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Adaptive Leadership Approaches in Online Education: A Study of Trust Creation and Change Management in Higher Education

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ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACHES IN ONLINE EDUCATION: A STUDY OF TRUST CREATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACHES IN ONLINE EDUCATION: A STUDY OF TRUST CREATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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This focus of this study was to determine which aspects of “Adaptive Leadership” are most commonly used by leaders in online education at doctoral research institutions where online education is playing a major role in enrollment. Within this study, the current state of higher education is reviewed and major changes in the financial, technological and competitive landscape are discussed. Challenges within the higher education context are addressed. These challenges include the increasing cost of a college education, decreased state support for public institutions, reduction of regional hegemony caused by technological advancements, increasing competition for students, and student demand for greater flexibility and services.

The reality that many institutional leaders are turning toward online education as a way of improving the financial outlook of their institution will be presented. The challenges in adopting online education, and the assumptions and expectations of today’s online learners will be reviewed as will the impacts on institutional infrastructure, policies and processes. The theory of adaptive leadership is presented, and its applicability to the changing world of higher education is discussed.

A phenomenological qualitative research study was undertaken where leaders in online education at major doctoral research institutions within the United States were

interviewed regarding their leadership styles. Emergent themes and commonalities across the leadership approaches and narratives were identified and reviewed in the context of adaptive leadership. From this analysis a clearer idea of the adaptive leadership approaches that are being used to make change at academic institutions has emerged.

Online leaders in higher education today do use adaptive leadership approaches when they are dealing with complex challenges that involve both technological and interpersonal transformation. Online leaders who have been successful in motivating change are shown to use a cycle of trust development as an ongoing and essential component of their efforts. They are also shown to use behaviors associated with adaptive leadership when they are dealing with complex adaptive challenges, which are a common component of the online leader's responsibility at major public, doctoral, research institutions.

This dissertation is dedicated to my father Thomas, my mother Lillian, my wife Ana, and my boys Nathan and Jonathan. I am so grateful to all of you for your love, support, feedback, and patience.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

There is a conundrum related to higher education in the United States today. The importance of a college degree to the quality of life of an individual has never been more important but has also never been less affordable (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In late 2015, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, addressed the concept of student success and completion by noting that, while more students are graduating college than ever before, college is still not living up to its promise to the citizens of the country. Duncan pointed to the increasing costs of a college education, and the low completion rates of attendees. Snyder and Dillow (2015) find that almost half of the students who begin college do not graduate within six years.

In today's economy, the need for a college education is greater than ever, as college graduates with a bachelor's degree "typically earn 66 percent more than those with only a high school diploma and are less likely to face unemployment" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Carnevale (2015) notes that an individual with a college education will earn approximately $ 1 million more than an individual without such an education.

Finnie, Wismer and Mueller (2015) find that public policy makers worldwide support the notion of post-secondary education for their citizens, due to the common belief that employers will need an educated workforce in order to support the needs of the knowledge economy. However, Mortenson (2012) finds some fairly sobering realities related to reductions in state funding of higher education caused by the flagging economy, including reductions by 69.4 % in Colorado, 66.8% in South Carolina, and over 50% reductions in Arizona, Rhode Island, Oregon, Minnesota, Montana, Virginia and Vermont over the past few decades. Debot and Reich (2015) assert that even after significant investments under the Obama Administration, the maximum Pell Grant award covers only about 30% of the cost of a four-year program. The state of the economy, with fewer dollars left in state coffers to help fund higher education, leaves the problem of how to afford education to the students themselves and to the educational institutions that they seek to attend.

Impacts on Public Institutions. Public institutions of higher education are caught between several of their own realities that cause great pressure on their financial outlook. The reductions in state support for public institutions have forced tuition increases that are beyond the pale (Fillion, 2016). Public policy makers recoil against the rising tuition levels. Legislators argue that the rising tuition costs put the burden squarely on the student, where it should be up to the institutions to find ways to be more efficient and effective with the funds they already have (Watkins, 2016). These rising costs have burdened the students, forcing the percentage of Pell-Eligible students attending college for an undergraduate program that will have to work their way through college to rise to over 50% in recent years. Perna (2010) asserts:

> Quantitative studies consistently show that retention rates are higher for students who work a modest number of hours per week (ten to fifteen) than they are for students who do not work at all or those who work more than fifteen hours per week. (p. 2)

The problem of passing the costs on to the student falls back on the institution in dealing with students who are overburdened by work to focus on studies, therefore affecting student retention rates (Bowen, 2013). This passing the buck of the cost of post-secondary education is not a scalable, long term solution (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). These authors assert that some efficiencies must be found in the system of higher education that can slow the rising costs of education, while improving retention rates and overall student success.

Online and Continuing Education. Due to the aforementioned forces in the higher education environment including state budgets and technological advancement, many public institutions of higher education are under fiscal stress (Mortenson, 2012). Leadership within these institutions quite often turn to online education and non-traditional student populations as a way of advancing toward enrollment goals while minimizing new capital investment (Christensen & Eyring, 2011).

Christensen and Eyring point to examples where high-demand online education has expanded the enrollment at many institutions while institutions that lag behind in online development may well suffer negative enrollment impacts. Christensen identifies this phenomenon with his theory of “Disruptive Innovation” (Christensen, 1997) where new technologies or inventions with clear benefits can make obsolete or reduce demand for more traditional processes. In some cases, successful online operations can mean the stabilization of institutional budgets, and subsequent promotion of the health of the institution itself (Christensen, Horn, Caldera & Soares, 2011). Luzer (2012) noted a 2012 case, at the University of Virginia. The board attempted to fire the President, in part due to a lack of progress adopting online education strategies at the university.

Offering online modes of education forces change within an institution, as the teaching paradigms and student expectations are quite different than in traditional campus programs (De Freitas & Oliver, 2005). Inertia, a force which pushes back at change within a long-standing institution (DeZure, 2000), supports the status-quo, and recoil against adoption of change within the policies and structures of higher education. Bacow, Bowen, Guthrie, Lack and Long (2012) found that faculty resistance to online education can be particularly strong since it “calls into question the very reason that many pursued an academic career in the first place” (p.19), noting that the faculty “enjoyed being students and valued the relationships that they enjoyed with their professors or mentors” (p.20).

Fullan (2007) notes that change leadership is required to influence change successfully. Flawed leadership styles can backfire and cause disruption and worsen the case for change at an institution. However, several researchers found that the necessary competencies for online leadership have not yet been thoroughly defined (Beaudoin, 2007; Coleman, 2016; Nworie, 2012).

Continuing and Online Education Have a Shared Identity. Klieber (1996) asserted that online leadership and continuing education leadership are bound in a shared identity due to the similarities in serving non-traditional student populations. According to Burnette (2015) adult learners are the primary audience for continuing education, and similarly, asynchronous online education removes the barriers of time and place, creating a form of education that is attractive to military, working professionals and adult learners. Because of this shared mission, many universities, colleges and educational providers colocate online and continuing education facilities and services (Education Advisory Board, n.d.).

Adaptive Leadership

Unlike a broad range of leadership theories and styles (Northouse, 2016), adaptive leadership is more “follower centered” than “leader centered” (p. 258). Heifetz and Linsky (2004), define adaptive leadership as the “practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” (p. 14). The authors continue with the analogy of adaptation of evolutionary biology, in which successful adaptation has three characteristics. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009), claim that adaptive leadership has these similar characteristics to environmental biology: (1) It preserves the DNA essential for the species’ continued survival; (2) it discards (reregulates or rearranges) the DNA that no longer serves the species’ current needs; and (3) it creates DNA arrangements that give the species’ the ability to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments. Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future (p. 14).

With this analogy, the authors are illustrating their concept that “adaptive leadership is specifically about change that enables the capacity to thrive” (p. 14). Various forces in concert with the evolution of technology, such as increased competition driven by this technology (Smith & Prados, 1997) the economy (Choudaha & van Rest, 2018), and reductions in state funding (Mitchell, Leachman, Masterson, & Waxman, 2018; Mortenson, 2012), have significantly impacted many public institutions. One impact is the increased demand on higher education to be an accountable and represent an effective return on investment (Christensen et al, 2011). Northouse (2016) provides examples of other types of organizations that failed to respond to the changing environment around them and have suffered for it. He points to recent reductions in traditional denominational churches in the United States, which “have shrunken by 200,000 members” (p. 259), and the impact of corporate and company mergers, where job overlaps and redundancy may force a population of workers to retool their jobs. Organizations must change or they will become extinct. Leading an organization through dramatic change and thriving is extremely challenging, and it is where adaptive leadership theory is advantageous.

Problem Statement

Very little research is available in the literature related to leadership theories and approaches that have been used by leaders in online and continuing education environments during times of upheaval and change. Evidence within the literature (Lederman, 2018) indicates that expansion of online education is very important to many institutions. Evidence within the literature indicates that expansion of online education is very important to many institutions. However, online education can be a disruptive force in higher education (Christensen & Eyring, 2011) and within the institution itself, creating challenges that take strong leadership to manage.

Leaders in higher education institutions across the United States have been able to negotiate change at their institutions (Kezar, Carducci & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). However, not much is known about the successful leadership styles of the VP’s, Deans and AVP’s who have helped develop thriving online and continuing education operations their institution. If these changes are critical to an institution, specific examples of how this has been successfully accomplished should help other organizations successfully navigate these challenges. This research will investigate the change leadership approach used by successful leaders at large, doctoral, higher education institutions within the United States, and look to identify strategies for adaptive change that most align with successful results within these institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to inform the field related to the specific leadership approaches used by this population of leaders and to expand the knowledge base in the field of higher education related to the adaptive leadership approaches used when leading significant online education development efforts.

Research Question

The research question for this study is: "How do online and continuing education leaders lead and make change within the complex organization and distributed authority structure found within large public doctoral research institutions?"

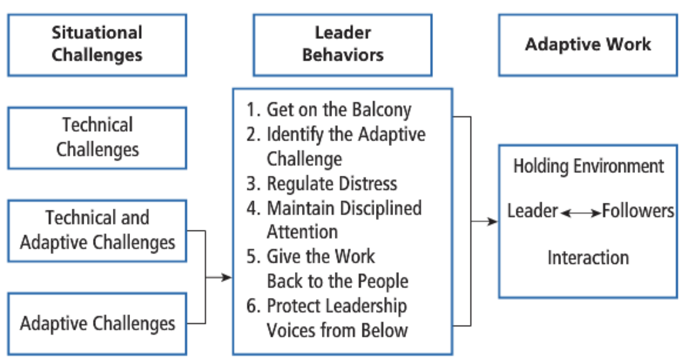
Significance of the Study

The significance of this study relates to the importance to the financial and enrollment health that online and continuing education has within public doctoral research institutions. According to Christensen, et al. (2011), institutions of higher education face increased competition for students from institutions with strong online education operations. Institutions that lag behind on creating their own online programs may face enrollment decline, and financial instability due to changes in the competitive landscape. However, change can be difficult to achieve within the shared governance system that is traditional higher education (Cortese, 2003; Kennedy, 1997). Successful processes and theories of change management can help to guide institutions toward healthier positioning within the field of higher education.

Conceptual Framework. This study applied the theory of Adaptive Leadership within higher education, to the problem of establishing critical changes on higher education campuses related to developing thriving online education systems. Figure 1.1 depicts the suggested leadership behaviors related to leading through technical and adaptive challenges. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) described Adaptive challenges as “difficult, because their solutions require people to change their ways” (p. 69). Northouse (2016) asserts “Generally, adaptive leadership is concerned with how people change and adjust to new circumstances” (p. 258). Adaptive leaders engage in activities that mobilize, motivate, organize, orient and focus the attention of others (Heifetz, 1994).

Figure 1.1

Northhouse Model of Adaptive Leadership



Reprinted from *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. (p. 261), by P. G. Northouse, 2016, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission.

The concepts of mobilizing others as defined in adaptive leadership certainly apply to leadership in online education. Online education represents a paradigm shift within higher education. New pedagogical approaches, accelerated semesters, customer-oriented support systems and online platforms of interaction are all critical components of successful online education systems, and require leadership at the institution to facilitate. Adaptive Leadership will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

Research Methodology

The research design for this study was a phenomenological qualitative approach was undertaken for this study, utilizing semi-structured interviewing techniques with 12 - 15 leaders within larger four-year institutions involved in Online and Distance Education. Respondents were asked about the processes and approaches they have used to generate change on their campuses. Patterns of successful strategies among these leaders were tracked, and key components of change management for online education were identified. Once these patterns were identified and common patterns and approaches emerged, the approaches were reviewed through the lens of adaptive leadership by coding the transcripts and identifying the behaviors of these participants which aligned with the prescriptive behaviors of adaptive leadership. Commonalities and differences between the approaches described by the participants and the behaviors prescribed within the theory of Adaptive Leadership were highlighted. Ultimately, the researcher ascertained which adaptive leadership approaches have been utilized by the participants, and which of the approaches the leaders found to be the most useful and successful.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarification, the important terms used in this study have been defined:

Adaptive Challenge – problems that are not clear-cut or easy to identify. They cannot be solved by the leader's authority or expertise. They are usually value-laden and they stir up people's emotions. They are difficult because they usually require changes in people's assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Northouse, 2016).

Adaptive Leadership – The "practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" (Heifetz et al. 2009, p. 14).

Change Agent, an individual leader within an institution who has been identified in the field, or by peers, as having been a champion for, and motivator of, change toward improved processes in online and continuing education within their institution (Coplin, Merget & Bourdeaux, 2002).

Change Management, the process utilized by change agents to lead and manage change processes within their institution (Clegg & Walsh, 2004).

Continuing Education, a rather broadly defined area encompassing both organizational and programmatic components mostly aligned with the non-traditional student population. These can be both for credit and non-credit academic program areas (Jarvis, 1995).

Disruptive Innovation, a term coined by Clayton Christensen and made popular in his work, "The Innovator's Dilemma" (Christensen, 1997), which refers to a new technology or approach that can disrupt a long-standing business strategy or competitive environment by utilizing new approaches to attract new populations as customers. Included are innovations such as cellular telephones, personal computers, video recording devices, and Community College versus traditional institution. In the case of this study it refers to the impact that online education is having on traditional campus based higher education.

Major Change, in this case refers to relatively comprehensive changes to the processes within an institution related to all aspects of its operation (Ashford, 2004). Typical systems impacted are course modality, course schedules, semester schedules, faculty time, duties and schedules, delivery and support system modalities, systems in support of financial aid, admissions, registration, student record keeping, academic program selection, student support, student success coaching, career management, technical support, and most other major areas of institutional process.

Non-Traditional Student **–** a student whom falls outside of the age range and background of the traditional 18-22-year-old student advancing to college directly post-high school (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). This population includes adult students with work experience, their own families, current employment, inability or unwillingness to attend traditional on-campus programs, or any combination of the above.

Online Education – an academic degree or certificate, either undergraduate or graduate, which is entirely, or nearly entirely available for participation completely through computer-based programs accessed through the Internet (Allen & Seaman, 2006). "Nearly entirely available" programs may include concepts such as a required summer session of on-campus work, or occasional on-campus visits, but includes more than 90% of participation time conducted via computer access.

Traditional Student – a student in the 18 – 22-year age range who has recently completed their high school education within the United States, and who seeks a campus-based college experience and program (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002).

Assumptions and Delimitations

Allen and Seaman (2015) indicate that online education will continue to grow in higher education, creating a long-lasting need for this line of research. A pilot study including these semi-structured interview questions will be conducted with a small group of online and continuing education leaders to assist in validating the association between the interview questions and the research question and outcomes.

Limitations to this study include the relatively small sample size of relevant leaders in comparison to the overall size of the online and continuing education industry. The interviews will take place during the winter of 2017, and, given the pace of industry change, conditions will likely change over a relatively short period of time, potentially changing leadership strategies as well. This study only covers the specific association between interviewed online and continuing education leaders and the concept of adaptive leadership. Other theories of leadership will only be touched on, but will not specifically be a part of the research questions.

The semi-structured interview questions developed for this research study were created by the researcher. The researcher will interview individual leaders in online and continuing education from large, doctoral research institutions across the United States. Due to often dramatic differences in academic focus, culture, tuition cost, budgets and endowments, among other factors, outcomes will not be generalizable to other types of institutions.

Conclusion

Given the aforementioned importance of online and continuing education to the health of the modern research university (Allen & Seaman, 2015), as well as the need to expedite development of such systems in order to quickly capitalize on the demand of the relevant population (Christensen & Eyring, 2011), the importance of the success of the institutional change necessarily tied to these systems is paramount. Never has the world of public higher education seen these circumstances, and the "good old days" of strong public funding and regional hegemony are unlikely to recur. Understanding and embracing those aspects of adaptive leadership that contribute toward institutional stability and modernization is part of the equation toward strong viability higher education moving forward.

In the following chapter, a review of the literature will be presented that will cover adaptive leadership theory and leadership in online and continuing education in higher education.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Within this study various aspects of the leadership approaches to leading higher education institutions through the dramatic changes necessary to compete in the world of online education will be explored. The first section of this chapter will explore the disruption to higher education caused by online education. The notion of online education as a disruptive innovation will be presented. The theory of “disruptive innovation” will be presented. The theory of adaptive leadership and the work surrounding this concept within higher education will be presented in the final sections of this chapter.

Online Learning in Higher Education

According to Allen and Seaman (2015), “the proportion of academic leaders who report that online learning is critical to their institution’s long-term strategy has grown from 48.8% in 2002 to 70.8%” in 2015 (p. 4). They also report that the classes of institution showing the greatest growth of enrollment in online courses are public (up 7.2% for the year) and private (up 12.7%) four-year colleges and universities (p. 5), with approximately 30% of all higher education enrollment coming through online education. Clinefelter and Aslanian (2014) find that flexibility, such as the ability to study at their own pace, year-round class offerings, accelerated course semesters and multiple start times per year are important to online learners.

Kretovics (2011) argues that we are living in an era of perpetual change. “In this climate of change, higher education has been under attack for not keeping pace with societal demands, and is constantly being asked to defend itself as to its effectiveness and its quality” (p.3). McCusker and Babington (2015), assert that many of today’s institutions are not ready to be successful in the digital era, citing inflexibility of processes and systems and a lack of understanding of transformations required across all aspects of the institution, not just within IT systems and distance learning operations.

Aslanian and Clinefelter (2013) find that students looking for online programs overwhelming prefer accelerated semesters over traditional 15-week semesters. They also find that “online students are not likely to enroll in any higher education institution if they cannot enroll in an online program (p. 24).

