obtaining a doctorate. Future research should investigate whether more recent DevPres also have academic backgrounds, such as teaching experience, and whether they were hired for their fundraising prowess or were expected to pursue fundraising as a primary presidential goal.

Such research should also investigate the role of governing boards in hiring and supporting the external aspects of the presidency. Additionally, further research is needed on the role that search firms play in the presidential hiring process. How they understand and regard past external experience and view it in connection with expectations for presidential fundraising merits investigation.

This study underscores the need for more research in general on the qualities of effective development officers as well as the qualities of presidents effective at fundraising. Existing studies of the latter (Bornstein, 2003; Nicholson, 2007) have been limited to four-year institutions. The president may be a head fundraiser but that role is different than the chief development officer, who orchestrates fundraising activity. The characteristics, roles, and relationships between these positions require deeper investigation, especially within the community college context.

Further research should also examine additional contextual factors affecting ascendancy to and experience in community college presidency. For example, with these recent hires from development and with more likely to come in the future, research should address what if any role gender plays in this phenomenon. A dissertation (Leatherwood, 2007) suggested that more development hires could be a way for more women to enter the presidency. As more development presidents are analyzed, research should also focus on whether development experience gained in other contexts—in four-year institutions or in non-higher education nonprofits—is also part of presidents' backgrounds. Research could also explore other ramifications of non-community-college-based development experience in the presidential role. The DevPres in this study had all held a formal position in development at a community college, but many also had extensive experience as volunteer fundraisers with other nonprofits. How might fundraising experience outside a community college setting affect ascendancy to the community college presidency?

Another expanded context for research would be a wider geographic representation. This study had a heavy concentration in the Midwest for reasons explained in the methodology, and it did not appear that geographic considerations played a role in the presidents' approaches. Future research could more fully explore whether philanthropic partnerships are impacted in their pursuit or in their realization by geographic factors.

Because of the dearth of existing research on non-traditional pathways to the presidency, future research should also focus on external roles beyond advancement, such as workforce development. Similarly, because of the shortage of research on development presidents, DevPres at community colleges should be compared to DevPres at other institutional types. As the literature review showed, community colleges and liberal arts institutions have demonstrated

more of a willingness to hire such non-traditional candidates, but it is still worth exploring whether institutional differences also exist within such hires. And while an anomaly, in recent years a couple four-year public institutions have hired former fundraisers. This, too, could be a future research area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The conceptual model represents the perception of the presidential role by presidents themselves. The perceptions of other entities may not necessarily align with these views. It is hoped this research helps to change perceptions in the scholarly literature as discussed above as well as more practitioner-oriented literature and to shape the perspectives of trustees and hiring committees and aspiring or even current presidents, as the recommendations will now detail.

Debunking the dichotomy of an “internal” or academic affairs president and an “external” or development president, as this dissertation has done, results in implications for practice on many levels. Recommendations range from the more practical and tangible to the seemingly remote. With this study’s demonstrated impact of the changing environment, however, even concepts once improbable have become realized. Accordingly, the recommendations below include more immediately actionable suggestions as well as more remote possibilities. The environmental sensitivity and foresight of presidents in the study provided a model used in creating recommendations that do not merely respond to a changing environment, but moreover anticipate and plan for an altered future.

Implications for Those Involved in the Presidential Hiring Process

Search firms play an important role in the presidential hiring process, and as the future recommendations for research suggested, more investigation into their perceptions, actions, and influence is needed. On a practical level, however, providing information such as this study to challenge the seemingly existent dichotomy in use to identify a president as either internal or external would be helpful. Rather than background positions alone, search firms could help evaluate candidates and assist campuses in vetting them by probing for candidates' sensitivity to the changing environment and their perceptions of the presidency as a proactive or responsive role.

Along these lines, governing boards who actually hire and evaluate presidents could benefit from a more current and comprehensive model for the community college presidency than merely looking for fundraising capability. The presidents in this study positioned fundraising as a comprehensive strategy for resource development that was integrated with other aspects of their management, including their relations with campus and community constituents. Such a broad-based perspective would help in determining a "fit" for the institution and areas in which to then monitor presidential performance.

