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A Phenomenological Inquiry of Leadership Competency Perceptions among Community College Leaders in South Central Appalachia

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Community College Leaders in South Central Appalachia

by

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ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Inquiry of Leadership Competency Perceptions among Community College Leaders in South Central Appalachia

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Combined with other economic development challenges in the region, this context

presents unique challenges for community college leaders in this part of Appalachia. The

American Association of Community College Six Competencies for Community College

Leaders are considered within this context to explore how those leading community

colleges in the region feel about the competencies, what is unique to leading in

Appalachia, and their most useful professional development experiences. Those

competencies are: organizational strategy, resource management, communication,

collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism.

The Appalachian Regional Commission subdivides Appalachia into several

regions which share similar topographical, demographic, and economic characteristics.

South Central Appalachia, includes the mountainous Appalachian regions of Virginia,

North Carolina, and Tennessee. To explore this topic, data were collected via interviews

with 18 presidents and vice-presidents in the South Central Appalachian Region were

interviewed and a document analysis of publicly available documents was conducted.

The study utilized a qualitative approach and phenomenological research design. 10

presidents and 8 vice-presidents were interviewed.

The following major themes were identified: (1) Leaders in South Central

Appalachia see value in all of the leadership competencies, but especially value

collaboration, communication, and resource management; (2)Leaders in South Central

Appalachia feel that the ability to adapt to regional and organizational culture is an

imperative skill which is not addressed by the AACC competencies and there are special concerns for adapting to the culture at rural colleges in South Central Appalachia; (3) Leaders in South Central Appalachia cite on-the-job training and formal academic experiences as most valuable for their professional development, but those who have had entrepreneurial experiences feel strongly that those experiences better prepared them than other experiences could; and (4) many leaders who are not native to Appalachia commented that even after many years they are still viewed as outsiders or "being from off".

This study has implications for leaders currently serving or aspiring to leadership roles in Appalachia, hiring managers, search committees, boards of trustees or others responsible for finding institutional leaders, leadership development programs, and scholars with an interest in rural community colleges, community colleges of Appalachia, and leadership development in community colleges.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the love of my life, my wife, Darilyn, and our beautiful daughter Claire Olivia McGraw. To Claire: You are very young now, but I hope you dust this off one day and read these words: I have loved you more than anything in this world since the moment I first held you in my arms.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter One

The higher education landscape in the United States faces many challenges that must be addressed by the individuals leading those institutions. These must be recognized, anticipated, understood, and addressed in creative ways which ensure that America has a well prepared and trained workforce. Policy issues, changing market demographics, lack of college preparation, access to higher education, the challenge to increase student success, and a sharp decline in funding for publicly funded colleges and universities are but a few of the issues which current and future leaders in higher education confront (Barr & McClellan, 2011; St. John, et al., 2013). A call from the public for increased accountability adds additional challenges such as an increased demand to coordinate with K-12 institutions, compliance with both funded and unfunded federal mandates, and gaps in degree completion among various underrepresented groups, and even questioning the long-held post-secondary tradition of institutional autonomy (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2008; Lovett, 2013; Mehta, 2001;Orrill, 2001; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997;St. John, et al., 2013).

While these are but a few of the broad issues facing college and university leaders, it is important to recognize that four year colleges and universities get much media attention because of their broad research agendas, athletic programs, and development efforts (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Community colleges, however, serve nearly half of all undergraduates in the United States and are often characterized by their commitment to access and serving those often overlooked by other sectors of higher education such as students from low-income families, underrepresented populations, students with weak academic preparation, non-native English speakers, veterans, and

non-traditionally aged students (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Hirt & Frank, 2013 ; Jurgens, 2011; Thelin. 2011; Williams, 2013). As such, community colleges face additional challenges such as questioning the sustainability of the comprehensive academic mission (Meier, 2013; Williams, 2013), moving into an era of "collaboration" (Eddy, 2013), and increasing enrollments and declining funding (Eddy, 2013; Barr & McLellan, 2011), and a leadership vacuum created by many community college presidents retiring within a short period of time (Amey, 2006; Basham & Mathur, 2010) to just name a few.