Allen and Seaman (2015) assert:

> A continuing failure of online education has been its inability to convince its most important audience–higher education faculty members–of its worth. The lack of acceptance of online among faculty has not shown any significant change in over a decade – the results from reports five or ten years ago are virtually the same as current results. (p. 21)

Given the growing importance of online education to today’s learners, it is critical that the institutions embrace online education and find ways to support the demand for flexibility that the modality offers (Bok, 2015; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Martin & Samels, 2009).

Fiscal Challenges Within Higher Education

Bill Bowen (2013), President Emeritus of Princeton University asserts that there is a near-crisis in higher education today, brought on by escalating tuition costs, reduced public funding, increasing competition driving costs up, and increasing public “anger and resentment” toward institutional leadership regarding the increased costs (p. 26). Martin and Samels (2009) cite declining state funding (Lederman, 2013), increasing cost of technology (Kim, 2017), tuition dependency of institutions (Toppo, 2019), and increasingly demanding student populations (Altbach, Gumport & Berdahl, 2011) as factors in the stressed state of colleges and universities in this digital era. Altbach, Gumport and Berdahl note a shift away from public funding and a greater reliance on private funding in "almost all countries" (p. 30) and the increased cost of tuition exacerbating the situation of financial uncertainty for higher education institutions.

A recent report (Mulhern, Spies, Staiger, & Wu, 2015) sponsored by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and conducted by ITHAKA S+R, a strategic consulting company, had this to say about the impact of reduced public support for higher education within that state:

> "Declining state appropriations and increasing reliance on tuition revenue have substantially increased the cost of public higher education to Virginia students, and the trend has accelerated since the Great Recession that began in 2007. Rising costs have deterred students from remaining in college and completing their degrees, and the lowest-income students have been hit the hardest. These results are particularly discouraging given that public higher education as a whole in Virginia – as in most states – was already falling well short of achieving these goals even before the latest declines in state support and increases in tuition came into effect.

This trend of reduced public funding and increasing tuition is a common theme in higher education in the United States (Christensen & Eyring, 2011).

The concern of the never-ending rising costs of traditional higher-education has been raised (Harper & Jackson, 2011; Bowen 2013; Martin & Samels, 2009) in light of the geographic-boundary crossing nature of online education. The advent of less expensive, faster moving educational options has been expressed in great detail in the literature (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2013; Christensen & Eyring, 2011). Christensen and Eyring note that three years before the recent worldwide economic crisis hit its peak, the 2006 Spellings Commission report warned U.S. higher education institutions that they were becoming overly “self-satisfied and unduly expensive” (p. 3). These authors note “By 2009, the universities and colleges that the Spellings Commission had characterized as self-satisfied were struggling to fill budget gaps left by dramatic drops in their endowments and state appropriations” (p. 7). Christensen and Eyring conclude that American higher education institutions are in a position to face the same disruption of their business models as the corporations described in Christensen’s (1997) seminal work, “The Innovator’s Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail”, that being, “Disruptive Innovation”.

Online Education as a Disruptive Innovation

Harvard professor and businessmen, Clayton Christensen and Joseph Bower (Bower & Christensen, 1995) coined the term “Disruptive Innovation” in a 1995 Harvard Business Review article entitled Disruptive technologies: Catching the wave. Within the article, the authors describe often repeated scenarios in business where strong and dominant business markets continue to strive to please their top-tier customer base, continually moving up the market, which eventually leaves a gap at the lower end of the market for new technologies to come in and take market share at the lower end of the market with innovative technologies. The authors cite examples such as the personal computer disrupting the mainframe computer market, cellular telephone uprooting land line telephony, discount retailers upending full-service department stores and community colleges disruption of four-year schools. More recently, Christensen, Raynor and McDonald (2015) point to Uber's disruption of the traditional taxicab marketplace.

In 2011, Christensen and Eyring (2011) warned that the higher education marketplace in the United States was ripe for heavy disruption caused by online education offered by lower cost, private educational institutions. In this same work, the authors argue that American higher education institutions will become obsolete unless they adopt a changed mentality and culture and overhaul the institutions to reduce waste, reduce cost, partially by eliminating smaller and less critical programs and departments, serve more students, raise quality in remaining academic programs and embrace online education in a comprehensive way.

The Need for Strong Leadership in Online Education

Martin and Samels (2009) stress that to turnaround these ailing institutions a complete online degree programs will be critical, noting that "Colleges that prove themselves flexible and adaptable to these market demands will meet with success" (p. 18). However, traditional doctoral research institutions do not have the reputation of being "flexible and adaptable" (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2013). Institutions of higher education suffer from inertia (Bowen 2013; Martin & Samels, 2009), and change creation within them is difficult (Buller, 2105; Cortese, 2003; Pierce, 2012; Schein, 2010). However, change within these institutions must occur or many institutions will fail (Christensen & Eyring, 2011).

Beaudoin (2002) argued for a great understanding of effective leadership in distance education. He also expressed other concerns for higher education. Beaudoin argued, "It is no longer a question of if and when to consider distance education; rather, it must be done now, and it is a matter of how best to proceed with the important work ahead” (p. 144).

Change within a comprehensive doctoral research institution takes strong leadership (Bok, 2015; Bowen, 2013), and online divisions are increasingly crucial to the institution. However, these units have often played a marginalized role (Morton, 1980) in a traditional doctoral research institution's organizational structure, leaving online leaders with little direct authority over the vast areas of the institution that need to align with online delivery.

Linda and Lori (2007) argue that the theory of adaptive leadership should be applied to the current issues within higher education, where institutions refine their services and policies to become more attractive to non-traditional students. They argue that institutions must learn to be more adaptable and competitive to stay alive. According to Beaudoin (2002), the question was not whether to move forward with distance and online education, but how to move forward effectively. In the seventeen years since he made that argument the facts (Allen & Seaman, 2015) have supported his position.

Introducing Adaptive Leadership to the Problem

Heifetz (1994) introduced his theory of “adaptive leadership” in his book, “*Leadership Without Easy Answers*”. Heifetz and his colleagues, Marty Linsky and Alexander Grashow (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009a; Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009b; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2004; Linsky & Heifetz, 2002) at the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, have continued to refine the theory since the original work. Others (Gunter, 2001; Hartley, 2007; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Northouse, 2016; Randall & Coakley, 2007; Squires, 2015) have added to the body of knowledge surrounding adaptive leadership as it is applied in the world of education.

According to Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009a) “adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” (p. 14). The authors assert:

> Adaptive leadership is an iterative process involving three key activities: (1) observing events and patterns around you; (2) interpreting what you are observing (developing multiple hypotheses about what is really going on); and (3) designing interventions based on the observations and interpretations to address the adaptive challenge you have identified. (p. 32)

Hoy and Miskel (2005) describe adaptive leadership as a process where multiple leaders complete tasks and share responsibility for accomplishing those tasks. Squires (2015) notes “adaptive leadership is highly collaborative and requires the commitment and engagement of multiple stakeholders” (p. 16).

According to Owens (2004) Educational organizations today are confronted by demands for near-constant change in dealing with problems that are highly complex, often ill-understood, and ambiguous and with outcomes that are uncertain. Such organizations must be nimble, adaptable, and responsive (p. 280).

Theoretical Framework of Adaptive Leadership. According to Northouse (2016), “the process of adaptive leadership incorporates ideas from four different viewpoints: the systems, biological, service orientation and psychotherapy perspectives”

(p. 258). Northouse describes situational challenges that are either adaptive, technical or both adaptive and technical. When challenges have an adaptive component, the leader should apply adaptive approaches to leading through the challenge.

In figure 1.1, Northouse (2016) provides a framework for adaptive leadership that involves six leader behaviors that involve observation of the situation from a high-level perspective, identifying the challenge, regulating the distress of the participants as the adaptive challenge is addressed, maintaining the energy and focus on solving the problems, applying leadership while avoiding micromanaging the participants, and protecting the voices from others within the organization undergoing change. Within each of those behaviors Northouse describes prescriptive methods for successfully leading through the change, such as “Creating a holding environment”, an area where people can feel safe to tackle the difficult challenges (p. 266). Northouse asserts “leadership is not a trait or characteristic of the leader, but rather a complex interactional event that occurs between leaders and followers in different situations” and that adaptive leadership stands out because it is “follower centered” as opposed to leadership approaches that focus on the expertise and skills of the leader solving problems (p 275).

The Call for Leadership in Online Education

Institutions of higher education are extremely complex organizations making problem solving within them challenging (Bowen, 2013; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Kauko, 2014; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). They are also institutions facing serious financial issues where there is urgent need to enhance entrepreneurial approach, and adopt new digital modalities of teaching (Bok, 2015; Bowen, 2013; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Martin & Samels, 2009). To remain competitive, institutions will need to adapt to the increasing competition for students and with increasingly complex processes of promoting themselves and providing digital services (Gibbs and Murphy, 2009; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Squires (2015) has called for the inclusion of Adaptive Leadership while attempting to solve the complex adaptive challenges that we face in higher education.

> The complex challenges facing education require solutions generated by multiple stakeholders through collaborative processes. These collaborative cultures and collective efficacy in developing solutions, in turn, require adaptive leadership. Through intentional development of strong collaborative structures and processes, adaptive leaders move beyond distributive leadership toward a more efficacious leadership style needed to tackle the increasingly complex, adaptive problems in education. (p. 17).

According to Nworie (2012), "The continuing success and future of distance education depends on effective leadership" (p. 10). Nworie argues that online and continuing education leaders on today's campuses are agents for change, and as such, they must understand leadership approaches that work in a constantly changing environment. Nworie, Haughton and Oprandi (2012) posit that online education leaders are in a position that demands "a new type of leadership in an old environment" (p. 183), requiring the ability to look at higher education differently.

While the literature is still thin in the area of leadership in online education (Coleman, 2016), researchers have begun to call for greater understanding of the leadership requirements in this relatively recent area of higher education. Beaudoin

(2002) took an early lead in defining leadership in distance education as "a set of attitudes and behaviors that create conditions for innovative change, that enable individuals and organizations to share a vision and move in its direction, and that contribute to the management and operationalization of ideas" (p. 132). McKenzie, Ozkan and Layton (2005) state "it is imperative the need for effective distance leadership be recognized as well as measures taken to adequately prepare and guide distance leaders in planning and implementing well thought out distance programs" (p. 1).

Conclusion

While adaptive leadership is not the only leadership theory that has been tied to distance and online education (Coleman, 2016; Dede, 1993; Nworie, 2012) it holds promise to assisting online and continuing education leaders in solving the complex problems of leading through change in educational environments (Squires, 2015).

Given the bleak future financial outlook for many institutions of higher education, and the shifting demands and increasing sophistication of the student populations in finding higher education solutions that work for them, finding ways to lead institutions through the changes necessary to serve those populations is critical to the survival of the institutions, in the long term (Bok, 2015; Coleman, 2016; Nworie, 2012; Martin and Samels, 2009). Therefore, with the role that online learning leaders play in moving institutions toward those necessary changes, it is imperative that today's online leaders find leadership approaches that work in higher education (Coleman, 2016; Nworie, 2012).

In this study, the focus is on understanding the approaches leaders in online and continuing education on university campuses have used to successfully implement changes to the policies and practices of the institutions in order to thrive within the changing demands and modalities of the new era of digital higher education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how online and continuing education leaders lead during times of change in large, doctoral research institutions. This chapter will include information about the research design of the study, the research question, presentation of information around the participant list and the environment details, and methods for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

The research was conducted using a phenomenological qualitative interview approach (Maxwell, 2012). Creswell (as cited in Coleman, 2016) noted that this qualitative approach is useful when the subject matter of a particular study has not been addressed within the population of interest – in this case the exploration of adaptive leadership within online and continuing education leaders. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews of 15 participants who held administrative positions as leaders in online and continuing education at public and private doctoral research institutions across the United States. All participants have positions within institutions that are going through, or have recently undertaken advancement of online and continuing education programs under the tenure of these leaders.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via telecommunications (two-way videoconference technology or telephony). Interviews are anticipated to be approximately 60 minutes in length.

Research Question

The research question for this study is: “How do Online and Continuing Education leaders lead and make change within the complex organization and distributed authority structure found within large public doctoral research institutions?” This rather open-ended question is designed to avoid any assumptions as to the approaches used by leaders in times of critical change on college campuses, and to allow the research itself to clarify the realities of the approaches used. Once common themes and patterns to these approaches become clear, the strategies will be compared to the strategies defined within adaptive leadership theory.

Participants

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into the leadership approaches utilized by online and continuing education leaders at large, public doctoral research institutions, and compare and contrast their approaches to the approaches defined within the theory of adaptive leadership.

Through a combination of a review of the literature, and analysis of various reports related to the distance learning activities and growth patterns at various public universities, I was able to identify a number of institutions that fit the description identified within this study, and identify the individuals within those institutions who were responsible for online and continuing education activities. The leadership identified were all from research institutions in the United States that have significant investments and enrollments in distance education and have growing enrollments in distance education modalities. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this study, the combination of traditional, doctoral research institution with a faculty governance structure and the dramatic change and adaptation challenges of the introduction and growth of distance education programs are factors on these campuses.

15 leaders of growing online learning programs at public, doctoral research institutions within the United States were interviewed for this study. These leaders were administrative professional faculty or staff, who held the top position at the particular institution in the area of online and continuing education. The titles for these individuals' positions included Vice President, Associate Vice President, Associate Vice Chancellor, Vice Provost, Dean, Executive Director and Director.

Setting

The interviews were conducted via Webex, a high-definition two-way videoconference technology. The use of Webex, with its high-quality video connection allowed me to observe non-verbal information delivered during the interview. I communicated with the individual participants via telephone and email well in advance of the actual interview date and time. I explained the purpose of the study, and let them know that their participation is highly desired, but entirely voluntary. I also communicated that all of their personally identifiable information will be redacted and protected. I explained that I used pseudonyms in place of real names, and would not identify their institution. I made it clear that they will receive an email with a Webex link, which they used at the time of our interview. The Webex interviews were recorded, and those recordings were then used by me to create the transcriptions needed for the coding process. Audio was transcribed verbatim. I reviewed the video components for any non-verbal components that were communicated visually, including participant gestures, expressions, and a general sense of their environment.

While the interviews took approximately 60- 90 minutes each, I allowed myself 120 minutes for each interview. This allowed me a few minutes prior to the interview to collect my thoughts, and prepare for the session. I double-checked the technology settings, and prepared to take paper notes during the discussion. Most of the additional time was used at the end of the discussion for me to write my thoughts and reactions via post-interview memos.

Interview Questions

The interview protocol and interview questions had been designed to align within the theories of adaptive leadership. According to Northouse (2016), adaptive leadership is composed of six dimensions, those being: *get on the balcony, identify the adaptive challenge, regulate distress, maintained disciplined attention, give the work back to the people,* and *protect leadership voices from below (p. 286)*. The interview protocol for this study (Appendix A) had been designed to ask questions related to leadership at the institution from the perspective of those six dimensions of adaptive leadership. The interview questions were pilot tested, and subsequently improved post-pilot test phase.

Data Collection

This study drew primarily from the interviews with the participants. Secondary sources of data collection were also included such as participant curriculum vitae and the post-interview memos.

An interview protocol (Hays & Singh, 2011) was developed and was utilized to guide the interview process and discussion with the participants. During the pilot phase of this study, the draft interview protocol was utilized through a pilot interview with a continuing education professional local to the researcher. Adjustments to the interview protocol occurred once the pilot interview was conducted and the process and data from that interview had been analyzed.

The interview protocol utilized in-depth, interview style open-ended questions, designed to be a guide and starting point for the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Follow-up questions will also be used. The interview questions and follow-up questions changed somewhat from interview to interview as the interviewee's responses will have some say in shaping the discussion (Hays and Singh, 2011). The interviews were recorded via the Webex recording feature. Permission for the recording of the interviews was obtained from each participant.

Data collection occurred through review of data available on the participant institutions' websites, through available data within the literature, as well as documents and materials provided by the participants themselves. These documents included participant curriculum vitae, enrollment trend data related to the relevant online and continuing education programs, documents describing the history, narrative, policies and practices of the institution and of the online and continuing education units. I asked participants to provide any available documents of this type after they agreed to participate in the study. These documents provided additional context to the interviews (Mason, 2002; Rapley, 2007), and provided important descriptive components and additional context. Both descriptive and reflective field notes were taken. Post interview memos were conducted. These memos provided an opportunity to capture my reflections (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) from the interview. During the interviews data collection was handled via Webex recording and personal note taking. An observation protocol was prepared for the occasion.

Data Analysis

This section describes the data analysis processes that was conducted within this study. Data to be analyzed primarily came from the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the study participants. Secondarily, for the purpose of providing additional context to the discussion narrative, observations, notes, photographs, and documents were analyzed.

The interviews video and audio were recorded on encrypted digital media. Transcripts were created based off of the audio recordings. The text of the interviews was coded multiple times. The first pass at coding will be done to identify themes and constructs that emerge from the conversations. Additional passes at coding the transcripts will be conducted as major themes begin to emerge across the multiple interviews. A code matrix (Hays & Singh, 2011) will be created to look for themes from the interviews that align with the themes and structures that make up the theory of adaptive leadership. This will help to identify which of the components and concepts of adaptive leadership are strongly at play within the leadership approaches and institutions being studied. The reflective memos will also be utilized in concert with other steps in the analysis to gather preliminary findings (McLeod, 2001). These preliminary descriptive findings will contribute toward the identification of themes and patterns that describe the leader's approach and strategy and which may align with adaptive leadership Theory.

Several iterations of coding refinement will be conducted, as themes strongly emerge and patterns become clear. A codebook will be created that will include the codes, sub codes and patterns (Hays & Singh, 2011). The codebook will track these attributes and will be itself improved and refined through the coding process. Ultimately a main narrative will be produced that will be the foundation for the results section of the study.

Limitations

Limitations to this study include the relatively small sample size of relevant leaders in comparison to the overall size of the online and continuing education industry. The interviews will take place during the winter of 2017, and, given the pace of industry change, conditions will likely change over a relatively short period of time, potentially changing leadership strategies as well. This study only covers the specific association between interviewed online and continuing education leaders and the concept of adaptive leadership.

The semi-structured interview questions have been developed by the researcher for this study. Given that I play the dual roles of researcher and member of the community being researched, researcher bias will be a concern, and I will have to take steps to avoid the issue. Researcher bias refers to "errors in study design, implementation, or analysis by the investigator" (Aparasu & Bentley, 2015, p. 51). I will adopt a critical self-aware reflective approach to the process which will lead me to examine the data and analysis through multiple lens and presuppositions (Tan, 2016).