As "non-traditional" candidates are hired, it will be important not only for their credibility but also for a fuller positioning of the importance of fundraising within a comprehensive strategy for resource diversification and community engagement to convey a presidential hire as based upon more than fundraising prowess. Connecting advancement to the institutional strategy and emphasizing academic aspects of the new president's background will help to quell any skepticism over the leader's qualifications amongst the faculty.

Implications for Working with Faculty

The primacy of faculty is, of course, an important aspect of academic culture that has ramifications for the presidential pipeline as well. For non-traditional candidates to find favor with faculty, especially those serving on search committees, prospective leaders must fully convey a solid understanding of the academic enterprise.

Although the presidents in the study articulated their reliance on the provost to curry favor with faculty and to advance presidential initiatives, the president should still cultivate faculty relationships. To help win over faculty, the role of philanthropy and fundraising must be elevated on campus and positioned as integrated with academics, not competing with it or as a supplementary basis for scholarships only, for example. Every attempt should be made in fundraising initiatives, particularly early in a president's tenure, to secure funding that directly impacts faculty in terms of program support, release time, etc. Although such support is not yet common, privately-funded programs for faculty chairs, faculty innovation, and international travel do exist at the community college level. To become integrated into the campus, fundraising must focus on more than scholarships. Advancing academic initiatives, particularly through faculty support, will help to strengthen the legitimacy of a DevPres and gain approval for an AAPres to focus on fundraising rather than traditional academic affairs responsibilities.

Along these lines, presidents need to be sure faculty are informed of external activities and their impact on academic initiatives, particularly gifts received, so that the president's presence off-campus is not interpreted as neglecting campus operations but rather furthering them as the next section will explain.

Implications for Development

Development work and activities should always be presented in every interaction as a means of furthering the institution's academic mission. Practitioners should avoid lingo about "prospects" and other language that often misconstrues development work. Development officers should take every opportunity to help demystify the fundraising process and to clarify misconceptions about the field. Exercising the highest ethical standards and demonstrating an appreciation for academia by pursuing advanced degrees, valuing research and data, and grounding practice in these academic standards will help to enhance the stature of the field.

Although the presidents in the study expressed more confidence—at varying levels—in their current chief development officer (CDO), as nearly all presidents had replaced this position, the study still indicates a need to enhance the skills and professionalism of development as it is practiced in community colleges. To be sure, the lack of resources and attention to this area has been problematic. This study offers possibilities to help advance the field, though.

One is to underscore the possibility of embracing fundraising at the community college level as a unique endeavor. Rather than feeling intimidated by four-year institution operations or trying to replicate them, community college development officers should embrace fundraising as part of a more comprehensive model of resource development. Such positioning offers more opportunity to demonstrate and measure success. At the same time, it offers the possibility of sharing resources. For example, if fundraising is part of economic development, then the workforce training and continuing education areas of the college can be partners in the process. Fundraising at the community college level has the potential to be a model for other nonprofits and even four-year institutions as it embraces philanthropy at the community-impact level.

Another take-away from the study is the group of 10 inspirational role models represented by the DevPres. Because the literature on development professionals has been scarce and dated, the potential power of the CDO position as a pathway to the presidency has been diminished. CDOs can be inspired not only to do their best work for their institutions but in the process can also realize the opportunity that exists for continued personal career advancement. In fact, development officers at other institutional types who have aspirations to advanced leadership positions might want to consider working in a community college, as that sector has a demonstrated predisposition toward hiring non-traditional candidates into the presidency (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Cook & Kim, 2012; Weisbrod et al., 2008), a concept affirmed by this study.