While these challenges may seem daunting, the outlook for America's rural community colleges is even more challenging. Community colleges educate 46% of all undergraduates in the United States (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015) and the majority of those community colleges, 64%, are located in rural areas (Rural Community College Alliance, 2015). Thus, most undergraduates are at community colleges and most community colleges are in rural areas. Rural community colleges face challenges which are unique to their rural environs which urban and suburban counterparts do not face (Cejda, 2012; Williams, Pennington, Couch, & Dougherty, 2007). Rural community college are further challenged by greater expectations of the rural communities they serve (Cejda, 2012). They often serve regions with high levels of illiteracy and employment, low levels of educational attainment, low incomes, and high poverty rates, (Fluharty & Scaggs, 2007; Katsinas, 2012; Murray, 2007)As such, these communities are particularly sensitive to changes in Federal Pell Grants (Katsinas, 2012). Rural community colleges are often geographically isolated, serve regions with static economies, are typically in small size, have reduced or limited economies of scale

compared to larger colleges, and face the additional difficulty of attracting skilled faculty and administrators (Eddy, 2012; Leist, 2007; Morelli, 2003)

Background of the Study

In 2005, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) conducted a study in which they identified, analyzed, and defined the leadership competencies most employed by community college leaders. The AACC sought to address the looming shortage of community college presidents by providing a framework of competencies to aid those who wish to advance to the community college presidency, search committees, and college president preparation programs. Titled *Competencies for Community College Leaders*, this report defined those competencies and characteristics that the AACC feels are crucial for a successful community college leader (American Association of Community Colleges, 2005). The competencies and their descriptions as described in the report are listed below. See Appendix A for a full description of the AACC competencies.

- Organizational Strategy
- Resource Management
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Community College Advocacy
- Professionalism

In the same report, the AACC (2005) identified five characteristics of effective community college leaders. Those characteristics are:

- Understanding and implementing the community college mission

- Effective advocacy

- Administrative skills

- Community and economic development

- Personal, interpersonal, and transformational skills

In 2013, the AACC released a second edition of the report which reinforced the findings of the 2005 study, provided a relevant context for the continued use and application of the competencies, and provided guidance for emerging leaders, new CEO's (those who are within the first three years of a presidency), and CEO's (those who have been in their presidency for three years or more).

Several researchers have extended and applied the AACC Leadership Competencies in various ways. McNair (2010) applied the competencies in a study of community college presidents in California and suggested adding strategic thinking, K-12 partnering, and fundraising as additional competencies. McNair, Duree, and Ebbers (2011) conducted a nationwide study of community college presidents who reported that they felt underprepared in areas such as resource management, collaboration, community college advocacy, resource management, and fundraising when they assumed their presidencies. A 2013 study examined the leadership competencies of community college presidents, vice-presidents, and deans in Pennsylvania found that many leaders value some competencies, such as communication, over others such as professionalism, and reflected upon how aspiring leaders could develop those skills (Boswell & Imroz, 2013).

The AACC Competencies have been further applied to studies about community college leaders' style (Boswell & Imroz, 2013; Grasmick, Davies, & Harbour, 2012;),

pathways leading to the presidency (Amey, 2013), in certain geographic regions such as the Midwest (Jacobs, 2013) or the Southern United States (Lehning, 2013) or in how these competencies can be applied to a changing higher education landscape (Eddy, 2010).

These competencies have also informed research on leadership in rural community colleges. Cejda (2012) suggested that rural community college leaders are more likely to develop these competencies through on-the-job training opportunities than through intentional leadership development programs, unlike their urban and suburban counterparts. Eddy (2013) observed that rural community colleges are in need of leaders with strong resource development and organizational strategy skills, two of which she said are the most lacking among rural community college leaders.

This study seeks to examine the AACC Leadership Competencies and Characteristics within the context of South Central Appalachia. The Appalachian Region, or "Appalachia", is described by the Appalachian Regional Commission (2016) as the region following the Appalachian Mountains from New York State to Mississippi and includes all West Virginia and parts of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Appalachia is largely rural; 42% of Appalachia is rural while only 20% of the rest of the nation is rural. Appalachian region is large at more than 1,000 miles in length and diverse as it is home to 25 million people in 420 counties of 13 states.