Conclusion

This section described the methodology behind this research study. The methods described here will be utilized to create the research findings that appear in the following chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative interview study of online and continuing education leaders who run large and growing online education development and delivery operations at public doctoral research institutions. The findings are based on 15 semi-structured interviews, conducted over six months, followed by additional data collection that included a review of participant Curriculum Vitae, job descriptions, and organizational websites, interview protocol documents, and post-interview memoranda.

The interviews were conducted via WebEx two-way video and audio recording over the spring and summer of 2017. An observation protocol was created and utilized during the discussions. Post interview memos were created at the end of each interview. These data were used to provide additional context during the coding phase of the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Transcripts were created of the interviews which then underwent several rounds of both descriptive and in vivo coding. Descriptions of the leader's behaviors and their commonly expressed beliefs, ideas and philosophies were codified and tallied. A codebook was created and then analyzed for patterns of statements of behaviors and ideas (Hays & Singh, 2011) related to adaptive leadership. Other commonly occurring concepts or ideas from the interviews were also coded and tallied. The findings were derived primarily from the codebook, matrix, transcripts, interview protocol documents, and post-interview memos.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of each research subject's educational credentials, initial career focus, and current roles and titles at the time of the interviews. During the interview process, several commonalities were found in the personality types and driving motivations expressed by these leaders. Those commonalities are briefly reviewed.

Summary of the Findings

This section presents the outcomes and dominant themes from the interviews related to the research question "*How do online and continuing education leaders lead and make change within the complex organization and distributed authority structure found within large public doctoral research institutions?*"

The following three themes emerged from the findings: the development of trust is critical to leadership success; leaders take specific, deliberate and iterative steps to create trust; leaders conduct specific trust development efforts with staff. These themes will be discussed next.

Theme 1: The Development of Trust is Critical to Leadership Success. Interviewees revealed, in detail, the importance of building relationships with stakeholders at all levels that are based on mutual respect and trust, sincere interest in the potential outcomes and understanding that the change will be managed efficiently, effectively and ultimately, successfully. This takes not only strong planning but real trust that the leader attempting the change is capable of ensuring its success across all levels and contact points. Leaders noted that this trust element is fundamental to establish, as within the highly dispersed and autonomous nature of a large institution's power centers, online leaders rarely could count on authority alone to make progress. Relatively low-risk, low-reward activities are relatively simple to conduct in transactions among a handful of individuals. However, transformative change requires the interest, attention, energy, resources, and commitment from actors at all levels and across vast swaths of the university structure.

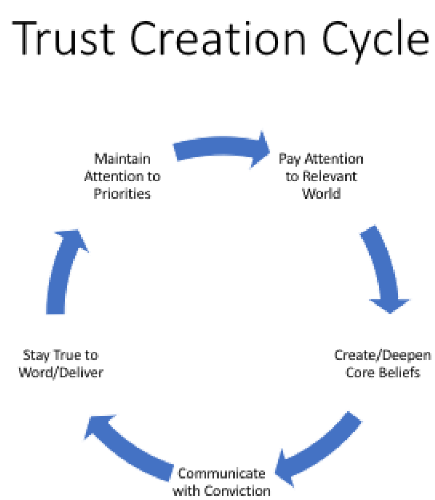
Theme 2: Leaders Take Specific, Deliberate and Iterative Steps to Create Trust. A second theme emerged as one-by-one the leaders described specific activities they take in very deliberate and purposeful steps to create trust relationships with critical stakeholders at all levels. Trust creation is a leader's intentional use of words, actions, and behaviors, which are meant to instill within stakeholders a sense of trust in the leader's intentions, commitments, abilities, and actions. The notion of trust and trust creation will be explored in this chapter.

Five common actions emerged that a plurality of leaders shared. Those actions are: understand the relevant world; create and deepen core beliefs; communicate beliefs and strategy with conviction; always stay true to your word and deliver; and continue to maintain strong attention on priorities.

These common actions are described in this research as the “cycle of trust creation”. Figure 4.1 depicts this cycle graphically.

Figure 4. 1

The Cycle of Trust Creation



Theme 3: Leaders Conduct Specific Trust Development Efforts with Staff. A third theme emerged related to the direct reports and departmental staff within the organization under the control of the leader. Many of the interviewees indicated that one of the leader's primary functions is the selection, employment, and management of the very best people available. Interviewees noted that leadership style and approach is not only critical when dealing with the broader institutional stakeholders, but equally critical in fostering excellence within the internal workforce, where most of the significant developments and advancements are generated.

Overview of the Study Participants

All 15 participants currently hold positions as leaders in online and continuing education at large, public doctoral research institutions at the time of the interviews between March and October of 2017. All these individuals and institutions were selected for this research because these leaders have achieved significant positive enrollment results in the development and deployment of online and continuing education programs, offerings, and systems. Here, success is defined through indicators such as the number of programs they offer, the enrollment in those programs, the number of graduates, and the reputation these individuals and institutions have earned in the industry.

Table 4.1 provides information about the study participants, the top academic degree they have earned, and the number of years they have worked in online and continuing education. The participants in this study have held positions of increasing responsibility within institutions of higher education. They are individuals with between 10 and 43 years of professional experience each and have an average of 24.9 years of professional administrative experience. The fifteen leaders have a total of 374 years of professional experience in managing and leading online and continuing education programs.

Table 4. 1

Information on the Study Participants

Part. #	Pseudonym	Title	Education Level	Years in CE/online
1	Richard	Dean	PhD	30
2	Janet	Assoc. Vice President	MS	26
3	Anthony	Assistant Provost	PhD	18
4	Mark	Assoc. Vice Chancellor	PhD	43
5	Randy	Vice Provost	PhD	18

Part. #	Pseudonym	Title	Education Level	Years in CE/online
6	David	Vice President	EdD	26
7	Warren	Dean	PhD	34
8	Valerie	Exec. Director	PhD	26
9	Dean	Dean	PhD	27
10	Regina	Assoc. Vice Provost	PhD	22
11	Sandy	Dean	PhD	25
12	Anna	President	PhD	10
13	Christine	Assoc. Vice President	EdD	15
14	Jennie	Director	MSEd	30
15	Russell	Associate Dean	EdD	24

The character of the study participants. These leaders are all very accomplished and talented individuals who have achieved high level positions within in their institutions and are well-respected outside of their institutions. They are all very active regionally and nationally, and all participate actively within at least one of several national professional organizations for Online and Continuing Education professionals, such as the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA), the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), EDUCAUSE, the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) and others. Several of these individuals are or have been board members of these organizations, and several have held the position of president of their national organization.

Commonalities exist in the character of online leaders. After the interviews were conducted and transcripts were coded, specific common characteristics of the leaders emerged. The interviews resulted in the identification of several commonalities in the nature and style of many of the leaders as well as the specific activity and action steps they take and the reasons they do so. Table 4.2 presents these commonalities in leader character.

Table 4.2

The character of the Leaders

Characteristic	Description
Personality	Warm, inviting, humble, humorous, creative, driven, transparent, interested and invested. Combination of introverted and extroverted personality types
Preparation	Nearly all hold terminal degrees, with an average of 25 years in advancement administrative roles
Passion	Expressed deep personal reasons for their work in this area. Driven by a desire to help provide access to education, very purposeful in activities to help advance mission. Seek to instill that passion in stakeholders.
Talent	A wide range of individual backgrounds and educational, academic disciplines. From highly technical training in engineering and communications to management and leadership focus or education and social sciences.

Personality. Each of these individuals had a compelling personal character, a combination of intelligence, sense of humor, a sense of curiosity about the world, ability to communicate with clarity and a sense of professionalism, and graciousness. They all presented as very likable and humble individuals: people with a strong sense of their focus and values who readily assigned credit to others within their environments for successes and seemed to take responsibility for failures. It was interesting to note this commonality among participants.

Preparation. These are highly educated individuals. Most have terminal degrees with an average work experience of nearly 25 years. They are seasoned individuals with tremendous experience in online and continuing higher education. These individuals all spoke with a deep understanding of higher education policy, practice, and history. They presented evidence of the use of data as well as experience in managing technical infrastructure, workspaces other resources. Critical resource management, such as human resources were discussed at length, including the interpersonal aspects of management as well as the more formal human resource components of organizational management.

Passion. As noted in the section on personality, the study participants were driven individuals with personal and organizational goals. All presented their backgrounds and communicated deep convictions related to their focuses and their actions. Very often, the passion expressed by these participants touched on the impact that access to education has on their students' lives. Improving lives was a prevalent theme, as was the impact that these leaders hoped to have on the success of their organizations' own staff members' lives and careers.

Warren, the Dean of Online Education at a sprawling public institution in the northeast, has over 40 years of experience in continuing education. Warren put it this way: "What I try to do, my goal constantly, is to get people to believe in our mission, to provide access to people who either haven't had it before or need another opportunity and chance." He went on to describe the virtue of telling the stories of the impact his program has on the lives of his students to all of his stakeholders and internal staff. The value of doing that, he described, is that their stories of success and advancement clearly describe the power of education to transform lives. The interviews revealed that these leaders care deeply about the purposefulness of the work they have devoted their careers to, especially as it relates to the positive impact that this work can have on the lives of students and their families, and the positive impact on their communities, region, state, and beyond.

Talent. Nine of the interviewees came into their current positions having focused their graduate education and career path to education, social science, distance education or continuing education administration. Four of the interviewees held terminal degrees in another academic area and moved into their current administrative roles from faculty positions. One of the interviewees rose to his current position after having begun his career as an expert on radio and television communications technology, where he managed television systems and held a faculty role teaching courses related to the use of this technology. Another came from the information technology and web development sector, before earning his doctoral degree. A lone member of the study group came from a thriving high-level career in the private sector with a focus on business management and leadership.

While participants had a variety of backgrounds from teaching, technology, administration, and elsewhere, their responses to the interview questions found commonality in their deep understanding of interpersonal management and concern for the human aspects of their responsibility. These leaders nearly universally described leadership as being about their ongoing efforts as well as the knowledge, education, and experience they have developed over time. They stressed the importance of making connections with people, motivating staff, communicating the fundamental value proposition of education and the specific benefits of the programs that they manage. The discussions focused very little on necessary technical skills, computer or IT knowledge, spreadsheet development, and management and the like, although their education and experiences provided them with profound understanding and comprehensive experience with higher education for adult learners.

Hire the Best People and Give them Due Credit for their Work. The interviewees indicated that their focus as leaders is very often on people management and relationships, whether they are potential students, institutional stakeholders, faculty, or their own organization’s internal staff. Most of the interviewees spoke of the importance of identifying new staff members with high potential and strong talents, and they described helping those staff to achieve that ultimate potential.

In responding to a question regarding his leadership style, Anthony, who has nearly 20 years of experience managing non-traditional education pathways for adult learners, described his leadership style as "collaborative and transparent," with a focus on promoting staff excellence and a concentration on helping their talents and capabilities truly shine. In the position he held just before this current role, he had 70 people reporting to him through five area managers. His approach was to provide guidance and resources through those managers without those directors micromanaging their staff. He focused time nurturing his direct reports and their staff by identifying their individual talents and goals. This process helped him identify potential future leaders, which Anthony says is one of his critical roles. He noted, "What I always tell people is if you don't know who the next person is to replace you then you're not doing a good enough job as a leader. You need to bring up the next wave of talent - that's part of leadership."

In general, these leaders did not talk much about their personal accomplishments but instead characterized the accomplishments as organizational successes where their role was as catalyst and facilitator, striving to get the highest possible performance out of their talented workforce. Sincere and deep care for their employees and care for their students was a theme that was repeated throughout the interviews.

Dean has 27 years of experience in managing distance and continuing education programs at several universities. He spoke of the importance of higher education on the social fabric of our society and our economy. Dean noted that “making sure that people from all walks of life can access education is really important, and so it's become very important to me, personally, to help make that happen.” Over and over, these leaders spoke of caring genuinely and personally about providing access to continuing education due to the role that these services play in improving the lives of individuals, their families, and society as a whole.

Strong personal beliefs related to access and social justice. In general, the overarching sense regarding the commonalities within this group of individuals is that they are teacher-educators first who have come into leadership through the exhibition of intelligence, talent, and drive. While only four came directly from faculty roles, nine more came directly into the administration of higher education. Most of those nine came in with backgrounds in education and social sciences, fields where the goal is to help people grow, and learn, and develop. One of the subjects had an academic interest in anarchism in education. Another was a student activist during the Vietnam War in the late 1960's and began her work fighting for the rights of women, and other underrepresented populations. These experiences led to her securing a role in an education program at her college that focused on serving the needs of the non-traditional student. Most of these individuals teach at least occasional courses and often teach regularly.

The study participants are well-known individuals in this field, many of whom have been regularly-invited guests at national events to speak on their work and their thinking related to higher education strategy. They have devoted their lives to finding ways to help others. Their approaches to how to deal with work challenges and opportunities reflect this characteristic of the population as a whole, not only with the work they are accomplishing but the way they go about accomplishing it.

Change Occurs Through Relationship Development. Rather than through resource allocation transactions alone, progress instead is achieved through relationship building, trust creation, and the building and maintaining of mutual respect and shared goals with colleagues and stakeholders. Leaders created strong bonds when individuals shared a significant appreciation for the purposefulness and quality of the project plans and actions, appreciation for the potential outcomes, and clearly communicated actions and value propositions.

It was also often noted that relationship building alone also is not enough. Substantial progress does take resources and the administrative horsepower necessary to distribute those resources and create or change policy, change thinking, and impact the action and culture of any institution. However, the leaders expressed that all those components require the same level of trust in individual leadership to accomplish and that without the trust development components, resources alone will also not be enough.

Randy, who is a vice provost for extended education at a large midwestern state's premier public university, said:

> All of this is based on a lot of trust, right? Because we don't have much authority over people in organizations like this. If they don't trust you, they don't have to work with you. If you don't have people working with you, you're not going to get very far. We are in the people development business, not just externally, but also internal to the organization. That's also part of the internal trust building. So, communication is really about trust building. And I think the more you have trust, the easier people are willing to engage in change. It's an ongoing process.

The leaders described an environment where they feel significant pressure as institutions move into online delivery to increase or protect enrollment, expand their reach, serve new populations, improve their standing and solve education and training needs, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The leaders are expected to deliver enrollment, but often don't have direct control over the total resources needed to bring that enrollment.

Warren, the dean of extended education in the northeast, described the need for trust building given the lack of direct authority online leaders have over the broader institution. He noted that leaders end up with much responsibility but have very little authority.

> Trust is so critical to the whole thing. It is a collective discussion and decision-making process. But still, because we don't have authority, really, I mean, we have *some* authority, but there is a delicate balance. We have responsibility - we probably have more responsibility than authority. So then, how do you balance that, and how do you get partners in the decision-making process? Not everybody is going to agree. I mean, it's not implementing this by dictum, but by repeating the idea that here's the vision, here's what's happening out in the field, here's how we can help you.

Leaders attempt to build credibility and trust early. Sandy, a dean of continuing education at a large east-coast public institution, is nearing retirement after a successful and happy 45-year career. She put it very succinctly: “Leadership *is* credibility.” Without credibility, she says, no leader can expect long term and positive responsiveness from the variety of stakeholders with which leaders in higher education work.

Credibility requires successful outcomes to be maintained, these leaders mentioned. Early “wins” are needed to establish performance, which then builds trust and helps to create an environment for additional opportunities. Dean described trust as being an almost formulaic combination of interpersonal skills and performance that develop over time. He said "I think the data get you in the door and then it is about relationship building. But at some point, it does become about showing success."

Repeatedly, the leaders talked about the need to develop trust bonds with stakeholders, including with their staff. David is a vice president who oversees an extensive continuing education operation at a prestigious flagship state school in the northwest. He has spent his entire career at this institution and has grown in title and authority as he has grown successful operations over time. He also described the importance of trust in developing his career and his successes, indicating that leaders not only need to be able to create ideas and motivate people, but also that stakeholders need to trust that the leader can lead the operation to success while maintaining or improving quality and providing the resources and outcomes that stakeholders expect. David says that takes building stakeholder trust in the leader as an individual.

> I think one of the challenges all the time is building trust, among staff and among campus faculty. Staff have got to begin to believe that the direction you are moving makes sense and that you are capable of leading that. It's a bit of a tight rope that we have to walk on. But I do think that establishing trust and getting people to know who you are as a person is absolutely critical.

The trust development bond is critical with nearly all relationships, the leaders said. Valerie is an executive director of online education at a large west coast public institution. She has grown in leadership responsibility through a variety of positions both within her current institutions as well as others earlier in her career. Unlike David who worked his way to the top at a single institution, Valerie has grown her career by taking on more and more responsibility at increasing levels by moving between institutions.

Valerie also described the idea that trust building is central to achieving success, and that it is an iterative process over time. Having moved from one successful role to a new position at a different institution, she noted the need for trust building even for shorter-term relationships, such as consulting work in higher education.

> I really think that the trust factor is paramount to creating any kind of change. I also think that even when you're out doing consulting work at another institution. I think that that "an institution" will only listen to you if there's some kind of trust built up. If somebody comes in from the outside, they're an outsider and they're from a different culture. And if they come in and start making changes or making moves like they're going to change things around without really addressing the institution's own culture, then you lose the trust. So, it seems like it takes time for anybody who's in a leadership position to come in and really listen, and get to know people, and prove themselves to be a trustworthy person.

Online leaders often walk a tightrope balancing leadership demands with university culture and inertia. These leaders described themselves as often “walking on a tightrope," where expectations and opportunities are not always in alignment. The leaders believe they need to be able to navigate sometimes difficult situations where the trust bond is especially necessary.

Jennie directs online education for a large southwestern state institution. The institution had supported distance education and continuing education operations for many years. Jennie's operation, which was centralized, self-funded, and revenue-generating, grew dramatically under her leadership in the number of programs, overall enrollment, and in revenue generation. University leadership decided to decentralize the online programs back out for the individual colleges to manage, apparently thinking they reduce cost and maintain quality. Jennie indicated that there was no support or resources within the colleges to take on the support for online programs or grow them in enrollment and quality at the same time. She described the challenges of leading her internal staff through the decentralization effort while at the same time working with university and college leadership to maintain quality and enrollment through the transition.

To Jennie, it was critical that she has a seat at the table with university leadership in navigating through the process and ultimately to a positive outcome for the institution. To have an active seat at the table where your voice and vote are recognized as significant and vital requires strong partnerships and trust between the area leader and university leadership, she said.