In addition to more scholarly research into the development profession and on presidents from development, a more professionalized view of the field and its potential must also be integrated into practice, particularly the professional associations and related publications and training materials for the field. Beyond the largely anecdotal emphasis of such programs, an enhanced emphasis on presidential role models from development and on providing data to confirm purported best practices need to become more standard practices. Dissatisfaction with current associational training and materials exists, as fundraising consultants Schreifels and Perry recently highlighted (veritusgroup.com), but viable alternatives and recommendations for changes must be offered to effect change.

Beyond implications for the chief development officer position, the study has implications for other executive officer positions, particularly VPAAAs.

Implications for Provosts

Most of this study's AAPres were not prepared for the external aspects of the presidential position and indicated that learning the skills while on-the-job in the presidency was challenging. Provosts who wish to ascend to the presidency should be intentional about seeking training opportunities for fundraising and experience with board relations while still serving in their provost positions. A DevPres in the study uses a committee staffing structure of working with the board as an opportunity to train and groom her vice presidents. If such an option does not exist, provosts should seek out other opportunities, which could include serving on a nonprofit board themselves. Understanding a board member's perspective is one challenge of working with trustees, and firsthand experience as a board member would help to provide insights into the role. Working with trustees in a leadership capacity will still require additional training, however, and existing programs appear to be in need of expansion and improvement. The study's data can help to encourage provosts about the benefits of gaining skills and knowledge in board relations and fundraising before the presidency. While such experience might not yet be a full requirement, again, the presidents themselves indicated how previous exposure to such activities facilitated the transition into the presidency. What appears to be an increasing internal focus for the provost position, while the president operates externally, does not mean provosts will not be positioned for the external aspects of the presidency, should they so choose to attain that post.

In fact, the increased emphasis on resource diversification by integrating academic programs more fully with community needs and input should help to provide provosts with experience in working with external constituents. Indeed, funding needs require a greater understanding of the external not just in terms of philanthropy and fundraising but also for admissions and academic programs. Programs must be connected to and supported by the

community, business and industry. In today's environment, colleges must meet the needs of their partners rather than telling them what they should need; colleges must know the needs of the community instead of providing programs and wondering why they are not supported or graduating students are not hired.

For those provosts not interested in the presidency, a different training is still in order. As the community college president increasingly delegates campus operations to the provost, the VPAA role has more accountability. Increased training and support for enhanced leadership responsibilities would be beneficial. Provost counterparts at four-year institutions can help to provide modeling of how such a dual leadership structure works effectively. Even this team structure does not abdicate provosts from responsibility for fundraising, however. Rather, as the chief academic officer, a provost must be ready to help convey the academic vision effectively to donors and other partners. Training on visioning and persuasive communication skills would be beneficial. Additionally, the provost must be able to articulate the benefits of the president's external activities to internal constituents, particularly faculty. The provost and president must be viewed as working in tandem in this regard. Similarly, other members of the executive team must articulate the same message internally to the campus about the role of the president in operating externally and the importance of private support.

In addition to providing provosts with exposure to and dedicated roles in furthering fundraising, enhanced training on fundraising is necessary for trustees and current and future presidents.

Implications for Training on Fundraising

Presidents in the study expressed frustration with trustees' lack of personal involvement in fundraising. Subjecting trustees to training about fundraising in and of itself is unlikely to be well-received. Trustees need to have fundraising positioned in a broader context. Such training could help to address the concern presidents expressed not just for trustees' involvement with fundraising but for their general knowledge as well. Fundraising, or resource development, should be positioned as a part of a comprehensive strategy for positioning the community college as a driver of economic development. An emphasis should be placed on a proactive approach to partnerships and the potential for win-win relationships.

Training should emphasize that merely begging or passively hoping for support does not represent an effective strategy. Such an approach largely characterizes what community colleges have done with traditional revenue sources. Non-traditional revenue requires a new approach focused on impact, accountability, and community economic development. Embracing this new approach could even positively influence public support. The same partnership approach can be applied to legislators. Rather than bemoaning what cannot be done with the legislative funding allocated, colleges can demonstrate what can be done within those terms, maintaining a positive message but also providing parameters.