The Appalachian economy, once heavily dependent on industries such as mining, forestry, agriculture, and heavy industry, has broadened in recent decades to include the travel and service industries. In the past 50 years, Appalachia has seen improvements in

its poverty rate (31% in 1960 and 17% in 2013) and a reduction in the number of high-poverty counties (295 in 1960 to 90 in 2013). The Appalachian Regional Commission considers a "high-poverty" county as one with poverty rates more than 1 ½ times the national average. While these improvements have benefited the region, they have also redefined Appalachia as a region of stark economic contrast. Some communities have been able to diversify their economies while others, who have remained in a state of high-poverty since 1960 or prior, struggle to construct and maintain infrastructure like roads, water systems, sewer systems, or educational systems.

Furthermore, the Appalachian Regional Commission website (2016) recognizes that "…despite progress, Appalachia still does not enjoy the same economic vitality as the rest of the nation. Central Appalachia in particular still battles economic distress, with concentrated areas of high poverty, unemployment, poor health, and severe educational disparities. And recent economic data show that the Region has fared far worse in the current recession than the rest of the nation."

The ARC divides greater Appalachia into subregions which are geographically contiguous and relatively homogenous in terms of topography, demography, and economics (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2009). The ARC uses these subregions as means for further analysis and comparison. This study focuses on the South Central Appalachia which contains portions of the mountainous western region of Virginia, western North Carolina, and portions of Eastern and Central Tennessee. A map of all of the subregions of Appalachia, including the South Central Region, can be found in Appendix B.

Many states and regions have rural initiatives to increase educational attainment as a means to address weak regional economies. One such initiative is Virginia's "Rural Virginia Horseshoe Initiative" (RVHI). Of Virginia's 23 community colleges, 14 of them are part of the distressed "Rural Horseshoe" region. Over half of all of Virginia's Community Colleges and one-third of RVHI colleges serve economically distressed regions of Appalachia. The Virginia Community College System (2012) reports that while Virginia ranks in the top 10 states in educational attainment, this attainment is largely confined to the Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Tidewater regions. If the rest of the state, referred to as the "Rural Horseshoe" were its own state, it would be ranked 50th in the country for educational attainment. If the non-Horseshoe region were its own state, it would be ranked 2nd nationally. Appendix C contains a map and list of colleges in Virginia's Rural Horseshoe.

Given the economic disparity and observation that the Appalachian Region in Virginia, like many areas of South Central Appalachia, experiences economic, social, and educational challenges that are unique to the region, community college leaders in these areas have a particular interest in preparing future leaders of community colleges. These leaders face unique challenges. The proposed study applies the AACC Leadership Competencies within the context of South Central Appalachia in order to inform further study on the topic, assist colleges in finding qualified leaders, and helping aspiring leaders to recognize which competencies are most valuable and how they apply to community colleges in rural Appalachia. There is a gap in the literature on this topic as no other study seeks to apply the AACC Leadership Competencies to Community College Leaders in this region.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to discover 1) if rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia assessments of the leadership competencies necessary for success in their current roles are congruent with the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders and 2) the professional development experiences and formal academic preparation that rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive have contributed to their leadership successes.

Research Questions

The following guiding research questions were used to address this topic:

1. What leadership competencies do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their professional success or the successes of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

2. What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area.

3. How do 1) position within the institution, 2) professional background and academic preparation, and 3) institutional role effect leaders' perceptions of which leadership competencies have contributed to their professional success or the success of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

4. Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed?

Professional Significance

This study examined the AACC's Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders in a real-life setting by interviewing community college leaders in many of the institutions located in South Central Appalachia. The population of this study was unique in that community college presidents and vice-presidents currently practicing in community colleges in South Central Appalachia were interviewed to explore their observations, feelings, perceptions, and lived experiences of leading community colleges in South Central Appalachia. Long-standing leaders were targeted, time in their current position ranged from a few months to over 25 years.

This qualitative study utilized interviews and sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, opinions, and feelings that these leaders have towards the competencies and their application to community colleges in general and specifically in South Central Appalachia. Data were also collected via an analysis of publicly available documents such as public social media pages, institutional websites, resumes, and press releases. Qualitative research has been effectively used in similar studies in which the researchers compared the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders to the experiences of those currently leading community colleges in various settings. There is a gap in the professional literature applying the

AACC Competencies to the economic disparity between urban/suburban areas which is found in states like Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, and Florida.