Jennie noted, “It does come back to that relationship, right, if you can build a trust relationship or an understanding through good communication, you'll stand a better chance of having a seat at the table and making an impact.” Ultimately it became clear to the university leadership and stakeholders that the decentralization effort was, perhaps, not the optimal solution for all online programs. The university provost has since asked Jennie to begin to manage the development of any new online credit programs in the original centralized model.

Janet is the associate vice president of online education for the top public institution within her state. She has had many successes in her 26-year career of building well-respected distance education operations serving adult learners in another state and moved into her current position seven years ago. She described the need for trust building that she encountered not long after arriving at the new institution. Janet indicated that before her arrival, the leadership had hired a very well-respected consultant who had left the university with a plan that was outsized and overly ambitious. Faculty had no interest in participating in what they saw as potentially a tremendous amount of work with little to gain by it.

After Janet arrived and reviewed the plans, she called the consultant to ask what he was thinking when he provided the concept. The consultant responded that the leadership pushed back when he presented a what he believed was a more appropriate strategy, indicating that they wanted something much more impactful in scale. The consultant did not believe the market would be responsive enough to strategy to warrant the potential impact and upheaval the development would have on the already burdened programs and resources. More concerningly, their vision had almost no buy-in from faculty, she said.

> I got here, and I realized what the leadership thought was happening or should happen was completely opposite of what the campus ever wanted and were willing to participate in doing. It took me two years to begin building trust: to convince the president and the Provost that what they had envisioned wouldn't work.

Over time, Janet worked with faculty and administration alike, and was able to gain their trust through a combination of efforts that included collection and presentation of data over time and long planning sessions with stakeholders from across the institution where faculty, staff, and administration could share ideas and provide their concerns, needs, and expectations. Janet worked hard to convince the university leadership, who were initially frustrated and concerned that she did not enthusiastically endorse and execute on their vision, that she was a team player and that she was willing to roll her sleeves up and do the hard work necessary to find the optimal solution for the university. Janet clearly communicated the issues with the original concept and crafted a solution that met everyone's needs. The program that she created is now growing "double-digits" in enrollment annually and is more than satisfying the needs of the faculty, staff, students, and leadership at her institution.

Adaptive challenges are not easy to solve with resources alone. Because of the deeply embedded and core cultural and procedural components involved, funding alone is insufficient to motivate transformation. The leaders understand that they must provide a very compelling case for significant change and then work with all areas to overcome any potential resource, policy, procedure, and cultural roadblock when facing these types of challenges. A compelling argument alone will not be enough, since all stakeholders involved are coming with different sets of goals, expectations, and assumptions about the environment, and often they also lack the resources and motivation to bring the transformation upon themselves.

Consider a faculty member in the Mathematics department, one leader said, which is over-crowded with undergraduate students from all the colleges. Mathematics, a subject area that is part of every academic discipline at the institution is not a department that is seeking additional student enrollment. She likely has her primary focus on her research interests related to very advanced mathematical concepts. The idea that the Engineering Technologies program is needed in an online format by a distant population of non-traditional students and that Math 110 is a necessary course to build in an online format in order to make the entire program available at a distance might very well be of little concern to her. While the problem may be compelling to the online learning administrator and the enrollment management leader, it is likely less compelling to the math professor, who has more students than she can handle already, has other priorities, and does not report to either of the areas who have asked her to assist. Even the promise of additional resources to cover the burden may not be motivation enough since there still lacks a compelling rationale for the effort and impact on her busy department.

Stakeholders must believe the leader will be successful and the work will be of high quality. The leaders who participated in this study have faced this type of adaptive challenge many times. The leaders said that they understood that real relationships and bonds must be formed with the stakeholders. Stakeholders need to believe that the effort is critical to the health, success or mission of the institution. The leaders say that stakeholders need to not only believe in the merits of an initiative but also to believe in the leader themselves. Stakeholders must believe that the leader will manage the project in a way that enhances the reputation and resources of their department or area.

Given the requirement that there is trust in the leader and their own ability to succeed, leaders say that they must build trust before they can reliably expect participation in extremely challenging initiatives. They say they build a foundation of trust through thorough preparation, substantial development of core values and direction, vetting and communication of plans and activities, careful execution on plans, honoring all commitments and expectations, and by staying on course and avoiding distraction.

The leaders take these steps in a somewhat linear manner, although all aspects and actions within the cycle are almost always in simultaneous action.

The Cycle of Trust Creation

The discussions revealed that the leaders firmly believed that trust is a critical factor to success and that they use an iterative set of processes to develop that trust. Figure 4.1 illustrates the trust creation cycle.

In this section, we examine how leaders say that trust is created in the public, doctoral research environment. These stories about challenging work experiences indicated that trust does not "just happen" by virtue of the role or title that you hold. Trust is developed through an ongoing and iterative cycle of "trust creation," where leaders take specific and intentional actions to generate trust in their leadership. Table 4.3 presents the actions that leaders take in to generate trust.

Table 4.3

Leadership Behaviors in the Cycle of Trust Development

Behavior	Description
Pay Attention to the Relevant World	Stay continually connected with world, national, regional and local events related to higher education, the economy, politics, technology, business. Follow the actions of peers and competitors. Comprehensive understanding of the local institution, it's leadership, faculty, policy, practice, funding, and culture. Know each critical stakeholder personally.
Create and Deepen Core Beliefs	Create deep and meaningful value, mission and vision, direction and beliefs. Share and vet these widely and iteratively to refine the vision and shared nature of the organizations meaning, purpose and core values and to create culture and conviction around purpose and direction. Use core beliefs and values to drive all aspects of strategy and direction.

Behavior	Description
Communicate with Conviction	Communicate purpose, direction with passion and a sense of urgency. Communicate widely at various levels to create a global understanding of mission, priorities, direction, and opportunities. Provide vivid and compelling case for the use of resources and need for direction. Focus on shared core values of the stakeholders.
Stay True to Your Word - Deliver	Maintain and protect commitments with intensity. Monitor activities at all levels to ensure commitments will be honored. Provide updates and information regarding progress. Deliver on promises.
Maintain Attention on Priorities	Once the hard-earned direction is created, vetted, shared, and executed, keep focused on direction and avoid distraction. Engage with challenges and difficulties directly and maintain communication.

The leaders described in detail very challenging experiences and projects through which they have led their teams. Each of the leaders described situations that entirely fit the notion presented by Heifetz (1994) as an "Adaptive Challenge." Adaptive challenges, as discussed in chapter 2, are complex in nature in that they involve not only technical or logistical decisions but also require mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive (Heifetz, Grashow & Linksy, 2009a). These challenges involve a wide array of stakeholders and decision makers and encounter long term policy, practice, and cultural components that can be inflexible and difficult to overcome.

The following sections present the specific actions that were repeatedly and commonly mentioned by the leaders. The following five behaviors have been identified within the cycle of trust creation.

Pay Attention to the Relevant World. These interviewees indicated that leaders must stay connected with current events in higher education, trends such as demographics, market analysis, changes in technology, the actions of competition, funding opportunities and best practices. Their decision-making capability, and ability to understand a wide variety of aspects related to the economy, demographic trends that may impact enrollment, changes in their own environments, activities at other institutions, changes in technology, all must be considered and well understood in order to take actions that result in building and reinforcing credibility and trust.

The leaders, they say, must also listen to all stakeholders, talk ideas through, share opinions and learn the culture of the institution to which they belong. What might work at one institution may not work at another, so the complete context of every idea and decision is critical. It is through demonstrated diligence, demonstrated success, and deep understanding of and resolution of concerns and requirements of their partner stakeholders, that the leader's word and reputation become respected over time.

David described a daily process of immersing himself in information, starting first thing every morning and continuing throughout the day and into the night. To David, these activities come with the territory. In order to be an effective leader, he says, you have to be really connected with the world, with your region, and with your institution.

> I have multiple strategies and multiple sources that I use. And it's from very simple things like, for example, I look at the New York Times every day: get home delivery. So, my day starts with looking at the New York Times with breakfast and start there. And then I get the statewide paper, and the local paper delivered to my office. So, you're looking at

> environmental scanning, and doing that. But then I've got probably half a dozen, or eight feeds that I'm getting from different sources. So, I'm looking at those each day. So, for me, working so hard, I've got people doing a lot of what I use to do, the hands-on kind of thing. And for me, what I give back to the organization is trying to be as informed as possible with trends, what's going on. But then also looking at constantly reading books and literature on business principles, or whatever it is that I need to stay current. So, I think that is one of the biggest challenges, I think, of this. I read stuff; I talk to people; I look at models all the time outside of the organization for a better example of what we should be doing. I look for insights. I think about this stuff all the time, but I don't have it all, I don't have it all.

Most of the leaders talked about collecting, consuming, and sharing a wide variety of information, not only related to their organization or institution but comprehensive information about the world around them that may impact their thinking or generate opportunities. The leaders describe themselves as change agents, and change in a positive direction always includes maps, information, prediction, and analysis.

Regina is associate vice president for distance education at a well-respected state school in the northeast. She agreed with David on the importance of staying tightly connected with the activities and changes around themselves. She said that it is essential to gather data and to share that data and to be a source of current and comprehensive information that is consumable by the stakeholders. What information the leader has and how it is shared is critical, Regina said. Information is often used to help create a broad understanding among relevant stakeholders regarding upcoming directional shifts or new opportunities. It is essential for the leader to be seen as a well-educated asset, she said.

Mark has had a long career in education, both as a faculty member and later as an administrator. He is currently an associate vice chancellor within a large university system in the northwest. Although he is an administrator, Mark continues to teach since he loves the process of teaching, and he is committed to helping others to gain new understanding, gain new skills, and make meaning from the world around them.

> You need to look to new markets, and that's kind of an ongoing challenge, so we do gather data, and we use data. Some people, some faculty, could care less. For others, particularly in the sciences and business, quantitative people, man they just jump right on it. It's about interpersonal, and yes, we use data analytics. And certainly, I use that with the provost and chancellor and president of the system because those are the kinds of things that they can hang their hat on and share with the board of trustees and the legislature.

The relevant world is a continually evolving target. Mark reinforced the idea that data gathering may be a science, but the trusting relationship, reputation, and interpersonal communication style is all about interpersonal skills and approach. “When we get down to deans, department chairs, and faculty,” he says, “it’s really about people.” Mark’s description of a successful leader includes this combination of hard work at staying current, combined with equally hard work in relationship building, trust building, and care to ensure that outcomes are successful for all stakeholders, not just some.

Randy also described the evolving landscape of higher education and the need to continue to watch what is happening and to evolve along with it. Without a solid understanding of all the "moving pieces" of the relevant world around us, we will never be able to keep up, never mind lead. "For us, the challenge is: how do we continue to be those innovators in the future?" Randy says, "Because the future is not going to stop. We need to continue evolving."

David described the need for information gathering from outside sources, from other institutions, and from within one's own institution. He says that leading is indeed a cyclical, iterative process, one where outcomes inform your theories which inform your actions, which affect your outcomes, etc. David notes that no matter how connected and well-read a leader is, they can never be the source of all knowledge and ideas individually. One of the best sources for data and ideas, he said, comes from others within the organization, so it is critical that the leader has a strong interpersonal relationship with other critical stakeholders. David promotes combining the collection of information with the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships with stakeholders where insights come from others. Like quite a few of the other leaders interviewed for this research, he describes his leadership style, as "servant leadership."

> One of the difficulties for me, and it's not that difficult for me to recognize, is that I don't know it all. But I believe that service leadership model says that I don't have it all; I don't have all the answers. And that I need to be of service to others in the organization, and I need to consult with them. I need to run ideas by people, and I may have some brewing insights which I will share with others. So, looking for those brilliant

> insights, I think, is one of the more challenging things. I'm a big guy on marrying theory and practice. And that's what I'm trying to implement here, too. There's a theory behind all this stuff that we're doing, but here's how the theory influences the practice. And here's how practice, then, our experience with the practice, goes back and influences theory, right?

Dean described his iterative processes of creating direction, starting with staying connected to the relevant world through continual information gathering and sharing, holding internal discussions, and conducting market analysis and through outreach outside of his institution to employers in industry. Richard's organization has created a new online degree program that is an enormous success for his institution and the students participating in it. That effort, he says took constant connection with the outside world, the economy, technology, and activities in higher education. It also took communication and idea-sharing with internal staff and external stakeholders. Ultimately, buy-in was necessary from contact points throughout the institution and many stakeholders outside of the institution.

By staying connected to the relevant world, Richard understood that students had a hard time affording education, and industry was demanding a new model where the costs would be lower, and the quality and applicability of the program and skills outcomes would be higher. He and his staff were concerned with finding ways to keep the cost of higher education down while maintaining quality and providing access. He was also aware of new, high-quality course materials that were available through OER, or Open Educational Resources. His idea, now cloned in other applications and other institutions, was to drive costs down by teaming with industry in the creation of the program to receive their help in funding the startup costs of the program. The institution, in turn, would scale the program up so that the cost per student could be driven down.

The result is one of the most highly-publicized and successful degree programs available online. Richard describes the process this way:

> Well, it really started out by a couple of my staff members and I brainstorming about where higher education is going. And we were looking at the MOOC phenomena, which was really red hot at the time, and scratching our heads, wondering where the business model is. And so, we didn't conclude that that would be a very smart place to invest, because we just didn't see how to make money on it. But we did think that focusing on outcomes and using the increasingly available open and free educational resources across the world was the way to go. So, rather than reinventing content over and over and over again, we wanted to really focus on ensuring that students were learning and demonstrating that learning in a very applied way, we built a formal business model. We did the market analysis and market research. We talked to employers about what their needs are. So, it was all of it.

Anna is the president of a large and growing online university that is connected to a flagship state university in the south. She is one of the few individuals interviewed for this research that did not have a long career in higher education, but rather, successfully lead some large private organizations unrelated to education. Anna's experience in leading large organizations convinced her that staying current and understanding the relevant world around her was extremely critical to success. She emphasized the need to see real-world data in an organized way before providing any guidance or making critical decisions. "I need to see the data, and we need to share the data internally," she said.

Create/Deepen Core Beliefs. As the leader understands the world around her, the people, place, problems, vision, potential, and activities of the institution and of the relevant world the institution is part of, their core beliefs in an appropriate direction for institutional activities will form, these leaders say. The rationale for these beliefs will also form. The leader will build a compelling narrative around the proposed strategy. The leader will back the narrative up with documented research and analysis. The communication of compelling narrative and comprehensive analysis helps to create a shared belief system with stakeholders. The leaders say that this shared belief system will inform the direction of action plans that will enjoy a strong chance of success because of this foundational work. Again, the process of creating the shared belief system is iterative and cyclical, involving continual data collection, data sharing, and communication by the leader and in collaboration with stakeholders.

Randy described the shared core beliefs as a “belief statement” adopted by his organization through this iterative process of collecting and sharing data and communicating with conviction with critical stakeholders. He said that involving others in understanding the reasons for direction and the critical role that the stakeholders play in achieving that outcome and appealing to the passions of the stakeholders, is an iterative process that a leader must purposefully foster and manage.

Randy regularly communicates the real-world impact that his organization has on the lives of others to his stakeholders, and in particular, to his staff. He wants them to understand that their work has meaning and that the outcomes are real and important in creating an improved world around us.

> We exist to benefit others. My belief statement is that everyone deserves education to thrive in an ever-changing world. That's becoming a bit of the mantra for the organization. So, my leadership is mission-driven, but also this sense of personal accountability moving forward and a sense of openness, not silos and bureaucratic environments.

Deepening conviction and core beliefs is an iterative process. David also spoke directly of the process of developing core beliefs in himself and then in minds and hearts of the stakeholders. He says that the more profound his conviction is on a matter, the harder he will work to get others to adopt the same understanding and concern. If he is less convinced of a particular matter, he will still communicate it but has room to change his mind in this cyclical process of sharing a belief system and reinforcing core values.

> I'm not as sold on everything, every idea or insight that I have, right? So, some of these things that I am really passionate about, and the ones that I'm particularly passionate about, I spend much more time trying to make a convincing argument to others, right? The other ones I don't have to work so hard. I'll float the ideas and then let people take the idea and run with it. So, the challenging aspect is knowing what are the things that I'm really passionate about? What do I really believe in? And one of the things I talk about all the time are core values, right? So, there are my core values, and this may be overstating it, but I think I've tried to influence the core values in our organization based on my own core values. You have to

> be able to take in new information and decide to move in a different direction, change your mind. You've got to be open to that. Otherwise it's just a dictatorship. And that doesn't work.

Anthony also described the iterative nature of deepening conviction and buy-in regarding core directions. He spoke of the process regarding a massive re-organization that they conducted at his institution several years ago, which involved merging disassociated and autonomous departments from across campus, including information technology, their office of teaching and learning, instructional design teams, and the continuing and online education offices. That process was daunting, Anthony said because the various teams each had their own focus, culture and belief system. Not only did the area managers need to go through the process of sharing their core values and beliefs, but the new shared reality also had to be shared with the larger staff from the various offices and their buy-in secured. Without the more substantial buy-in, the newly merged organization would have severe difficulty in becoming successful. Anthony described the process this way:

> We sat in the conference room week after week, trying to figure out the best way to organize ourselves. Very transparent, each of those leaders would bring that information back to their former group. And we really had to get the buy-in for all those people to start talking about not looking back. It took about a year.

While the process was long and iterative, the newly merged organization ultimately became successful, mainly through the process of sharing information, creating core beliefs based on information, and creating buy-in throughout all of the team members through active leadership and communications. The iterative process of sharing information and core values, providing clear information, solid reasoning, and forming a collective vision of a new reality, over time, is what Anthony credits for the ultimate success of the effort.

Warren said he also appeals to the passions of the stakeholders when creating a shared vision for significant change or large-scale projects. He also spoke of creating a sense of direction based on an understanding of the relevant world through information gathering and sharing and by creating his own core beliefs based on this process. He described modifying his core beliefs as an outcome from the iterative process of communicating and information-sharing with other stakeholders.

Communicate Core Values, Beliefs and Direction with Conviction. The leaders described the need to not only form a clear understanding and vision for the proposed direction but to also present it to stakeholders in clear and compelling ways. Both the written word and verbal delivery are critical at every step. Meetings with stakeholders to communicate the ideas, create potential plans, processes, and policies will take place, and the presented ideas and direction will begin to be understood and appreciated and often modified by the relevant stakeholders.