The connection between the governing board and the foundation board should also be strengthened. Although the presidents reported it was still effective to have the boards' missions firmly distinguished as policy or fundraising, meetings of the boards should involve a representative(s) from either group to keep one another informed and to integrate efforts. Even if governing boards are not actively involved in fundraising, they must be expected to lead by example with their giving, and 100% participation by both boards is not an unreasonable

expectation. This support will take effort not only by the president, but by the leadership of both boards. Additionally, although the president can and should champion the connection, board members of either body should themselves see the potential for supporting one another's efforts, and foundation board members should be actively groomed as governing board candidates, whether elected or appointed.

Presidential Fundraising Training

The presidents in the study believe fundraising will only become more important for future presidents, but they expressed concern about the abilities and skills of leaders to effectively execute that responsibility. Enhanced training is recommended for current and aspiring presidents.

The model and data from this study represent the types of material that should be included in presidential training. Educational efforts should inspire with proven results on more than a singular scale, using data rather than personal anecdotes, which appear to comprise much of the current training opportunities available for presidents in fundraising. Presidential training initiatives through various sources should expand the context of their fundraising training. From some of the less sophisticated approaches of the AAPres and their lack of full comfort in fundraising—despite all seeking some formal training on the job through professional associations—it is clear that presidential training is likely not fully preparing presidents to appreciate the philanthropic context for their efforts. Development programs and activities should be positioned within the context of the country's rich philanthropic history of supporting higher education as well as within the context of today's changing philanthropic environment with contemporary donors seeking community impact (Moody & Goldseker, 2013).

Beyond just presenting fundraising as the seeking of philanthropic support, training can extend the partnership focus to other important aspects of advancement such as alumni relations or even student involvement. These constituents have largely been neglected by community colleges, and involving and exciting them about giving, even on a small scale, promise payoffs in different ways. These constituents in particular, students and alumni, influence “big donors” to want to give because they can personalize the potential impact of giving. Such activity becomes mutually beneficial, as students and alumni are exposed to individuals who have achieved financial success and are in a position to contribute, and potential donors can feel good about their giving. Other pay-offs of involving these constituents include the other ways that alumni can become connected to the colleges beyond giving. As alumni are actively cultivated through more formalized approaches for fundraising, they become more connected to the college and can in turn be inspired to hire students and alumni, speak to current students, and serve on industry advisory boards. Engaging students while they are in school increases the likelihood they will be active alumni.

Although presidents were not asked explicitly about their educational backgrounds, it still seems striking that when presidents were asked how they learned about fundraising that none of them mentioned gaining such knowledge in academic programs of any kind. In fact, a few presidents even mentioned the failure of educational programs to address and train future leaders in fundraising. Relevant academic programs, particularly higher education administration programs that constitute the majority of doctorates community college presidents hold according to ACE (2012), should integrate philanthropy and fundraising into their curriculum to better prepare leaders before they assume the presidency. Given advances in the literature, such integration should also be done in the full historical and theoretical context of the field, not as a

set of how-to tips or steps. As the presidents in this study demonstrated, true development is an intentional, strategic, data-driven profession—and it should be taught as such.

Implications for Aspiring Presidents

The following recommendations might also apply to current presidents who are struggling with operating effectively in the current climate and meeting increasingly external expectations. As already noted, potential presidents should gain experience in working with boards. Aside from the various fundraising training recommendations already provided, the study offers other perspectives that would be useful to presidential aspirants.

It appears the study's presidents effectively “manage up” with trustees. Rather than being intimidated by them, even as trustees are a president's bosses, the presidents illustrate the concept from popular management. Essentially, to manage up is to intentionally build a relationship with superiors to accomplish their goals while also advancing one's own through an emphasis on a win-win partnership. Presidents can take this approach with trustees by anticipating what they need to know but are unlikely to ask or admit. Presidents should operate from a position of assuming trustees want to help and then provide clear tasks, processes, and data to measure their accomplishments. DevPres likely have an advantage in board relations because they have worked with key leaders of the college not as their bosses but as key volunteers. Although the volunteers do not supervise the chief development officers, they do hold power over them. Even so, volunteers look to the CDOs to guide their actions. Development officers orchestrate the relationship with volunteers in a respectful but “managing up” way. Presidents can implement a similar strategy with their boards.