This study is of value to several types of researchers and practitioners such as researchers of community colleges, researchers with an interest in rural community colleges, current community college leaders, hiring committees searching for community college leaders, and aspiring community college leaders.

Overview of Methodology

This research study utilized a qualitative approach. Hays and Singh (2012) pointed out that "Qualitative research is the study of a phenomenon or research topic in context. Phenomena tend to be exploratory in nature, as researchers examine topics that have not been investigated or need to be investigated from a new angle" (p.4). Specifically, this study uses a phenomenological approach since the goal is to examine the lived experiences and opinions of participants. Similar qualitative approaches to research have been successfully applied to the study of leadership within community colleges (Boswell & Imroz, 2013; Jacobs, 2013; Lehning, 2103; Grasmick, Davies, & Harbour, 2012; McNair, 2010).

Community college presidents and vice-presidents at institutions in the South Central Appalachian Region were invited to participate in interviews during the summer of 2016. All interviews were either be conducted in person or via telephone. There are 28 community colleges in the South Central Appalachian region. The target sample size was 10 leaders or until the point of information saturation. Interviews continued until the point of information saturation was reached. 10 presidents and eight vice presidents were

interviewed, which provided a balanced mix of the two positions. An interview protocol

was be followed to strengthen validity and trustworthiness. Data were collected through

interviews and analyzed through the processes of transcription, bracketing, and memoing.

Delimitations

Delimitations, as defined by Roberts (2010) refers to "…the boundaries of your

study. It is the way to indicate to the reader how you narrowed your study's scope" (p

138). Delimitations for this study included the qualitative perspective of the study and the

limited time frame for data collection and analysis (May-September, 2016). This study

only conducted interviews with and collected data on with community college presidents

and vice-presidents from public, two-year colleges located within South Central

Appalachia. Data collection followed an interview protocol and was conducted by only

one researcher. Responses to interview questions are only reflective of individual

participants' view of leadership competencies exhibited by effective community college

leaders.

Researcher's Relationship to the Study

Hays and Singh (2012) recognized the importance of the qualitative researcher

being self-aware as to their relationship with the study and with research participants. In

this study, it is important to note I, as the sole researcher, during the time this research

was collected and analyzed, was employed at a small rural college located in South

Central Appalachia. As such, the researcher had an existing professional relationship with

some of the research participants. While this may have helped the researcher to gain

entrée into the field and aid in participation, some biases may be present. I am a native

and life-long resident of Appalachia and am currently employed at a community college in Virginia. I have held leadership positions in professional organizations associate with the Virginia Community College System such as the Council of Deans and Directors, the Student Development Task Force, the Student Success Leadership Initiative, and others.

Definition of Key Terms

American Association of Community Colleges or AACC: Professional organization which represents "…over 1200 two-year, associate's degree granting institution and more than 13 million students…" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016).

Appalachia: **"**The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 205,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population" (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016).

Appalachian Regional Commission or ARC: **"**The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair, who is appointed by the president." (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016).

*Appalachian Subregion: "*The Appalachian subregions are contiguous regions of relatively homogeneous characteristics (topography, demographics, and economics)

within Appalachia. This classification was developed in the early history of the ARC and provides a basis for subregional analysis. ARC revised the classification in November 2009 by dividing the Region into smaller parts for greater analytical detail and by using current economic and transportation data" (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2009).

*Community College Leader***:** In many studies, including the AACC's Competencies for Community College Leaders "community college leader" refers to the Chief Executive Officer of a college. In this study, however, leader is defined as either a president or vice-president.

Culture or Organizational Culture: There are many definitions of culture and organizational culture in the professional literature (Martin, 2002). For this study, "organizational culture" refers to a shared experience that is distinctive and unique to a particular context. Schein (2004, p. 1) describes culture as "…a dynamic phenomenon that surrounds us at all times…created by our interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior."

Economically Distressed: A designation used by the Appalachian Regional Commission to describe counties in Appalachia who are below the national average in three economic indicators: three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. The results are summed and averaged to give each county a composite score. The scores are then ranked and designated as "economically distressed", "at-risk", "competitive", or "attainment". (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2016).

Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System or IPEDS: **"**IPEDS is the Integrated

Postsecondary Education Data System. It is a system of interrelated surveys conducted

annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics

(NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and

vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. The

Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in

federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation

rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid."

(Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System, 2016).

Professional Success: While success can be defined in many ways, for the context of this

study success or professional success refers to ascending to a presidency or vice

presidency within the administration of a community college.

Rural Community College Alliance or RCCA: Professional organization which seeks to

"…advance rural America through an active program of advocacy,

convening stakeholders, leveraging resources, and as a clearinghouse for best practices

and research" (Rural Community College Alliance, 2016).

Rural Locale: defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as either fringe,

distant, or remote:

> Fringe: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles
>
> from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or
>
> equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster

Distant: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less

than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural

territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10

miles from an urban cluster

Remote: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an

urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban

cluster (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Rural Virginia Horseshoe: "Drawing a line from Virginia's Eastern shore westward across Southside to Southwest Virginia, and then up the Shenandoah Valley, you trace an arc that represents 75 percent of the Commonwealth's geography, where half million people have less than a high school education. As a result, Virginia ranks 31st nationally in the percentage of residents with at least a high school equivalency credential" (Virginia Community College System, 2016)

Rural Virginia Horseshoe Initiative: Initiative funded by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education to address low educational attainment rates within Virginia's Rural Horseshoe (Virginia Community College System, 2012).

South Central Appalachia: A subregion of Appalachia containing portions of Western mountainous regions in Virginia, Eastern Tennessee, and Western North Carolina (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2009)

Suburban Locale: Defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as either large, midsize, or small.

Large: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with

population of 250,000 or more

Midsize: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with

population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000

Small: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with

population less than 100,000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Town: Defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as either fringe, distant, or

remote.

Fringe: Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an

urbanized area

Distant: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or

equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area

Remote: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized

area (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Urban or City Locale: Defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as either

large, midsize, or small.

Large: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population

of 250,000 or more

Midsize: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population

less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000

Small: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population

less than 100,000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Virginia Community College System or VCCS: Refers to the 23 community colleges

serving the state of Virginia and administrative support offices (Virginia Community

College System, 2016).

Summary

In summary, it is apparent that community colleges are an increasingly important

sector of higher education and that the majority of community colleges are located in

rural areas. The leaders of these rural institutions face challenges which are unique to

their rural setting. While the AACC has provided a framework to assist future leaders and

institutions with how to select and develop leaders, this framework needs application to

rural settings. In Virginia, there is economic disparity between the Northern, Richmond,

Charlottesville, Roanoke, and Tidewater regions as compared with the remaining Rural

Horseshoe Region and the challenges faced by colleges in Appalachia. This study

addresses a gap in the professional literature and can assist practitioners leading and

preparing to lead institutions in South Central Appalachia by seeking a deeper

understanding of the competencies required for successful leadership in this context.

Findings may be then generalized to other economically disadvantaged rural regions

within the United States. The next chapter provides and in-depth literature review of

leadership theory, leadership in higher education in general, leadership in community

colleges specifically, and then focuses on leadership in the South Central Appalachian

Region.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to discover 1) if rural community college leaders' assessments of the leadership competencies necessary for success in their current roles are congruent with the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders and 2) the professional development experiences that rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive have contributed to their leadership successes.

This chapter reviews the literature related to the topic for this study and includes the following sections: a brief discussion on leadership theory, leadership in higher education, the history and mission of community colleges in the United States, community college leadership, and rural community college leadership.

Leadership

Definitions of Leadership

The word "leadership" is not easily defined or described. In *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Northouse (2013) noted that while each of us has an intuitive sense of our perception of leadership, it is nearly impossible to reach consensus on a common definition. Despite the subjective nature of trying to describe such an abstract term, there are common themes: it can be described as a process, it involves influence, groups, and the pursuit of common goals. Still, others describe leadership much more broadly: "Both art and leadership involve a mysterious amalgam of technique and inspiration" (Shugart, 2013, p. 60).

The Study of Leadership

In *The Art and Science of Leadership: Explorations into the Classics* (Bratton, Grint, & Nelson, 2008*)* the authors explained that the study of leadership is as old as civilization itself and is represented in every culture that has developed written language. This review focused on leadership theory and study in the United States since about 1900 and was not intended to provide a universally accepted definition or comprehensive evaluation on the topic.