David described the variety of communications approaches he uses on large scale projects.

> It includes formal presentations; it includes individual one-on-ones. It includes just going around, walking the floor, listening to people's concerns, and answering them, and being very transparent and direct. It's

> been going out looking at models, bringing back models, showing them to people; here's what the models look like, and so on.

Warren said that once the leader establishes a strong sense of direction and vision, that vision needs to be shared often in order to achieve buy-in, which ultimately will decide how invested people will be in the project and therefore how hard they will work to achieve its success. He described this part of the process as “selling” the vision:

> I mean, it's not a sales job, but you have to have passion about it. I think I'm probably selling every day of the week in some way. Maybe not the traditional sense of sales, but you have to convince people that what you're trying to do is worth doing and that they will benefit from it. I think it's all about believing in the mission. It's getting people to understand that. So that's basically what I'd go after. Turn them into passionate believers of what we're trying to do.

Mark, who had earlier spoken of the criticality of data collection and analysis in creating core beliefs, now described the adoption of a shared understanding and the process of using and sharing data, analysis, and core values and beliefs. Over time, he said, the core values and hence directional focus and strategic planning, are reinforced or modified based on information, evidence, and communication sharing. Once you have a strong value system, he said, you need to communicate it, stick with it, and create buy-in on a broader scale over time.

One area that Mark spoke of was related to quality improvement within the creation and teaching of online courses at his home institution. He described faculty resistance to new processes in developing the online courses. The faculty believed that the changes were not necessary and were burdensome, difficult, and not what they were accustomed to or enjoyed doing. However, Mark said, one of the institution’s core values is related to the creation of the highest possible quality in teaching and learning, and that all the faculty are interested in the lives of the students and student success. The reputation of the institution and his reputation were potentially at stake if he could not convince the faculty to do the necessary work to improve course quality. His process was to determine an appropriate plan based on data and feedback and then to share those plans and the related rationale with the faculty so that they would understand why they would need to do this work and how the work would help the lives of their students. He spoke of being persistent and while dealing with faculty pushback this way:

> We have to be proactive, that's the walk. And so, trying to bring them along is a challenge. Faculty members who say, you know I'm a full professor, I've been teaching here for 25 years. And I do just well, and my students give me good student evaluations. Why do I have to do these outcomes and map them to a degree? And so, it's trying to motivate them to understand that.

Mark went on to describe how he finally sold the faculty on redeveloping their online courses in a much more comprehensive way. He noted that it is one thing to collect information and understand important components of the relevant world, which in this case are related to quality, reputation, student learning outcomes, and student success. However, it is another thing altogether to achieve collective buy-in and bring about needed change. That part of the effort, he said, is interpersonal and iterative. It involved the leader communicating the facts along with a strong rationale and with conviction as to the merits of the direction. Mark described using Aristotle's terms for the three "artistic proofs:"

> That's a challenge, and it really is interpersonal. Really a lot of your job and my job has to do with interpersonal communication and motivating our colleagues. This would really help him or help her if you could just do this. Or so you use ethos, logos, pathos, Aristotle's rhetoric, three modes of appeal. So, you have an ethical appeal, a logical appeal, and then the kind of more emotional appeal. So, I think you use all three where appropriate, and it's one by one.

Mark also found ways to help reduce the work burden on his faculty and support their activities in other areas. That, combined with detailed analysis of the issues with their current courses and a roadmap to creating courses of higher quality where student perception was improved and learning outcomes increased is what sold the faculty on a significant redesign effort. Mark said he knew that the faculty cared about the quality of the programs and when presented with a proposal that made the path more comfortable for them, they readily accepted the challenge. The students in their online programs are the beneficiaries of this effort.

Russell is an Associate Dean at the flagship public doctoral research institution in his state. Russell started his career in higher education teaching courses at a community college. The courses he taught were in an academic area related his undergraduate education and earlier graduate degree. While teaching, he earned his doctorate and moved into an administrative position related to continuing and adult education over 20 years ago.

Now, as an Associate Dean, he had a challenge. His institution has a very highly regarded MBA program that is campus-based. The reputation of the program is stellar, and the faculty are rightly proud of the program and concerned about any changes that might damage their reputation or program quality. Russell understood through data collection and market analysis that there was a significant, unmet demand for this program by students who were currently working full-time jobs and could not attend the campus-based classes that were available only during the daytime. Russell knew it would be a hard sell to get the faculty to agree to create an online version of that program.

Russell and his team undertook a feasibility and market demand study to review all aspects of the online MBA development concept, including the potential demand and to understand the resources necessary to create and maintain courses of equal or better quality to the campus-based courses. Russell understood that he would have to appeal to the “three artistic proofs” with the faculty. Primarily, however, he appealed to pathos, describing the impact the MBA program could have on the lives of the students who would have access. Russell described it this way:

> What we really spoke to; what we addressed in the feasibility study and our many conversations with the faculty was the emphasis on how we could provide additional access for students who had no opportunity to earn an MBA by coming to [our institution]. And we had to huge unmet need for students who wanted and needed that program but could not make the time commitment, and there was this big group of working professionals that had an untapped source of educational needs. That they really could make a big difference. It really resonated with the faculty. If

> they had not been so committed to their teaching mission, I don't believe this would have succeeded, but because our faculty really are, we were able to make that strong connection.

Russell described the notion of being an “agitator” at his institution. The institution has an age-old and traditional way of educating students. His role is to represent the needs of the non-traditional student. He sees his role as a voice and facilitator for adult learners and those in need of distance delivery. This role can cause friction, Russell said, and problems for virtually every office on campus. In this case, he was aware of significant unmet need within the state for graduates of this MBA program. Russell was also aware that many potential students who wanted to enroll could not come to the campus to participate in on-campus classes. He created a proposal to resource and developed a very high-quality version of the campus MBA program, and to meet the needs and concerns of the faculty.

At first, he said, the notion is seen as an agitation: an undesired message that with which the faculty would rather not have to deal. However, the iterative process of developing and strengthening shared core beliefs and communicating them with conviction ultimately converted the initially intransigent minds and the “agitating idea” into a successful outcome for his institution, his faculty and most importantly, his students. He did this by creating a task force where faculty from the program participated, learned about the needs of industry and the students, and the potential for online course development to be undertaken in a way that positively impacted quality and generated additional success for their population, their region, and their institution.

At Russell's institution, the process involved not only the critical faculty of the MBA program, but also departments across the campus that would need to add processes, change policies, and manage new workloads. All these areas needed to be convinced that the new challenges and workload would be worth the effort. Through his leadership, and other influential voices on campus, the online program is now a huge success. Russell said the change was slow, iterative, and gradual, but that over time, the culture of the academy changed.

> And so, people were waking up slowly, but surely, and I've seen this in a number of situations that a lot of the intransigence that we had with the registrar's office and admissions, and in helping our students, it's gone. Intransigence is gone, and they're cheerleading right along with me.

At Anthony's institution, where they were undergoing the significant merger of departments and staff members were on edge about the changes, Anthony indicated that part of trust development is remaining transparent and not shying away from communicating news, even when the news may not be well-received by the audience. He described his reorganization situation as one where he required area managers to regularly communicate even though it was well understood that staff had real concerns about how the organizational changes might affect them and expressed concern and frustration at times with the changes:

> Very transparently, each of those leaders would bring information back to their former group. And we really had to get the buy-in for all those people to start talking about not looking back. Well, we used to do things this way, we used to, looking forward, okay, that's good. Let's bring those

> positive tenets into the new organization, but we can't get stuck on how it was. We had to make some tough decisions there, but we never hid anything from anyone, I think. While that was hard, at least you knew where you stood and that's a really, people do not like guessing about where they're at. And that's not fair. I don't think it's a good leadership quality at all.

Stay True to Your Word – Deliver. A critical piece of the leader’s reputation and trust building involves delivering on promises and plans. Reputations can easily be harmed by making promises and failing to follow through, these leaders said. Remembering always that critical stakeholders can be helpful, harmful, or indifferent, depending on their reaction to the leader’s actions, it will be critical for leaders to fulfill promises, show results, and stay true to their word.

Janet's situation was mentioned earlier, where there was a dramatic disconnect between the plans from the institution's leadership and the information she collected from her development of core values and beliefs. In addition, there was no buy-in for the direction from critical stakeholders across campus. Janet was able to modify plans and achieve buy-in from both the faculty and the leadership for the modified direction. The new operation has found its footing, she said, and revenues are flowing in.

Janet says that she worked hard to create reports and provide feedback and updates to all stakeholders. She reinforced the need for continued review and continued rounds of data collection, analysis, modification of core beliefs based on the data and conversations and for openness to continue to evolve and improve. Her work included regular meetings and communications with the president and the chief academic officers and online learning leaders across all of the campuses. She wanted the area leaders to continue to see her as an asset, an advocate for their efforts who was interested in making sure all stakeholders have a positive outcome, not just the stakeholders closest to her area. “I’m letting them know that I'm a partner”, she says. “I'm here to support their mission their goals. And I want to leverage their collective strength. Not to own it, but to leverage it. And so, we're making good progress.”

Anthony described the same iterative approach at his institution once the departmental mergers had occurred and new programs began development. They created a concept based on data and core values and modified their understanding, values, and plans through the iterative process he described earlier. They undertook the effort to merge the departments into one new, stronger, higher performance operation that was designed to build and completely support entire online degree programs. Then they began to develop new online courses and programs within this new organization.

Their initial online offerings were an astonishing success in the eyes of the stakeholders across campus, some of whom had worried that the demand for the courses and programs would not be robust. Anthony described the progress:

> We did eight courses to start in the first year. By the third year, we had 24 courses, and we'll probably have a few more this year. The first two courses that we opened the first year filled in one minute. In one minute, 100 seats filled. We've had about 6,000 enrollments across three years so far. The students win there, and so that was kind of an example. And It's kind of over, it sounds a little easier than it was.

At Anthony’s institution, enrollments in online learning have boomed, and there is now considerable enthusiasm for building new programs within the current structure. Where skepticism and inflexible thinking once dominated, the process of creating trust through information development, value establishment, communication, buy-in, shared vision and focus, and quality execution has resulted in a great success for the institution and its students. Anthony says that this process is critical to growing and maintaining the trust among stakeholders at his institution.

At his university system in the northwest, Mark worked to help faculty in a wide variety of ways. He developed a center for "online learning, research, and service," organized to assist not only in the development of new products but in improving the lives of the faculty of his institution. Mark said:

> I created a unit to support faculty members which has grown dramatically. It is a center for online learning, research, and service. This is the three-part mission of the contract between faculty members and the institution. So, we don't just stop with helping them design classes and launch them or promote classes; we're working with them to get published and to get grants and to do service. It's a holistic approach for faculty. They benefit greatly while they work with us, which makes them happy to produce results for us.

The unit assists faculty with support for their three primary missions. The assistance they give faculty help the faculty be better at what matters to them and improves the level of trust and respect between faculty and his online operation. This mutual support has been a success. Mark indicated that online enrollment had grown to be about 36% of their total enrollment and that they now offer more credit hours online than they do face-to-face. “It was a matter of helping them understand the potential of online," he said. Mark mentioned that the work he does to support other aspects of faculty life is another way his operation delivers on promises to the faculty and institution.

Valerie also spoke of helping faculty in broad ways to deliver on her promise always to support them. She mentioned faculty concerns with changing the format from classroom to online and their worries related to issues such as not being proficient with technology and potential disconnection from students as impediments to moving in a direction that would be positive for them and the students. Valerie describes her promise to faculty to not let them down, this way:

> I think a lot about change for me, as well as other people, is how is that going to affect what I'm doing now. And they're really more afraid of fear of the change that affects them individually, rather than seeing it globally. And so, I think if we can break it down for people to help them see that, yes, this may be a really big task, but I'm here to help you along the way. I won't let you fail. I won't let you look stupid in front of your class, which is a really big thing for faculty.

Russell described the iterative process of moving toward success as a “long game." When the faculty in his institution's MBA program first heard of the idea of moving it online, they responded negatively. Russell had to prove to the faculty that he had done his homework and that he would stand by the quality of whatever they did as being as high as the quality of their on-campus program. That effort took research, planning, and many iterations of communications and discussions with faculty to find out from them what they absolutely needed in order to be comfortable with the project.

Russell described the process: “I wanted and had believed that our institution could leverage our excellent MBA program in the online environment. Faculty were totally opposed to it. Five years of persuasion, the meetings, and so on.” Finally, Russell’s team pulled together the feasibility study and then put together a task force to work with the faculty. Then they held a faculty vote.

> We held a faculty meeting, and it was 100% endorsement of that program going online. They have hit the ground running. They have had to add new courses for this Spring semester. I knew it would be a huge success, but it was convincing faculty that the program that they had worked so hard to build and had such a strong reputation for and involvement would not be diminished; it would only be extended through online.

In the end, Russell’s team, and the faculty produced a very high-quality online program that has helped to serve the unmet needs in the state and beyond and has helped to convince the faculty that their trust in Russell’s operation was justified.

Mark was also focused on making broader improvements of support for faculty in general as a part of helping them accept the new world of online delivery. He knew he needed to deliver on his promise to make work life better for faculty.

> The one goal I've always had was: I do not want to make any more work or effort for faculty than has to be. So, we bend over backward to provide every kind of resource and service that they need, whether it's IT support

> for instructional designers, whatever they need. In our larger courses, we have TA's for every 35 students.

At Mark's institution, the same tenured faculty that teach in the campus-based programs also teach in the online programs. The work that Mark has done to keep faculty happy and to deliver on promises has paid off, he said:

> The faculty will tell each other, I'm well supported, or I'm not well supported there. Well, we survey them every year, and so we get excellent feedback, usually very, very positive. But I appreciate and it's funny; it's the same faculty of our on-campus programs [where they now rate the support in online programs as better than on-campus]. We do not hire faculty separately to teach through our online programs.

At Sandy's institution on the east coast, she spent several years developing new resource policies related to online course development and teaching. As with the other interviewees, she described the process of understanding all of the elements, creating a core vision, working with others to get on the same page, modifying plans through the iterative process, and ultimately creating a plan everyone could accept. She told me that her next step was to continue the process, meet with the deans and others, and show them they delivered on the results.

> It took a full year to review. You had to meet with the dean or the associate dean, and allow them to bring the finance officer. I brought my finance officer. And I did beautiful spreadsheets showing them every dollar, and that was probably one of the best things I did here, was simple models, so everybody knows where they stand.

The projects described earlier by Anthony, Sandy, Warren, Dean, Randy, Valerie, Mark, Janet, and Russell produced dramatically positive results for their institutions, faculty, students. These positive results reinforce trust in the leaders, which helps the leaders continue to influence change in a positive way with future projects, they said. The interviewees suggested that promoting ideas that aren't backed by strong real-world evidence, and/or have not achieved the buy-in necessary with all the stakeholders, likely will create less-positive outcomes and damage the reputation of the leader.

Maintain Focus on Priorities. These trust creators said that leaders must create a plan and stay focused on core beliefs, agreements, plans, and promises. The world of higher education can be challenging, in that opportunities come and go from continually. Identifying the most beneficial actions out of a multitude of options takes leadership with a strong sense of direction. Forming core beliefs and values and maintaining focus on those activities that have long-term real-world benefits for the institution, faculty, and students are critical in an increasingly distracting environment. Maintaining vision, not giving up on critical ideas, and not changing direction based on short term potential easy-wins will build the reputation of the leader as a solid, committed, driven, intelligent, and reliable colleague these leaders said. The trust creation cycle repeats and overlaps, as the relevant world is a moving target. There are always new activities, actions, technologies, people, directions, and outcomes which all need to be observed and incorporated into the leader’s values, beliefs and plans, they said.

At David's flagship institution, where he spends a lot of his day staying connected with the relevant world, he has learned that staying focused can be a big challenge. David said that once the leader has done the hard work and created a vision, shared that vision, and created buy-in, they need to stay focused on commitments and not be pulled astray or led to derail or abandon difficult projects. He brings back the subject of servant leadership but says that ultimately, it is the responsibility of the leader to be able to establish a direction and stick with it. Sometimes this means the leader has to say no to new ideas or changes in direction from others.

> I really believe in servant leadership. That's the model that I adopt and that I follow. And it is a collaborative model. Everybody is going to say they're a collaborative leader, yeah, collaborative leader. But ultimately, the decision making, there is somebody responsible, and that's me.

Anthony described the long term, unrelenting focus on the core mission, at his institution, where they had merged several departments and created new programs. Once that project had been completed, he said, focus needed to be maintained, so that the stakeholders understood that the team had delivered, and so that continual progress could be made.

> So, it was time here, in the spring, to take it back to the Senate, to see if it would be voted as a permanent semester. This took months to put together a huge report with all kinds of data. We compared the learning outcomes to the best of our ability with eight-week, and 16-week, and online, and not online, testimonies from the students and all this. But all the while involving the academic units that participated, involving the faculty who taught the program. Listening to the requests of the faculty Senate, some of which were very reasonable, others which may be less so, but not

> letting that get us off track. And it worked, so they voted it in May, they voted it to be an official semester, and we'll have winter session.

At Randy's institution in the Midwest, he had led his operation through a significant reorganization effort, using their "belief statement" as a mantra for focusing on what is most important. He said that some aspects of the change were moving faster than others, but it is critical that the leader keep focus, not only to guide the project as needed but do reinforce the trust his stakeholders had in him as a leader.

> This is a true systemic change, so not everything is moving at the same speed. So, we're behind in some things and some things leap ahead. So, the career accelerator that I announced- that's moving all along with the work to refine our incentive structures and performance structures taking more time. That's a slower thing that may be out of step with the direction of some of the tactical work we're actually engaged in. Yeah. Persevering through all that is critical. That's part of trust as well, letting people know that the leader is going to persevere through this.

Randy also asserted that it is vital for the leader to keep the focus on the end goals, above the "noise" that can occur all around the leader. Randy said that if the original planning involved the voices from the staff and the common core beliefs have been documented into the plan, the leader must now maintain the direction, even when there are dissenting voices.

> I think the mindset really begins to shift and people get on board. But we do have to get past those really active resistors and persevere. And recognize that not everybody is in that camp even though they may be

> some of the loudest voices that you're hearing. That's always tough because I think as a leader you tend to focus where the noise is.

Valerie had earlier described the criticality of establishing trust early on and then making sure to deliver on promises to her faculty. Now, she said, it is critical to maintain attention and connection on the core processes:

> It’s lots of communication. Each semester, I go to the deans. And if I'm really trying to push through with a project, I make sure that I'm in communication with those middle manager folks on our campus to make sure that they are on track and understand. I try not to leave anybody out of the communication loop.