One of the most common complaints volunteers have is not feeling utilized. Presidents should help trustees to feel pride in their service, whether they are on the governing or foundation boards. A special emphasis should be made to increase their pride in the role of community colleges. They are not “just” community college trustees—they are in a position to influence the economic impact of communities. Such a positive positioning of service could even improve requirements for elected trustees by making voters more invested in success of college and who governs them. The president should set the goal of making service on the foundation board a prestigious role in the community. The DevPres and the one most fundraising-focused AAPres reported having done this effectively.

Aside from fundraising, training for aspiring presidents has a more practical consideration. The majority of the presidents in the study had been mentored by current presidents and reported this as a primary reason for pursuing the presidency. Beyond setting sights on taking the office, it is important that mentorship programs, formal or informal, mentor new presidents to operate effectively. The mentoring president’s perception of the role must be one focused on enhancing partnerships and diversifying revenue. Several of the presidents in the study reported their active work as mentors to others. Formal efforts should be recognized and enhanced through professional associations. Informally, aspiring presidents should seek multiple mentors and consider their perceptions of the presidential role when selecting a mentor.

If the presidency seems beyond reach, aspiring presidents should find hope in this study’s presidents. Many of them represented “late bloomers.” A number of them did not seek the presidency until a later point in life because of family considerations or after a different career path. The presidents’ shared belief that all experiences matter should encourage aspiring

presidents not to feel tied to some preconceived presidential trajectory or being a traditional or typical candidate.

Implications for Policy

The data from this study underscore the deficiencies previously noted in the way that presidential backgrounds are currently tracked and surveyed. Given this contribution and the forecasts made by the presidents and in the literature for an increase in “non-traditional” hires, it is hoped that changes will be made in the near future in the way presidential backgrounds are tracked. Changes have been made before; for example, Scully (2011) reports that in 1986 when the American Council on Education (ACE) first began the *American College President Study*, which tracks backgrounds, it did not even include advancement as a prior career position. The researcher’s recommendation would be to expand the survey scope beyond just reporting on the position immediately prior to the presidency and to query whether presidents had experience in areas beyond that position. The ACE survey does ask whether presidents have ever worked outside higher education; it could similarly ask whether presidents had worked in other areas of the college beyond the area represented by their most recent prior position. Additionally, the categories for tracking “non-academic” positions should also be expanded to break out various areas, including more delineations within advancement, to better track the growth of this potential pipeline.

In addressing the impending leadership crisis, Brown (2012) declares that boards must be more open to non-traditional hires, including candidates coming from outside of higher education. The need to look outside of higher education becomes less critical if leaders within “non-academic” units of colleges are viewed as potential leaders, and if these potential leaders

position themselves for taking on such responsibility by attaining the requisite advanced degree and other academic experience, such as teaching, that provides further credibility and experience. At least such “non-academic” candidates as those from development or student affairs would assume the presidency with an understanding of higher education and the unique culture it represents. Candidates from outside academia have seemed to struggle with making this transition and fully appreciating the history and nuances of academic culture and operations.

The views of only the traditional pathway from academic affairs and likely misinformation regarding the pathway from development have probably contributed to the perception of a “crisis” in leadership. Development candidates do not represent a pathway in large numbers, but they can be considered representative of a larger potential pool of candidates from “non-traditional” pathways, such as communications, governmental affairs, or workforce development. Perpetuation of a dichotomy of either internal or external perspectives is unfair to candidates from both areas, and aside from the scholarly literature, associations and their related policy briefs should provide a more balanced view of the contemporary presidency, the provost position, and the chief development officer positions, which have all changed considerably in recent years. Popular perceptions have yet to match this reality. Community college associations can promulgate a view of leadership that is more in keeping with community colleges’ increasingly important role in higher education and society.