Northouse (2013) described how general views and definitions of leadership in the United States have changed since around 1900. In the early part of the century domination, or the ability to command obedience, was a common theme. The 1930's saw traits, both physical and personality, as the foci of leadership definitions, but also recognized the attitudes and beliefs of a group may also affect leaders. The 1940's saw the distinction between persuasion and leadership by coercion. The 1950's and 1960's focused on leader/group interaction and relationships, the pursuit of shared goals, and leadership generally defined by a group's effectiveness. In the 1970's and 1980's the ideas of organizational behavior, shared organizational goals, leadership in the context of competition and conflict. This time period as when leadership as an academic discipline began to garner public attention.

Selected Contemporary Leadership Theories

Contemporary leadership theories can be described as either trait-based or process-based (Northouse, 2013). Trait based leadership theories tend to describe physical or personality traits of the leader while process-based leadership focuses on the

interaction between leaders and followers. People either possess these traits or they do not. Process-based leadership theories assume that leadership is a skill which can be learned, practiced, nurtured, and developed. Foci tend to be on the relationship between leaders and followers and that each is affected by the other (Bryman, 1992; Jago, 1982; Northouse, 2013). Northouse (2013) describes groups of popular theories as approaches and, for the sake of simplicity, the term approach will be used in this review.

The Trait Approach to leadership theory is a leader-centric approach which evolved out of so called "Great Man" theories which focused on the physical and personality traits of leaders considered great in the early 20th century. The premise is that few people possess the traits to become great leaders and these traits could be studied to differentiate leaders and followers. Trait theorists seek to identify and quantify traits and characteristics which are either present or absent, but are rarely learned or developed. Examples from various theorists include intelligence, dominance, self-confidence, influence, motivation, or emotional stability (Bass 1990; Jago, 1982, Northouse, 2013). While the popularity of trait leadership of leadership theorists has waned in recent years, it is still evident. A contemporary example of trait theory is evident in Van, Ahuja, and Van's *Naturally Selected* (2011) who posits that the human brain is predisposed by hundreds of thousands of years of evolution to follow those who exhibit certain traits.

Other leader-centric approaches include the Skills Approach and the Style Approach. Similar to the Trait Approach, the Skills Approach to leadership is leader-centric and related to traits and characteristics, but focuses on skills which can be learned and developed instead of being innate to the leader. Skills theorists seek to describe the attributes and behaviors of effective leaders and recognizes that the skills needed for

success could depend in large part on the position the leader holds (Bass, 1990; Katz, 1955). The Style Approach combines the leadership traits of a leader with how they act when dealing with constituents. In doing this, the Style Approach recognizes that style is effected by context, subordinates, and the relationship, it begins to shift the discussion from purely leader focused to including the behavior of followers. A differentiation between task behaviors and relationship behaviors is noted (Northouse, 2013).

Related to the Style Approach, but with more of a contextual focus, are Contingency Leadership Theories which recognize that leadership depends on many contextual factors including the leader and the followers. Contingency theories suggests that the context of the situation dictate the type of leadership style that should be employed. The ability of a leader to recognize the skills and abilities of subordinates and adapt to their needs is important (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1985; Northouse, 2013). Contingency Leadership Theories such as Path-Goal Theory, are related to Style or Situational Approaches in that they focus on the leader's ability to motivate followers to achieve a common goal while recognizing the need for the leaders to recognize and adapt to the context. These theories move away from being solely leader-centric into more of a follower or constituent centered approach. (Northouse, 2013).Path-Goal Theory, Leader-Member Exchange, and Normative Decision Theory and Situational Leadership Theory (Bratton, et al. 2008).

Other schools of thought are concerned with the development of leaders. Servant Leadership is an approach to leadership in which the leader consciously wishes to serve a greater good, intentionally places the good of constituents over personal interests, and actively works to develop followers, improve organizational outcomes, and have a

positive impact on society. Robert Greenleaf (2002), who is credited with founding the theory in the early 1970's describes a servant leader as such:

> It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. The conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such, it will be a later choice to serve-after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them are the shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27).