The cycle repeats continuously. These leaders describe this cycle as extremely iterative and overlapping. New ideas are gained every day that add to and modify core beliefs. These ideas are built into the communications cycles and information-sharing. Ultimately if leaders have done their homework and understand the relevant world, worked with others to create core values, beliefs, and direction, and delivered on promises, and have kept the focus on direction, the ideas will turn into successes which reinforce the credibility of the leader and the team. This cycle continues to grow the reputation of the leader, their decision-making, and their trustworthiness.

The Cycle of Trust Creation is Widely Used in Online Leadership

During these interviews, a very distinct pattern of activity by the leaders began to emerge. The leaders described that they needed to be well-informed, broadly knowledgeable, and closely connected to the needs and culture of their institutions. The leaders needed to build trust with all stakeholders, find their core values and beliefs about their organizations and directions, work with others to build the strength of those convictions, and share them broadly. The leaders bring stakeholders on board for feedback and buy-in and then communicate the direction clearly and with conviction. Then, they said, they must deliver on the promise of the plans and continue the cycle. Because the world is a moving target, project phases may start and end, but the cycle of growth, development, trust building and trust maintenance never ends.

From those discussions, the Cycle of Trust Creation, Figure 4.1, was developed, which documented the cyclical, iterative phases of trust development: paying attention to the relevant world; creating and deepening core beliefs; communicating with conviction and maintaining focus. These are, fundamental aspects of building and maintaining trust, relationships, and success and therefore reinforce reputation and brand.

The process repeats in an evolving and overlapping manner. Table 4.3 identifies the leadership behaviors found in the trust creation cycle. The trust creation cycle is non-linear. It loosely follows the steps in order; however, the process is occurring at many levels simultaneously, on multiple planes, in a loosely coupled and asynchronous manner. The cycle is continually operating at a global level tied to the overall actions, achievements, relationships, commitments, and reputation of the leader and her organization.

At multiple levels, the cycle is applied to new projects, new goals, new relationships and with new stakeholders at the same time that the primary cycle repeats in an overlapping fashion with existing relationships and actions. The leader is continually reinforcing the commitments and reputation of the organization, and its actions and relationships. It begins again as the leader and the organization encounter new opportunities, new challenges, and new relationships.

Instilling a Trust Creation Culture with Staff. The leaders interviewed for this research described in detail the patterns that they followed to build success within their roles and with their stakeholders. The patterns evolved into the Trust Creation Cycle presented in this research. That cycle is common when dealing with stakeholders of all kinds and at all levels: from working with public officials, university leadership, college deans, departments and faculty, and with their staff. These leaders also had advice that was specific to working with their staff. In adaptive leadership parlance, the leader is the leader and the staff, the people who report to the leader, are the "followers."

The leaders interviewed for this research said that the leader must not only lead, like the Pied Piper but turn around and work with staff directly to help them achieve to their potential. The leader must serve the staff, clear the path for them, provide them resources and encouragement, and give them room to grow. In return, they said, the staff will perform at their peak under those circumstances. This next section provides the very commonly mentioned insights into working with staff from the interviews with these leaders.

In addition to the common themes of building trust, reputation, and credibility within the larger institution, these trust builders focused on their employees as their greatest assets. These leaders repeatedly spoke of the criticality of hiring the best people, treating them fairly and compassionately, and finding ways to empower them as employees and as individuals for developing organizational success in the long-term.

While none of the semi-structured research questions asked about making staff hires, 11 out of the 15 leaders specifically brought up the subject that one of a leader's principal responsibilities is to make the best possible initial hires. These leaders noted the importance of hiring the right people and then building a great team. Several of them said that the leader is only one person; the vast majority of the work, the quality, effectiveness, and performance of their organization is a product of the staff. That makes the selection of those individuals critical. Once the leaders have the best people, they said, the leader must coax the best performance out of them. Leaders do that by providing resources, time, and opportunity, by empowering the staff to make decisions without fear, and by reinforcing their efforts over time with positive feedback. Giving them credit for their work also encourages them to achieve their potential.

Mark, the Vice Chancellor, who earlier had described in detail the focus on improving the lives for his faculty, put it this way:

> Number one is the selection of the staff. It's critically important. That leverages everything else. So, my style is more of a collaborative approach. I tend to delegate a lot, but again, I go to great lengths to assure that we get the best staff. I think Collins has it right that it's not all about the boss. It's about the team, and it's the way that we accomplish much as a team.

Christine agreed that hiring the best people is a critical role of the leader:

> It's finding good people and then figuring out how to get the most out of them and clearing the path so they can prosper, but then getting out of their way and not micromanaging them. One of your fundamental key

> roles as leader is to make your folks successful in what they do, not necessarily to be the one who creates every win.

The leaders repeatedly mentioned making smart hires and then empowering them to be successful. Part of empowering them is making them feel supported and treating them with respect and kindness. They said, in return, the employees will go above and beyond since they feel so appreciated.

Anthony, who had dealt with the departmental mergers so effectively as his institution spoke at length about treating employees well:

> There is nothing more important than treating the people around you with a great deal of respect and they pay it back in droves. Absolutely, absolutely, it's not only the right thing to do, it actually is a wise business decision.

Janet, who had described bringing leadership's plans and faculty resistance back to the table, also spoke of the importance of empowering employees. She indicated that letting employees do what they do well and giving them some freedom is essential:

> Give them flexibility, and they give it back in return. I'm not a micromanager, and for them to begin seeing themselves as leaders in their area, and also acknowledging what they're doing [is important]. And I'm feeling that I did the right thing because they're the ones that did the work.

Mark described working hard to improve the lives of faculty, and he also wants to improve the lives and productivity of his staff. He spoke of giving staff some flexibility and freedom to be creative, which in turn gets them thinking differently, coming up with new ideas, maintaining excitement in their roles, and trusting that the leader has their interests in mind.

> I give half a day a week to the employees to choose whatever they want to do: research, whatever they want to do, or a project, or anything related to online learning, or technology you choose. And it gives them freedom to innovate beyond whatever they normally would be doing - they choose the time, and they can leave the office, or they can close their door. They can do whatever they want.

Mark also promotes them doing their own research, conducting conference presentations and getting themselves published. He says that has also helped them become more credible with the faculty.

> Everyone has taught courses. They weren't hired as teachers, but we've gotten them hired as adjuncts. Every one of them is published nationally, has co-authored book chapters and articles. Every one of them has done national presentations, and part of my role is, you know, I'm asked to write a chapter or to do an article or do a presentation and I invite them to help. They add great value, but also in their own, now it got publication record. Now, when they work with faculty members, they have another level of credibility with the faculty.

Valerie, who had spoken at length about the need to care for the interests of her faculty also talked about making sure the employees have flexibility, have a voice, and feel successful.

> I think that really the key is working with them to determine what makes them feel successful. And then how does that correlate with what you need as the supervisor to be able to determine their success. Part of that for my staff is being able to let them have some time when they can explore projects that is of their own choosing.

Like many others of the trust creators interviewed for this research, Valerie said that giving staff credit they deserve in a public forum is appropriate, helps to build the reputation of her team, and reinforces the trust relationship between the leader and staff.

> I also advocate for my staff regularly. I tell people all across campus how wonderful they are, and they know that, and they are wonderful. When they don't do something so well, I don't mention it outside of our unit. It's just we take care of it here. If it's fabulous, then we tell everybody. And so, I think that type of approach also is helpful for them because they know that I have their back.

Regina, who earlier had described the importance of paying attention to the relevant world, collecting and sharing information, and maintaining communications with stakeholders also spoke at length about making great hires. She spoke of building a trust relationship with them by giving them credit, treating them with kindness and respect, and "having their back" when they are in a position where they need to decide.

> I empower them to be the very best that they can be. I am not in any way a micromanager. I believe in letting each person achieve their utmost potential. I encourage them to take risks. If they make a decision that I don't agree with, I will never call them out in front of anybody else. I may

> bring it up later, but I always stand by my employees 1,000%. I am extraordinarily loyal to them. And they know that I have their backs no matter what. They are charged with a lot of responsibility, and the last thing they need is to have someone second-guessing their judgments. And managing things in a way that's detrimental. But ultimately what it's all about is hiring the right people in the first place. I have a team that has primarily been with me from the very beginning.

While the focus of this research has been on “how leaders lead,” the feedback from these leaders often focused on leading by building a terrific team of great people and then remembering that they are people and that you will get the most from them by building a strong trust relationship with them as well as other stakeholders.

A Real-World Example. An excellent example of the identification of an adaptive challenge was told by Richard, the Dean of a continuing education operation at a large public institution. Richard talked about his process of monitoring market demand, speaking with colleagues, hearing concerns regarding student's abilities to afford education, reading about MOOC’s and OER activity by other institutions. He deepened his core belief that his institution should better serve those students by identifying ways to reduce the cost of a high-demand graduate program dramatically. Richard and his team began to work through some ideas on how to create this program in a scalable, high-quality manner. He began to communicate the idea to key stakeholders. As those conversations unfolded, Richard reinforced his core beliefs and shared them with his team. Richard began the process of communicating the need and the potential solutions more broadly, and with conviction and passion.

The concepts shared by Richard challenged the assumptions of many stakeholders. Faculty were concerned that his idea was unscalable and financially undoable. Others worried that a very inexpensive graduate degree “cheapen” the reputation of their fine institution. Faculty in the program were concerned that open educational resources were not what they had used to teach their courses, and that finding suitable OER materials would be impossible.

Table 4.4 presents, in brief, the steps that Richard and his team undertook to understand the relevant world around them in a way that highlighted the need they identified, create and strengthen their belief system regarding this project, to communicate the concept with stakeholders, stay true to their word and deliver positive results, and maintain focus on the project so as to ensure its success.

Table 4.4

Example of the Cycle of Trust Development, using Richard’s Graduate Program

Behavior	Description
Pay Attention to the Relevant World	Richard kept up to date with regional economic and business news. He read market demand studies, spoke with local industry representatives. Richard studied the rising costs of higher education and read stories of students being unable to afford the education they need to fill vacant positions in industry in his region. Richard monitored MOOC and OER development at various institutions. He studied successful models of online program scalability at his and other institutions. Richard worked closely with institutional, college and departmental stakeholders and was aware of their beliefs, needs, and culture.
Create and Deepen Core Beliefs	Richard’s core belief is that everyone deserves access to a high-quality education. He believes that the cost of education is a problem that needs to be addressed. He values the work and talents of the faculty at his institution and believes that they share his concern for access to education. Through careful design and vetting, Richard became increasingly convinced that his operation could find ways of creating an extremely high-quality program at a fraction of the cost of most other graduate programs.

Behavior	Description
Communicate with Conviction	Richard shared his concern regarding high demand by employers for employees with essential professional skills and education with stakeholders and staff. He communicated critical components of the plan to create a high-quality, low-cost graduate program. Richard held many conversations on the subject with key stakeholders at all levels and incorporated solutions for their concerns into the planning process. Richard worked to find a resolution to stakeholder concerns at all levels and worked to receive their support in response. Richard knew this plan would challenge many stakeholder assumptions regarding quality, scalability, the chance of success, and potential impact on other programs. He received enough support for the idea to continue development to a pilot phase.
Stay True to Your Word - Deliver	Richard carefully managed the pilot, keeping open communication with his team, local industry partners, university leadership, potential students, local and national press and stakeholders at all levels. Richard and his team, now fully onboard and excited about the project guided the initial developments and activities. They hit target progress, cost and quality milestones. He communicated progress to stakeholders, reinforcing their trust in his leadership and the strategy overall. As the pilot came to a successful conclusion, Richard shared information and provided reports and analysis proving revenue and quality success. Richard worked with faculty and other stakeholders to provide resources and services as promised in the planning stages.
Maintain Attention on Priorities	Richard kept the project and his team focused by reinforcing the critical purpose and milestones of this project through communications and hands-on attention. As project issues developed, he and his team addressed them quickly and with a sense of urgency. Richard continued to monitor the relevant world around him while maintaining focus on key project milestones.

Summary of the Findings

In this section, a summary of the purpose of this research, the process of conducting the research and the identified outcomes from the research will be presented in brief.

The research question asked in this research was *How do online and continuing education leaders lead and make change within the complex organization and distributed authority structure found within large public doctoral research institutions?*"

The significant finding from this research is that leaders lead through a cycle of processes identified as "The Cycle of Trust Development" (Figure 4.1).

Due to the lack of direct organizational control over the various aspects of the institution that need to participate in activities in the leader's responsibility area, leaders create bonds of trust with relevant stakeholders. Leaders arm themselves with a wide range of information, develop strategies, vet those strategies widely, reshape the strategies, communicate the strategies with conviction, and then execute the strategies with a high level of discipline to ensure success. The leaders communicate outcomes and maintain focus on core strategies while equipping themselves with additional knowledge.

As described earlier, multiples of the trust development cycle coincide and are non-linear and overlapping. The order of these activities has logic since trust must be developed by actions which then receive buy-in, are then well communicated and executed, and then delivered without distraction or continual reinvention or collapse. However, these leaders described experiences which show that these processes are ongoing, simultaneous, and overlapping, as many projects, activities, actions and new directions continue to be introduced and executed.

The cycle of trust creates a reputation for the leader and the leader's organization that builds upon itself, and more opportunities open up, additional partnerships develop and, often, additional responsibilities are collected. If the cycle of trust is broken, significant damage can occur to the reputation of the leader and the trust relationships between stakeholders, including the leader's direct reports. Because of this concern, leaders work hard to build and maintain their relationships with relevant stakeholders and work hard to ensure that they keep their promises, delivered projects, and maintain communication.

While the cycle of trust process includes work with direct staff, the leaders use additional processes with staff so that the organization under their direct control operates at the highest possible level. The leaders said that human resources are the most critical asset and if neglected, the organization will suffer and impact the cycle of trust development negatively.

The leaders spoke at length about the importance of building and managing a top-performing team within their organizations and then empowering those individuals to do the best work possible. They do this by finding the best possible people, and then building trust with their team by giving them credit for their accomplishments, giving them time to explore their own ideas and interests, protecting them, and standing by them as they do their work.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the similarities and differences between the cycle of trust creation and the theory of adaptive leadership will be discussed. Leaders will be shown to use trust creation processes all of the time throughout their careers. These same leaders often also use adaptive leadership techniques while facing intense adaptive challenges. The two frameworks, adaptive leadership and the cycle of trust creation are not the same, nor are they mutually exclusive. The two easily co-exist, as leaders use trust creation in anticipation of adaptive challenges. Online leaders live in a world of adaptive challenges. These leaders build trust so that they can rely on that trust when they encounter adaptive challenges.

Brief Overview of the Findings

A single research question framed the basis for this study: How to do Online and Continuing Education leaders lead and make change within the complex organization and distributed authority structure found within large public doctoral research institutions?" During the semi-structured interviews, leaders were asked about their leadership approach and to describe how they have led their organizations through particularly difficult, multi-dimensional challenges. The “Cycle of Trust Creation,” Figure 4.1, emerged from the interviews. The Cycle of Trust Creation contains five key behaviors. These are: pay attention to the relevant world; create and deepen core beliefs; communicate with conviction; stay true to your word – deliver, and maintain attention on priorities.

Leaders described the need for trust creation due to the very deep impacts that online program development has had on their institutions and the lack of direct authority over critical departments. They have led by creating trust relationships with their stakeholders through a series of actions that are conducted in a deliberate, iterative, and cyclical manner. At any one-time, online leaders are operating within multiple, concurrent cycles of trust creation across various agencies, projects, actions, and populations.

Special activities and approaches to internal staff were identified in the interviews. Leaders were careful to select the staff with high potential. They nurtured all staff members to achieve their top performance. The leaders protected the staff from outside pressures and gave them credit for the achievements of the organization. This work creates a bond of trust between the staff and the leader, which results in strong performance from the staff and the organization.

Discussion of Results

This research study examined how online and continuing education leaders have led in the challengingly decentralized organizational structure of large, public, doctoral research institutions. Institutions of higher education are currently undergoing great financial pressure (Bok 2015; Watkins, 2016) from reduced public funding, and under pressure from increased competition for students from other institutions (Erickson, 2012). Reduced state support and increasing costs of operation (Bowen, 2013; Mortenson, 2012) have driven tuition costs up dramatically over the past several decades, making higher education less affordable.

Online education has played a disruptive role in higher education (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). It has allowed institutions to expand their access to potential students. However, institutions have seen an erosion of their regional hegemony, as the online environment has allowed other institutions to enter their traditional geographic marketplace.

Online education's disruptive role is not limited to the academic aspects of an institution's functional areas. Nearly all divisions of an institution, from academic departments to administrative areas, are impacted by the introduction of online education (Halfond, Casiello, Cillay, Coleman, Cook, LaBrie, Niemiec & Salley, 2015). Large doctoral research institutions of higher education suffer from inertia (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2013; DeZure, 2000), making significant change difficult.

The very fiscal health of many institutions is at risk (Bowen, 2013). While it is difficult for these institutions to change (Cortese, 2003), change must occur or institutions will fail (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). In some cases, the move to online education has allowed institutions to remain financially solvent (Christensen et al., 2011; Martin & Samuels, 2009).

Just after the turn of the millennium, Beaudoin (2002) asserted that institutions of higher education were undergoing profound changes due to the impacts of distance learning and online education in the way institutions teach and reach their student populations. Beaudoin noted the dearth of attention given to the understanding of effective leadership in distance education in the literature and urged greater focus in this area. Beaudoin argued, "It is no longer a question of if and when to consider distance education; rather, it must be done now, and it is a matter of how best to proceed with the important work ahead" (p. 144).

Change within a comprehensive doctoral research institution takes strong leadership (Bok, 2015; Bowen, 2013), and online divisions are increasingly crucial to the institution. However, adult and continuing education units often have played a marginalized role (Morton, 1980) in a traditional doctoral research institution's organizational hierarchy, leaving continuing education leaders with little authority to manage processes outside of their units.

Burnette (2015) noted the online leader's "struggle for authority" (p. 18), and the need for relationship building and trust creation. An online program establishment requires many partnerships across an institution in areas where the leader has no direct authority. Without direct authority, Kleiber (as cited in Burnette, 2015) found that online and continuing education leaders are "bound in asymmetrical power relationships" (p.15) and must use the power of negotiation as they attempt to create change.