The demands of the presidency today are daunting. A more “guttural” view of fundraising and of the challenges of working with boards will not attract candidates to the positive. A proactive approach to the presidency will be tough and demanding, for sure, but it promises a much more satisfying reward and sense of accomplishment than merely replacing revenue or containing trustees. It is easy to discuss philanthropy or foundation activity as a mere “add-on”

or more one technique to try. Positioning fundraising as an important strategy in comprehensive resource diversification makes it a more palatable activity not only for presidents to want to pursue but also for donors to contribute. They want to feel giving is part of a comprehensive vision for the institution and its impact on the community, not an act of desperation.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The researcher's bias toward the nobility of the development profession clearly emerged in the last recommendation, if not throughout the study. Even so, the researcher is not alone in recognizing the potential for the field. Some philanthropic scholars have called on development practitioners to embrace their role as educators in nonprofits. The development officer as educator seems to be a role demanded especially of those professionals serving within higher education institutions, in the mind of the researcher. Elevation of development professionals to the presidency of any type of higher education institution should be recognized as an essential step in the continued growth and evolution of the profession. Development presidents in community colleges also have the potential to contribute to an understanding of a changing practice in response to a new breed of contemporary donor focused on helping communities. Rather than extending four-year fundraising models to two-year institutions, successful philanthropic partnerships at community colleges have the potential to contribute to the field's continued growth as a whole. It is hoped that this study will encourage development professionals in any type of nonprofit to set their sights high for the field and for their continued role within it. Despite the challenges, hearing the presidents' passion for leadership and the difference they can make in their communities inspired at least one development professional to set high aspirations, and it is hoped others will similarly be inspired by this study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Recruitment Email

Dear President NAME:

I am a doctoral candidate in higher education at the University of Michigan working on my dissertation, which investigates a possible shifting orientation of the community college presidency by exploring whether presidents with an external background function differently than those who approach the presidency from a traditional, “internal” pathway. My qualitative study, conducted under the supervision of co-chairs Dick Alfred and Steve DesJardins (also CSHPE Director), involves interviews with community college presidents who have a previous background in development and a comparison group of presidents coming from academic affairs.

The demands on your time are so great, and I appreciate your even considering my request to participate in this qualitative study. I am hoping you will be part of this study by participating in an interview approximately one-hour in length to be conducted via phone, Skype, or in person. You will be asked questions around the key topics of your background, your approach to the presidency, and the college’s advancement performance. The names of participants will be kept confidential during the research process and in the presentation of the study findings. The University of Michigan Institutional Review Board has determined that this study is exempt from IRB oversight.

I would be happy to provide more detail about the project in advance, in a brief phone call or via email, as well as to share more of my background qualifications and interest in this topic. I believe the study will add to an understanding of the increasing demands placed upon the community college presidency, an understanding of the evolution of the development profession, the preparation and pathways for community college presidents, and the changing orientation of the community college presidency.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I will be in touch soon and I have also provided my contact information below.

Cordially,
Shelley Strickland

APPENDIX B

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

I'd like to talk with you about your prior background and your current responsibilities as a community college president. The interview will have three sections of questions.

1) President's Background

Lead off question: Would you please describe your career trajectory/pathway to the presidency?

Probe: How would you characterize your position choices (e.g., intentional, fortuitous, etc.)?

Probe: Tell me more about the skills and knowledge acquired in [select 2/3] positions.

What experience was primary in your preparation for the presidency?

Probe: What aspects of your previous experiences do you most draw upon in your presidency?

Probe: What experience/role in your background contributed to your skill/ability as a president?

Probe: What formal fundraising experience did you have before the presidency?

At what point in your career was the presidency the next step?

Probe: Why did you become a college president?