Similarly, the relatively new idea of Authentic Leadership has intrapersonal (Chan, 2005), interpersonal (Eagly, 2005), and developmental considerations (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). "Our work forms us more powerfully than we form it" reflects the developmental and intrapersonal nature of Authentic Leadership as described by Dr. Sandy Shugart, Authentic Leadership theorist and college president (Shugart, 2013, p. 21). Servant leadership and Authentic are often described in personal terms which are difficult to measure, very subjective, and highly personal such as love, service, or hope (Greenleaf, 2002; Northouse, 2013; Shugart, 2013).

In contemporary leadership literature, some researchers choose from various leadership theories and approaches in an attempt to frame leadership in a new way. For example, Kouzes and Posner (2007) describe "The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership". Their five practices are: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.

Social and Emotional Intelligence

Social and emotional intelligence, or EQ as it is sometimes abbreviated, refers to the work of Salovory and Mayer and popularized in the 1990's in Goleman's (1995) book *Emotional Intelligence*. Golman expanded upon Salavory and Mayer (1990) who defined emotional intelligence as a skill of self-awareness and managing relationships and emotions of others. Golman (1995) suggested that emotional intelligence can be learned, developed, and strengthened and is vital for the success of contemporary senior managers (Bolman & Deal, 2008).While still an emerging field (Northouse, 2013), emotional intelligence is often cited as a skill which is necessary for competent modern leaders leading in complex organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Goleman, 1995; Northouse, 2013; Smith & Kelly, 1997).

Transformational Leadership is a concept in which a leader relies heavily on emotional intelligence and, as Bratton, et al., (2008) describe it, is not a process. Rather, they describe is as a leadership style in which a leader inspires followers to pursue a goal which is greater than themselves. The benefits of organizational success then belong to all followers and the leader combined and the leader inspires followers to work toward a greater good. Northouse (2013, p. 194) describes transformational leaders in terms such as "idealized influence", "inspirational motivation", "intellectual stimulation", " and "individualized consideration".

Organizational Culture and Cultural Leadership Models

Schein (2004, p.2) recognized the deep connection and interdependence of leadership and organizational culture. His approach is a leader-centric one: "…I believe

that cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group…The culture now defines leadership…" He also recognizes that the term "culture", much like the term "leadership" is difficult to define. However, for this study, Schein's reference to culture and organizational culture as referring to the general climate, practices, values, and relationships with people. In his book, he recognizes some of issues surrounding adapting to and assimilating to organizational culture, discusses assumptions about managing internal integration, and discusses common organizational typologies and how they view and interpret culture.

Similarly, Martin (2002) recognizes the difficulty in defining organizational culture, but presents organizational cultural leadership theories. He identifies three broad approaches to the study of organizational culture: single-perspective theories, three-perspective theories, and claims of neutrality. Martin describes single-perspective leadership theories which view the study of culture as through one of three perspectives: integration, differentiation, or fragmentation. Three-perspective theories simply combine integration, differentiation, and fragmentation into one element. He goes on to discuss the idea that researchers' views of organizational culture are effected by their own experiences, beliefs, and assumptions. Rather than striving for a value neutral study of culture, he advocates for defining one's own interests and beliefs in a way which is similar to the qualitative research method practice of bracketing or epoche.

The next section focuses the broad topic of leadership into the context of leadership in higher education in the United States. Then, it is further focuses to leadership styles in higher education, community college leadership, and then leadership at rural community colleges. Special attention is paid to the unique challenges facing

rural community colleges and their leaders. Finally, further information on the South Central Appalachian region is provided to set the context for the study.

Leadership in Higher Education

Recognizing the Need for Strong College Leaders

In the United States, colleges and universities are often led by presidents and external boards, which is a trait held over from colonial era universities:

> This element in the structure and accountability of the colleges was an innovation that had enduring consequences. One could argue that the creation and refinement of this structure- the external board combined with a strong college president- is a legacy of the colonial colleges that has defined and shaped higher education in the United States to this day (Thelin, 2011, p. 12).