Nworie (2012) asserted that online leaders are change agents and that they must understand leadership approaches that work in a continually changing environment. Nworie, Haughton and Oprandi (2012) indicated that the environment that online leaders face is a challenging one that demands "a new type of leadership in an old environment" (p.183). The research presented here, therefore, investigates an immensely critical component of higher education at a critical time. How have leaders lead at institutions that have successfully adopted large and growing online education programs?

The Trust Creation Process Never Stops. The leaders described the need to create trust with the stakeholders, as they are operating in an environment where they have responsibility but little direct authority, especially over the faculty, who enjoy a good deal of autonomy (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Bacow et al. (2012) noted faculty resistance to a dramatic change in the teaching paradigm of online education. They also found that faculty fear that online instruction will be used to diminish faculty ranks. Thelin (2012) found these concerns to be unsubstantiated. However, the concerns do represent roadblocks to an online leader in higher education.

With little authority and the potential for financial or resource gain coming only after stakeholders expend considerable time and energy on any potential projects (Burnette, 2015), these leaders described the need to create trust in their partners across campus and communicate with conviction regarding any potential effort and its effect on the relevant world around them. Satell (2014) asserted that even with formal authority, it is difficult to generate significant, long-lasting change.

> The problem is that, while authority can compel action, it does little to inspire belief. It is not enough to get people to do what the leaders want, they also have to *want* what the leaders want — or any change is bound to be short-lived. (p. 25)

The leaders interviewed for this study understood that with or without formal authority, the changes needed would demand personal interest on the part of the stakeholders. These leaders used multiple reliable sources of data and information (Burnette, 2015), and they combined the data with compelling stories of the real impact new programs would have on the lives of students and their families. They understood that the stakeholders needed to believe that programs have merit from a marketplace perspective, and that they could appeal to the passions of the stakeholders who they know truly care that they are having a positive impact on people's lives.

The trust-creators pressed that leaders needed to have solid plans, based on reviewing real-world data from multiple viewpoints before attempting to secure partnerships on any related venture. The leader's track record, they said, is critical, so that core beliefs are created and tested. This notion aligns with Drennon's (2000) findings that noted the use of personal credibility and reliability as a negotiating strategy in adult and continuing education.

These leaders provided insight into their thinking with descriptions of their behaviors that focused on getting and staying current, with as broad a picture of the relevant world as possible. This included carefully creating plans, sharing them and evaluating them repeatedly. They regularly communicated so that ideas and direction were well understood and adopted. Working with stakeholders at all levels to build a reputation for their approach and their actions resulted in the sense of trust by the stakeholders in them as leaders and in their organizations. They spoke of creating trust and then delivering on their plans and their word while maintaining a sharp focus on the most critical components of their plans. This meant avoiding distraction from the path that had been agreed upon unless new information indicated the need for course correction.

Projects underwent careful management by the leaders to ensure their successes. They delivered on their promises and conducted course-corrections as they went so that all stakeholders' primary interests were protected. Focusing attention on priorities and avoiding becoming distracted were critical for avoiding the collapse of projects.

As described by these leaders, this cycle of trust-creation is always underway, with examples occurring concurrently across multiple dimensions. The cycles operate in a non-linear fashion and overlap. A leader who is well-known and trusted by departmental faculty in one college must create trust with a new leader from another area who has just come to the institution. When critical stakeholder roles change hands and new actors are introduced, trust leaders include these new stakeholders in their trust creation process. They must build a new relationship, share information, share core beliefs, and listen to and consider the new actor's viewpoints. Integrating the new actor's role into the leader's view of the relevant world, the leader will begin to create a bond of trust with that individual. The trust leaders will do all they can to develop agreements and understandings with the stakeholder and deliver on all they commit to with this new agent. As the relevant world has been modified, even in a small amount, a new cycle of trust creation begins. Leaders often have many overlapping cycles of trust creation underway, where new information is brought into the thinking, new bonds are built, and older bonds are reinforced.

Special activities and approaches to internal staff were also identified in the interviews. Leaders were careful to select the most qualified individuals to hire, to nurture staff members to achieve their top performance, and to protect their staff members from outside pressures while recognizing their contributions to the organization. This work creates trust with the staff in their leader and results in the highest performance of the organization as a whole.

Trust Creation is Critical to Leadership Success

There is a cyclical process of trust creation that these leaders use to create and maintain momentum for their organizations and institutions. The process centers around the notion of trustworthiness and reliability. From the interviews and stories, patterns emerged as to the fundamental necessity for the development of trust and exactly how the leaders go about creating it.

In their work on the nature of trust, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998) offer the following multidisciplinary view and definition of trust, which will be adopted within this research: "Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another (p. 395)." Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003) describe dimensions of trust that include an evaluation of an individual's abilities, integrity, and benevolence, where the perceived intentions or motives of the leader are central.

Examples of this type of vulnerability and trust phenomenon are common. Citizens may vote for a political figure after having heard them speak about their goals and intentions for their actions in office. These citizens may have some knowledge of the political figure’s previous actions that back up their faith in the individual. The citizens have faith that the individual is trustworthy, will do as he or she has indicated, and will follow up their words and promises with positive actions and positive outcomes. The citizens are vulnerable during this transaction because the political figure may come into the position of power and take actions that conflict with their previously-presented intentions. Those actions may harm the citizens in some way, perhaps by raising their taxes or changing policy that impacts their business or livelihood.

This notion of an individual accepting vulnerability based on positive expectations of the actions of an individual is crucial to understanding the dynamic presented within the relationships examined in this research. The traditional organizational hierarchy where the leader has direct authority over the individuals she needs to marshal is often missing in online and continuing education. The transactions are not generally based on an authority structure but rather a shared mission, joint goals and values and a reliance on each other as genuinely being trustworthy partners in any significant work effort. This research examines "how online leaders lead" at institutions where they have little direct authority over the institution. Repeatedly, the notion of the importance of building relationships based on trust surfaced in nearly every interview. This section describes what the leaders had to say about the importance of trust development to their ability to be successful in their roles.

The Centrality of Trust Creation. The definition of *trust* adopted for this research *involves individuals becoming willing to accept a position of vulnerability based on a set of positive expectations of the intentions and behavior of another* (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, Camerer, 1998 p. 395). The outcomes from this study indicate that the leaders understand the need to create a situation where others are willing to accept some potential vulnerability as long as they really can trust that the leader will protect their interests. The leaders purposefully set out to establish that sense of trust in others. This research defines *trust creation* as *a leader's intentional use of words, actions, and behaviors which are meant to instill within stakeholders a sense of trust in the leader's intentions, commitments, abilities, and actions.*

Higher education faculty may be willing to agree to do a very significant amount of work in the creation of an online version of courses, or even an entire program, based on trust in the online leader. The must trust that the leader will deliver on the promises of enrollment after the program has been developed, or based on delivering on appropriate marketing, advertising, technical support, and resource allocation once the program has been made available. Faculty are vulnerable because they may have to agree to invest significant time and energy before any real payoff can be expected. They must have trust in the benevolence of the leader and have faith that the results of any joint efforts will be of high quality, will be well-received by the prospective students, and that it will improve the reputation of their program.

Faculty are quite often in a position to tell the online leaders that they are just not interested in undertaking such any large new project or online effort. They are usually under no significant threat of adverse impact if they simply return to their regular work and campus-based programs, so the incentive to react positively to an online development opportunity is not strong. They may not participate if they do not entirely trust that the online leader is reliable and dependable to their word.

As discussed in chapters one and two of this research, higher education is a unique environment from a leadership and management perspective. Large, public doctoral institutions are organizations where authority is decentralized in such a way that very few individuals have any real “control” over others. Shared faculty governance, academic freedom, and tenure provide faculty with controls and autonomy, with a relatively flat power structure, very unlike the top-down leadership model found in other large-scale organizations, such as corporations and the military, or even primary and secondary schools. Individual administrators with charges to create new programs, activities, educational content, or directional changes often work without any direct supervisory control or oversight over the areas where they are attempting this change. The conversations and discussions undertaken with the study participants for this research reinforced this reality.

Leaders Have Responsibility but Often Lack Authority. Each of the interviewees faced situations where they were attempting change management in an environment where they had very little direct control over the vast range of stakeholders involved. Indeed, administrators have significant control over their own operational staff. However, even that control has limitations. Each stakeholder and staffer are often already quite busy so that the opportunity to respond positively to the potential for more work can receive pushback unless there is high confidence in the project concept and the leader themselves.

Online and continuing education leaders' fundamental function is to provide "non-traditional" programs and services for non-traditional audiences. These leaders operate systems that are intended to serve audiences with particular requirements and limited capability to work within the traditional university structure. Therefore, online and continuing education leaders are change agents at their institutions.

Lacking direct administrative control, how do the leaders bring about the desired changes within their institutions? Participants cited a variety of mechanisms such as the ability to provide direct funding and new positions and providing graduate teaching assistants and the like as critical to resolving resource needs related to new directions or activities. It is clear from the discussions that effective leaders use these mechanisms;

however, nearly all of the participants suggested that building relationships and creating trust between themselves and the stakeholders was a critical activity to accomplish before any action could be taken to try to drive the organization in a new direction.

Public doctoral research institutions are generally large and complex organizations with distributed structures and power centers. Functions such as finance, admissions, registration, financial aid, student support, international programs, information technology, legal services, research operations, and dozens of other departmental areas of real significance to the online leader each have their own management structure, and their own goals, projects and foci.

The autonomous nature of these mission-critical departments ensures that each area has significant devotion to their own internal progress and function. Receiving their attention and true participation requires a broadly multilateral and highly coordinated collaborative effort. Resources may be available to attract their attention; however, resources are generally modest, as public doctoral research institutions operate on relatively modest budgets and without deep financial or resource reward potential. Resources alone are rarely sufficient to generate the collective attention and focus of an extensive collection of university power centers simultaneously, without excellent coordination, significant mutual interest, real respect for the project at hand, and the leader attempting to make change.

The Cycle of Trust Creation and Adaptive Leadership

This study was designed to investigate the successful leadership styles of the vice presidents, deans, and associate vice presidents for online and continuing education operations through the lens of adaptive leadership. These individuals are change agents

(Fullan, 2007) who have helped their institutions adopt successful programs and lead the organizations through complex adaptive challenges (Nworie, 2012).

Adaptive leadership addresses the need for leadership through challenging environments (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Khan, 2017). According to Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009a) "adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" (p. 14). This research study analyzed fifteen leaders' responses and described their actions through the lens of adaptive leadership.

One goal of this research was to identify patterns related to the leadership approaches that had been successful within public, doctoral research institutions. Adaptive leadership was chosen as the lens the outcomes would be viewed through because adaptive leadership is focused on leading through particularly difficult, multi-dimensional "adaptive" challenges (Heifetz, 1994; Northouse, 2016). Scant research exists on the topic of applying adaptive leadership to the adoption of online education. Indeed, a paucity of empirical data regarding online leadership, in general, exists in the literature (Burnette, 2015), although interest and research in this area are growing (Coleman, 2016).

Navigating a World of Adaptive Challenges. Online leadership within a large doctoral research institution is a change management problem (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). The broad adoption of online education within an institution's high demand programs impacts many offices (Holt, Palmer, Gosper, Sankey, & Allan, 2014), disrupting traditional processes across the institution (Burnette, 2015). Online leaders must thoroughly understand all aspects of the potential impacts (Beaudoin, 2002) and the expected outcomes from the effort to introduce new programs and projects at an institution. They must understand the assumptions and expectations of all stakeholders and work across complex organizations on aspects of change that are value-laden and stir up people's emotions (Northouse, 2016).

Christensen and Eyring (2011) describe online education as a disruptive innovation. Online program development efforts are disruptive by nature because they are complex challenges which cannot be solved through a leader's authority alone (Northouse, 2016). They are challenges that require changes in people's assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Bruner, 2007). Large online development projects are therefore adaptive challenges, and online leaders must navigate the technological and logistical challenges as well as the human, behavioral challenges.

How Adaptive Leadership is Used by Online Leaders. After conducting the interviews, it was not initially clear that there was a strong connection between these leaders' actions and the prescribed actions within the framework of adaptive leadership. The model of adaptive leadership focuses on interactions between the "leader" and the "followers" and is "follower-centered" (Northouse 2016, p. 275). The discussions with these leaders, however, focused on personal preparation and research, their belief systems and passion for their work, relationship development, personal reliability, and trustworthiness and commitment to outcomes. The leaders discussed their behaviors as they immersed themselves in the relevant world, reinforced their internal belief systems, navigated relationships, and communicated their vision.

The leaders in this study focused on the creation of trust relationships across a variety of stakeholders, including organizational superiors and individuals outside of the institution itself. Once sufficient trust had been developed with key stakeholders to encourage participation, leaders focused on their determination to ensure that promises were met, and that their attention to priorities did not falter. While the leaders spoke primarily of their own accountability, reputation, and responsibility, they also spoke about their duties to others and how all these factors reflected on their organizations and potentially impacted success. This made the connection to adaptive leadership at first appear to be weak.

However, once the prescribed concepts and behaviors of leadership within adaptive leadership are combined with leaders' broader concerns with their world over time and from challenge to challenge, many parallels with adaptive leadership began to form. When describing their specific actions during serious adaptive challenges, connections to the behaviors identified in adaptive leadership become further clarified. Once the transcripts were coded for indications of alignment with adaptive leadership and any other commonly-mentioned behaviors, an obvious relationship to the six leadership behaviors identified by Heifetz become clear.

Online leaders get on the balcony. Adaptive leadership's first identified behavior for the leader is to "get on the balcony." Within the context of adaptive leadership, this behavior suggests that the leader should get out of the middle of the fray in a challenging situation within their organization and view the problem away from the noise and chaos of the situation (Northouse, 2016). Once "on the balcony," the leader can see the situation more clearly and with less distraction.

Adaptive leadership prescribes that a leader, within an intense and challenging situation, break away and view the challenge from a distance. In the present research, the leaders described the need to understand the world from a variety of perspectives. They spoke of connecting themselves to a wide range of current sources of reliable information to get to know everyone and everything they could about their institution, from the financial picture to the culture of the institution.

Online leaders "get on the balcony" as an everyday part of their role. They ingest information on all aspects of their work, their region, their stakeholders, their institution, and their state. They become experts in technology applications and in all aspects of the operational components of their institutions, often at a very detailed level. They get to know essential stakeholders personally and deeply. Online leaders said in this study that they need to understand what is happening in another part of the world, and they need to understand what is happening in the building next to theirs. While adaptive leadership prescribes that a leader facing a specific adaptive challenge escape the noise and chaos of a situation, the leaders interviewed for this research observed the relevant world around them from the balcony on a daily basis, since the work of an online leader is to lead through adaptive challenges.

Online leaders identify adaptive challenges. The second behavior prescribed by adaptive leadership is "identify the adaptive challenge." Adaptive challenges are defined by Northouse (2016) as problems that are not clear-cut or easy to identify. "They are difficult because they usually require changes in people's assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 262). A leader's authority or expertise alone cannot solve the challenges. The challenges are usually value-laden, and they stir up people's emotions (p. 264). Yuki and Mahsud (2010) found that leadership processes in higher education have many competing values, are very complex, and benefit from an adaptive approach to problem-solving.

This research found the leaders as having identified adaptive challenges within the Cycle of Trust Creation throughout the first three phases of the cycle. Leaders paid attention to the relevant world (world dynamics) while they created and deepened core beliefs. These leaders remained open, connected, mindful, attentive, and determined to understand the world around them, from global actions that had impacts on higher education to local issues and actions that had implications for opportunities or demands. As they remained mindful of how these relevant activities related to the core goals, beliefs, and strategies of their operation, key challenges and opportunities surfaced from which Adaptive Challenges often emerged.

Online leaders regulate distress. The third behavior of adaptive leadership is to regulate distress. Northouse (2016) defines the regulation of distress this way: "The adaptive leader needs to monitor the stress people are experiencing, and keep it within a productive range" (p. 266). The leaders manage stress through the phases of communication with conviction and staying true to their word. These cycles involve the leaders’ communications about critical needs, values, and strategy. Stakeholders who have concerns over potential workload, dramatic changes to their processes, potentially negative organizational impacts, perceived future impacts, and a wide variety of challenges to their own beliefs and assumptions will challenge the leader’s ideas and plans. Resolving stakeholder concerns and adjusting plan components to address agreed upon areas of need is a key role of the leader in regulating distress.

As the trust-creator stays true to his word, he provides relief to staff pressures by maintaining focus and attention where needed. The leaders in this study worked through organizational concerns and issues and dealt with employee stress by communicating the vision, incorporating employee feedback, and by modifying plans and strategy as needed without negatively impacting anticipated outcomes. Giving employees credit for their actions, placing credit for successes on individual and group actions, and buffering the employees from stresses coming from external sources are other ways leaders relieved staff pressure. In maintaining attention on priorities, the leaders managed distress by dealing with project issues and problems quickly and effectively.

Online leaders maintain disciplined attention. Adaptive leadership calls for leaders to maintain disciplined attention. The Trust Creation Cycle independently identified this as a critical component of the trust creator's behavior as well. The leaders described in detail the need for personal commitment and focus to bring essential projects and actions to complete and successful outcomes. They described the importance of avoiding sudden and dramatic course correction whenever possible to maintain a strong sense of control and strategic direction. With intense preparation, strong understanding of all aspects of the relevant world, multiple cycles of communication and vetting, and clearly designed and communicated courses of action, such course-correction can be avoided, the leaders said.

Online leaders work hard to bring projects and actions to successful completion and work hard to communicate and share outcomes connected to the original vision. This cycle of research, conception, planning, and communication, execution, and celebration of success builds the reputation of the leader and the team and paves the way for additional cycles of trust strengthening and, therefore, collaboration with stakeholders.

Online leaders give the work back to the people. Adaptive leadership calls for leaders to give the work back to the people. Northouse (2016) provides the following guidance.

> People want leaders to provide some direction and structure to their work and want to feel secure in what they are doing, but too much leadership and authority can be debilitating, decrease people's confidence to solve problems their own, and suppress their creative capabilities (p. 270).

The leaders described the work they did to identify the best potential employees and then to involve those employees by communicating how core mission and values impact organizational strategy. By giving employees credit for organizational successes, promoting their value to other stakeholders, and giving them flexibility in their jobs to explore their own creative ideas, the leaders empowered them. By involving their employees in the process of strategy and project development, leaders helped their employees create plans that included their creative input and their ideas for managing the workload and milestones of the project in a manageable way.