Probe: How different was your perception of the presidency when you first decided to seek that position from the reality of the role? Did you have a good understanding of what it entailed?

Probe: What was most surprising/unexpected regarding the presidency?

Describe the most challenging situation you have faced as president and what you learned from it.

Probe: What difficulty in your presidency has been a defining point in your leadership?

Probe: If you were to begin your path again, would you do anything differently in terms of training, preparation, or experiences to better prepare for the presidency?

2) Management of the Presidency

Administration and Operations

Explain your executive team organizational structure with the division of responsibilities among your executive or leadership team.

Who is in charge when you are not on campus or when you are on vacation?

Probe: What has been your strategy for attracting, developing, and retaining talent within your executive leadership team?

Probe: Do you have a succession plan in place? Is there bench strength in the organization?

Probe: How would you assess the caliber of your executive leadership team?

What operational areas can you delegate and which are most critical for direct presidential leadership and decisions?

Probe: What responsibilities can the president never fully delegate?

How do you allocate your time on a weekly basis, and how has that changed over the years?

Probe: If you could reallocate your time in any way during an average month, what would you prioritize more? Do less of?

Probe: What guiding principles do you employ in determining how to allocate your time on a weekly basis?

Leadership on campus and in community

How do you convey the community college mission, particularly to community leaders and legislators?

Probe: How has this changed over your presidency?

Probe: What is mission-critical? Can the community college be all things to all people?

How would you characterize your interactions with key stakeholders within and outside of the college?

Probe: What are the differences and similarities in your interactions with constituents on campus compared to external stakeholders?

Fill in the blank: Phone calls or meetings requests from these individuals will prompt me to rearrange my plans or schedule?

Probe: What concerns on or off campus hold the most urgency for presidential involvement?

Relationship with board

How often and in what ways do you communicate with board members?

Probe: How would you describe the balance between board governance and administration?

Probe: How would you characterize your relationships with the board, individually and collectively?

What are some of the goals and priorities you have established, with board support, for yourself as president?

Probe: How have those changed over the course of your presidency?

What accomplishments do you hope will define your presidency?

Probe: What do you want your legacy to be as a president?

Strategic and long-range planning

How do you engage the support of both internal & external stakeholders in defining and pursuing a strategic vision?

Probe: In what ways do you achieve buy-in for the college's direction?

How do you ensure that initiatives/efforts relate to goals & objectives in the college's overall strategic direction?

Probe: How do you/board members use dashboards and a set of metrics to lead the institution and ensure alignment of activity/effort toward desired goals?

Probe: Do you have a strategic plan and how vital is it in the college's operations?

What areas of growth and potential do you foresee for the college? Potential challenges?
Probe: What opportunities and threats do you see on the horizon that will impact the college's performance?

Probe: What about the impact of fund development and the foundation for the future of the College?

Financial Management

What strategies have you employed to address today's challenging fiscal environment?

Probe: What systems or processes have you put in place to improve financial performance?

What revenue streams hold the most potential for the future?

Probe: What fiscal activities do you plan to change, discontinue, or implement?

3) College Advancement Background

What were the board's expectations for you as President regarding advancement/fund development when you were hired?

Probe: How did goals related to advancement compare to other performance objectives?

Probe: Has the expectation for fundraising changed over your tenure? Increased? Decreased?

Probe: What organizational decisions/capacity have you made to support this changing expectation?

What are some advancement successes you are particularly proud of?

Probe: How much have you raised? Has the college's foundation increased its scholarships, endowment, etc. during your tenure?

Probe: How did any previous experiences help make those possible?

How has the college culture (and expectations) changed in terms of advancement during your tenure? *Probe: How has the board role in fundraising changed? Are trustees involved?*

Interested? Helping to make critical connections to major gift donors? Or do trustees not see fundraising as an important function for board members?

Probe: How is the college conducting its advancement efforts now compared to when you started?

CLOSING: Is there anything else about your background or your presidency that we haven't discussed that you think is relevant to this study?

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