Online leaders protect the leadership voices from every level. Adaptive leadership calls for leaders to protect the leadership voices from below. Northouse (2016) indicated that adaptive leaders need to listen to the ideas of "people who may be at the fringe, marginalized or even deviant in the group or organization" (p. 271). Northouse noted that when leaders give voice to an out-of-group member, it may upset the social equilibrium of the group. It is critical that leaders include these voices so that all stakeholders feel valued and heard, which often results in greater project success and adoption outside of the immediate circle of project stakeholders.

Online leaders described involving themselves in building their core beliefs and values by immersing themselves in deep understanding of the relevant world around them. This action involves gathering input from many sources and understanding the cultural components of the world their actions impact. Through the process of communicating, vetting and refining their beliefs and strategies, leaders listened to all voices and weigh and balance ideas until they had high confidence in the identified strategic direction.

The trust creation cycle does not stop and start in rigid order. Each phase of the cycle is in constant motion, informing every other phase and providing course corrections through inclusionary approaches to management. The leaders involved voices at all levels iteratively, guiding a challenge to a successful conclusion in a fluid manner.

How Trust Creation Relates to Adaptive Leadership. Figure 5.1 presents the Cycle of Trust Creation once more, this time with the behaviors of adaptive leadership imposed where there is alignment between the two conceptual frameworks. There are similarities, with both frameworks identifying the need for leaders to analyze the environment, identify critical components of their strategies, reflect, communicate their vision, listen to stakeholders at all levels, and drive with focus toward the goal of improving the position of their organization. The cycle of trust creation is shown to be external to the adaptive leadership behaviors, as trust creation is an ongoing, unending cycle that continues throughout the work and life of the leader. Adaptive leadership behaviors are more focused on specific challenges that the leader will face occasionally, or in the world of the online leader, often. Adaptive challenges end, where the cycles of trust creation do not.

Figure 5.1

The Cycle of Trust Creation Aligned with Adaptive Leadership.

However, there are stark differences between these concepts as well. The leaders described a lifelong effort to build, strengthen, and then stand by their own personal value system. They spoke of their work to create lasting and trusting relationships and empower their organizations through their commitment to quality and reliability. The leaders built solid reputations, which could then be used to facilitate and empower their organizations to succeed. These measures focused on the creation and reinforcement of trust with stakeholders at all levels. This is different from the focus of adaptive leadership, which focuses on leading organizations through complex challenges that generate stress and discomfort amongst the stakeholders. Table 5.1 identifies the significant contrasts between trust development and adaptive leadership.

Table 5.1

Trust Creation Contrasted with Adaptive Leadership

The Cycle of Trust Creation	Adaptive Leadership
Behaviors for empowerment through relationship building and bond creation	Behaviors for leading through difficult interpersonal challenges
Leader Centered	Follower Centered
Continuous and unending	Applied temporarily
Creates relationships	Creates change
Builds bonds	Challenges bonds
Broadly employed in career	Tightly focused on individual challenges
Relaxes tension	Creates and regulates tension
Preparation for challenges	Employed during challenges

Online leaders live in a world of adaptive challenges. Everything about the paradigm of online instruction challenges the traditions of the academy. Online leadership is about the creation of change and the installation of organizational and programmatic practices that align to a different construct of education, except for the most critical: the development and support of education that creates meaningful outcomes, engages and enlightens students, creates deep connections between faculty and student, and results in improvements to student quality of life. These fundamental concerns remain unchanged. Virtually every other deeply embedded assumption and expectation within the academy is challenged.

Trust Creation Helps Leaders Prepare for Adaptive Challenges. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) presented adaptive leadership as a framework for "the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and survive" (p.14). Adaptive challenges were described as being difficult because they tended to challenge human belief systems and assumptions and raise emotions among stakeholders. Adaptive leadership pushes people beyond their comfort zones, creates tension and "scares people" (p. 26) because the leader is forcing unwanted, but ultimately necessary, change on an organization and its people. Adaptive leadership is a set of behaviors that an adaptive leader undertakes when he is dealing with challenges that will create friction and discomfort within his organization (Northouse, 2016).

Adaptive leadership almost always puts you in the business of assessing, managing, distributing and providing contexts for losses that move people through those losses to a new place" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 22). They provided further context:

> Exercising adaptive leadership is radically different from doing your job really, really well. It is different from authoritative expertise and different from holding a high position in a political or organizational hierarchy. It is also different from having enormous informal power in the forms of credibility, trust, respect, admiration, and moral authority" (p. 23).

The leaders in this study described the importance of creating informal power in the forms of credibility, trust, respect, admiration, and moral authority, especially in the context of higher education, where formal authority is often missing. These attributes they identified as *sine qua nons* to their survival and ability to succeed in the environment of higher education. The leaders described the effort they invested in the creation of trust in detail.

During leaders' adaptive challenges, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, their behaviors often mirrored the prescribed behaviors in the theory of adaptive leadership. Therefore, these findings indicate that the leaders interviewed for this research employed both trust creation and adaptive leadership behaviors. They believed that the combination of attributes helps them to succeed. Adaptive challenges can create tension, cause frustration and concern, and create interpersonal conflict. For a leader to survive the massive wave of disappointment and resistance that emotional, adaptive challenges create among some stakeholders, a strong bond of trust and respect must be securely in place.

Online leaders presented a wide range of behaviors and skills, including researching, budget planning, conducting meetings, coordinating staffing schedules, managing personnel, resolving space needs, and dealing with many other common management responsibilities that do not present themselves as adaptive challenges. They understood that they needed to develop trust relationships. This cycle was conducted outside of adaptive challenges as part of an ongoing and unending pressure to ensure that they were seen as reliable and talented partners in the ongoing activities at their institutions.

Adaptive challenges present themselves often to the online leader. New online program development projects, institutional leadership changes, technology changes, and policy changes, to name a few, can all present themselves as adaptive challenges when there are complexities that go beyond the technical and question attitudes and expectations. While tackling tough adaptive challenges, the leaders interviewed for this study exhibited behaviors that have been shown to tie directly to adaptive leadership. Their work to create strong trust and respect with stakeholders created an environment where they were able to effectively execute adaptive leadership methods and drive change within their organization with successful results during challenging times.

Implications

For Researchers in Online and Higher Education. The findings of this study suggest that adaptive leadership is indeed an approach being used by successful leaders of large online programs and public institutions. The connection between the online leader's behaviors noted in this study and the behaviors prescribed by the theory of adaptive leadership are strong. All fifteen of these seasoned leaders in higher education mentioned at least some behaviors and approaches in their work and with their staff that directly align with the behaviors prescribed by the theory of adaptive leadership. Improved understanding of the practices within the adaptive leadership framework will benefit institutions attempting to expand their online and continuing education units.

The findings conclude that these leaders are using other tools and approaches that appear to have great significance to the way they create change at their institutions. The Cycle of Trust Creation is one framework that was identified by this research. Several key aspects of trust development were identified in this study that seemed to be integral to a leader's successful navigation of the complex power balance structure found within this type of institution. Further understanding of the implications of trust development, or lack thereof, may be critical to institutions attempting expansion in these areas.

In particular, this research may be of benefit to institutions working to identify those individuals who would be most successful at navigating the complex world of the institutional components and constituents. Finding individuals who independently identify their leadership philosophies as aligning with both adaptive leadership behaviors and trust development could prove to be pivotal to the success of their online operational growth.

For Leaders of Institutions of Higher Education. Higher education has undergone disruptive innovation (Christensen & Eyring, 2011) over the past decade or two in the form of online education. Technological advances have erased geographical boundaries (Grajek, 2018; Mellow & Woolis, 2010) and the regional hegemony once enjoyed by independent institutions. Online education has become fundamental to the fiscal health of many public doctoral research institutions (Bok, 2015; Coleman, 2016; Nworie, 2012; Martin & Samels, 2009). For this reason, the identification of an individual with the appropriate skills, background and aptitude is concomitantly critical to the institution.

Change occurs slowly within institutions of higher education (DeZure, 2000), which feature a unique shared-governance and tenure system that in some ways insulates faculty from some of these realities. McCusker and Babington (2015) assert that many of today's institutions are not ready to be successful in the digital era. Institutions of higher education must find leaders who can bring the institutions through necessary change in order for the institutions to survive (Bok, 2015; Nworie, 2012; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Martin & Samels, 2009). Linda and Lori (2007) argue that adaptive leadership approaches should be considered within higher education in an era where institutions must learn to be more adaptable and competitive. The findings identified within this present research study support these arguments.

For New Leaders in Online and Continuing Education. The leaders interviewed for this study have been responsible for the development and ongoing success of some of the largest, highest quality online and continuing education units within public institutions within the United States. This present research study identified several common themes of the behaviors of these individuals. Administrators who have been selected for leadership roles in online education, or would like to be in such a position, could benefit from taking a “deep dive” into the theory of adaptive leadership and working those strategies into their leadership activities. Additionally, new leaders in online education would be well-served to examine the role of trust development that has been employed by the individuals interviewed for this study. Trust creation appears to be a critical aspect of leadership effectiveness for these individuals.

Limitations

The findings of this study are limited by the fact that it focused only on large, public, doctoral research institutions. Other types of institutions, such as private institutions, for-profit institutions, and small liberal arts colleges have vastly different governance models and cultures. The findings here are not necessarily generalizable to these other types of institutions.

Another limitation is that the findings come primarily from the interviews with these leaders. While this insight into the leader’s actions and approach are critical, there are other sources of information that could be included in future research. Interviewing others within the organization, or conducting observations of the leaders at work would provide additional clarity.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this study present several areas that warrant additional research.

Focus on the concept of trust creation in higher education. The study design prescribed adaptive leadership as a primary lens through which the research would be viewed. The centrality of trust creation to the work of these leaders emerged from the findings. From these findings, a proposed framework for the Cycle of Trust Creation was developed. Further research, including a comprehensive review of the literature related to trust in higher education, along with a research approach designed to test and advance the concepts within this proposed framework could be conducted.

Expand the research to other institutional types, such as community colleges. The present study focused on large, public, doctoral research institutions. The concerns regarding fiscal health in higher education, the changing face of competition, and the inclusion of online education are certainly not limited to large, public institutions. At the time of the finalization of this research, many community colleges nationally are struggling with dramatic enrollment declines. Within the Virginia Community College System, one idea to improve enrollment that has been identified by a task force made up of community college presidents is to pursue policy changes that will increase access to education (Babb, 2018). This article indicates that "The decline has cost Virginia’s Community Colleges millions of dollars in lost tuitions, and resulted in hundreds of lost jobs at institutions across the state” (para. 8). One of the primary benefits of online education is the impact it can have on the expansion of access (Allen & Seaman, 2015). The research design used for this study could be modified and conducted within the domain of community colleges with resulting implications for advancing online education within that environment.

Utilize a case study research design. The design of the present research allowed for a preliminary overview regarding the potential application of adaptive leadership approaches within the complex world of online leadership at large, public doctoral research institutions. The findings indicated that (a) adaptive leadership approaches are evident within the activities and behaviors of all of the interviewed leaders and that (b) the notion of trust creation was central to the activities and focus as described by these leaders.

As discussed in the section on limitations, these findings reflect the self-described behaviors of these leaders. Each leader was interviewed for approximately one hour, one single time, in a one-on-one private conversation. Further research that allowed for additional sources of evidence to be included would be beneficial.

According to Stake (as cited in Hays & Singh, 2011), case study design "can be used to determine whether a theory's propositions are correct, or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant." Whether through a single case study or multiple case study design, additional sources of evidence would be beneficial in reinforcing or rejecting some aspects of the findings within the present study.

Conclusion

Higher education has been undergoing a significant change in the United States over the past few decades. State financial support for public institutions has, in general, been on the decline. Tuition levels have risen dramatically over that same timeframe, only partially due to the reduction of public sponsorship. Recent declines in the numbers of babies born in the United States has resulted in fewer young people in need of an education (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2013).

Advances in technology and the use of the World Wide Web have helped institutions to establish online programs attractive to busy working individuals who are anxious to advance their credentials and careers. This technology has allowed institutions to compete with each other outside of their traditional geographic boundaries. Some institutions have dramatically increased enrollment through online programs. Other institutions cling to online education to shore up sagging campus enrollment. Online education is a disruptive innovation in higher education. It is an innovation that impacts nearly every office on a university campus and challenges the belief systems and assumptions of many university stakeholders, especially faculty who may fear dramatic change in their approach to teaching and even their enjoyment of teaching.

These dynamics have raised the importance of online divisions within traditional institutions and created a demand for leadership in online and continuing education. The literature is thin concerning an understanding of the specific actions and approaches so far taken by leaders at institutions that have grown their online programs successfully. This research was conducted in the hopes of expanding that body of knowledge.

This research study viewed online leadership through the lens of adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership is a framework for leading organizations through difficult challenges toward positive outcomes (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). The findings of this study concluded that online leaders do use adaptive leadership approaches. The findings also highlighted the importance that leaders place into the development of trust relationships with stakeholders at every level. The leader’s integration of continual cycles of trust development and their application of adaptive leadership behaviors at critical points were the most striking findings in this study.

This combination of using trust development cycles and adaptive leadership approaches deserves additional attention and focus in the years to come. Online education will continue to have a dramatic impact on higher education overall. The specific approaches and strategies that have worked in this unique environment will be valuable tools for educators and institutions for the foreseeable future.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewee (Title and Name):____
Date of Interview:____

Background Information
Welcome the interviewee and thank them for participating in the discussion. To facilitate note taking I would like to record the conversation today. Only myself as the primary researcher and my dissertation chair will have access to the recordings that are being made today. A consent form has been electronically transmitted to you, and I ask that you return a signed copy to me. The form indicates that all information will be held confidential; that your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time. Neither your name, the name of your institution, nor any other personally identifiable information will be included in the actual study. A pseudonym will be used in place of your real name during the coding phase of the study. Thank you again for agreeing to participate.
I have planned this interview to last no long that one hour. I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time runs short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to move through the questions and complete the discussion within the hour allotted.

Introduction

Thank you, again, for agreeing to participate in this research project. You have been selected as a participant because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal of knowledge related to online and continuing education in higher education. You have also demonstrated a strong history of leadership within this environment. My research study focuses on “change agents” related to online and continuing education within the university environment. I seek to understand the specific leadership approaches and strategies that you have found to be successful in promoting lasting change and progress within the institution.

(I will ask the follow general questions, tailored somewhat the specific institution/interviewee, with prompts following their responses):

1) Could you briefly describe how you came to be involved in online and continuing education specifically?

2) How would you describe your leadership style?

3) Could you describe a particularly complicated and challenging organizational-change problem that you have dealt with in your capacity, and how you went about leading your organization through the challenge.

4) In your capacity at your institution, what are the most difficult aspects in leading through change?

5) What is your approach to getting the most out of your employees?

6) What else would you like to tell me about how you lead through change at your institution?

APPENDIX B

MEMO TO PARTICIPANTS

Email/ Memorandum to Study Subjects

To:

From:

Subject: Participation as interviewee in Research Study on Leadership in Online and Continuing Education at Public, Doctoral Research Institutions

Dear Interviewee:

I am writing to request your participation as an interviewee in a research study I am conducting as part of my dissertation toward a PhD in Higher Education at Old Dominion University. My study is entitled: **ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACHES IN ONLINE EDUCATION: A STUDY OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION.**

The study will look at successful leadership approaches that are being used by top leaders in online and continuing education at public four-year institutions. You are being invited because you have been identified by me, and a small group of your peers, as this type of leader. I will be interviewing 12 to 15 people in this type of top leadership position.

The interviews will be conducted via Webex, a high-definition two-way videoconference technology. The use of Webex, with its high-quality video connection will allow me to observe any non-verbal information delivered during the interview. Your participation in this study is highly desired, but entirely voluntary. Your identity will be protected and kept secret through the use of pseudonyms, and any information that could potentially identify your institution will be redacted in the actual study.

If you agree to participate in the interview, I will send you an email with a link to a Webex connection that will be used at the time of the interview. You would need to be using a desktop or laptop computer that has a camera and microphone, so that we can see and hear each other through the Webex connection. The conversation between us will be recorded, and the audio portion of the recording will be transcribed so that I can use the transcription (with your name and institutional references redacted) in the research study. Only a summary of comments will appear in the final study, with perhaps short quotations and remarks appearing in full. The conversation will be expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes.

If you agree to participate, it would be helpful to me if you could supply me a few pieces of information prior to the conversation, including your CV or bio, if you wouldn't mind sending it. I will only use the CV to get a sense of the positions you have held in the past and the scope of your current position, for the purpose of improving my preparedness for our conversation.

I will review your institution's and organization's websites prior to the call as well, to give me some familiarity with the environment you are working within. This will also help with my preparedness for the call. Any other such information that you can either provide for me, or direct me to, will be greatly appreciated.

Attached to this email is a consent form. If you elect to participate, (and I certainly hope that you do!), please sign and date the form. You can send it back to me via email, or as a fax to 757-683-3176.

Thank you very much for considering this request. Your strong history in this field will greatly improve the quality and completeness of this study.

Once the study is completed, I will provide you a copy.

Thanks so very much,

Andy Casiello
Associate Vice President for Distance Learning
Old Dominion University

Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education
Darden College of Education
Old Dominion University

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Mr. Andy Casiello, Old Dominion University, Doctoral Candidate. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about leadership in online and continuing education at public, doctoral research institutions. I will be one of approximately 12 people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The connection will be made via Webex two-way audio/video technology. Notes will be written during the interview. If I don't want to be recorded, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Review Committee of the Darden College of Education at Old Dominion University. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Dr. Petros Katsioloudis at pkatsiol@odu.edu.
7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature	Date
My Printed Name	Andy Casiello

For further information, please contact: Mr. Andy Casiello, 401 Gornto Hall, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, 23529 Fax: 757-652-3176 / acasiell@odu.edu

VITA

ANDREW R. CASIELLO

E-MAIL: ACASIELL@ODU.EDU

EDUCATION

2019 – Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA
- Ph.D., Higher Education, Darden College of Education and Professional Studies

2005 – Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA
- Master of Science in Education, Instructional Design and Technology, 4.0 GPA

1982 – Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg, MA
- Bachelor of Science in Communications Media

1979 – Springfield Massachusetts Technical Community College, Springfield, MA
- Associate of Science, Telecommunications Technology

Professional Development:

2006 – Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA
- Management Development Program

WORK EXPERIENCE

April 2009 – Present
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY Norfolk, VA
Associate Vice President for Distance Learning

2002 – 2009 **OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY** Norfolk, VA
Associate Vice Associate President for Academic Technology

1992 – 2002 **NATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY** Fort Collins, CO
Vice President of Technology

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