Today, the need for strong leaders to guide our institutions of higher education can be framed by discussing some of the challenges facing leaders of institutions of higher education. In *Public policy and higher education: Reframing strategies for preparation, access, and college success* (St. John, et al., 2013), the authors explored matters which are important for institutional leaders to recognize, anticipate, and understand while planning to lead their institutions into the future. The authors identified challenges like political and policy issues (such as increased reporting and accountability measures), changing market forces, lack of college preparation, access to higher education, and student success/degree completion. They cited many state system case-studies such as California, Minnesota, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, and North Carolina and used these cases to illustrate some of these

political and policy challenges. This review is not intended to present a comprehensive discourse on all challenges facing higher education; its purpose is to present an overview of some challenges which face institutional leaders.

The tradition of institutional autonomy is now challenged by a call for increased accountability. Proponents of increased accountability suggest that institutions ought to be held more accountable for their graduation and retention rates (St. John, et al., 2013; Mehta, 2014, Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Increasing accountability has exposed other challenges such as underprepared students, lack of coordination with K-12 educational systems, compliance with unfunded federal mandates, and gaps in degree completion (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2008; St. John, et al., 2013; Lovett, 2013; Orrill, 2001).

Similarly, a trend of declining state appropriations to all sectors of higher education continue to change how institutional leaders fulfill the missions of their institutions (Barr & McClellan, 2011; Eddy, 2010; Lovett, 2013; Thelin, 2008). Barr and McClellan (2011) explore the modern fiscal context in higher education in the United States. They pay special attention to the need for institutional leaders to make budget decisions that support their institutions mission, along with managing the budget cycle, auxiliary and capital budgets, and budget fluctuations. The recent economic recession, increasing competition for funds, unfunded mandates, rising cost of education, increased competition for faculty and staff, and increased competition for students are all counted among the challenges identified as facing institutional leaders. Declining appropriations and increased accountability has led to a nationwide shift from enrollment based funding models to performance based funding schemes,

but research is mixed as to whether these performance based funding models significantly improve student completion (Hillman, 2014; McKeown-Moak, 2013; St. John, et al., 2013). Other changing market forces such as rising tuition costs (Abel & Dietz, 2014; Grodsky & Jones, 2007), declining student aid (Katsinas, 2012), and increased student debt (Razaki, et al., 2014) cause students to reconsider if college is worth the cost. These factors strengthen the call for increased accountability, effect college enrollment patterns and present challenges that contemporary leaders in higher education must be prepared to confront (St. John, et al., 2013).

Unfunded mandates related to a variety of topics including, but not limited to, assessment (Erwin & DeFillipo, 2010), emergency management (Farris & McCreight, 2011), the cost to implement federal legislation (Hunter & Gehring, 2005), the Federal Clery Act (Janosik & Gregory, 2009), and regional accreditation (Powell, 2013) take time, energy, and money to earn compliance. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are examples of Federal Legislation. Compliance issues are ever present not just with these Federal mandates, but also with others such as Title IV financial aid programs which have significant administration and record keeping requirements (Lovett, 2012).

In *Public Policy and Higher Education: Reframing strategies for preparation, access, and student success*, St. John et al. (2013), suggested that that the skills gap between high schools graduates and college-ready student is just starting to get the attention it deserves. They pointed out that the previous focus of the national

discourse was on access to college, but a gap is not evident in college participation rates from both the majority and underrepresented populations. Both the U.S. Department of Education and individual states have attempted to adjust high school curricula to close this gap, but with mixed results.

While advances linked to these policy changes are noted, gaps in achievement remain, particularly among African Americans and Latinos/as compared to white students. Misalignment of K-12 and Higher Education continues to be a challenge. Related to the idea that many students are underprepared is the discussion of access to higher education in the United States: "The history of higher education in the United States has been a story of increasing access. From the Morrill Acts to the GI Bill, from the Truman Commission Report to the Higher Education Act, higher education has moved from serving primarily wealthy white males to providing opportunities for people of every age, ethnicity, race, and professional background" (Williams, 2013).

Friedman (2005) noted that the connection between access, public finance policies, and inequalities is well documented. St. John, et al., (2013) explained that the political ideology related to access to higher education in the United States can be described in four phases, of which we remain in the fourth:

1. Colonial America-Civil War: Characterized by limited access to higher education and few proposals for public colleges.

2. Civil War-World War II: Public and private colleges developed and expanded, but access still limited.

3. World War II-1980's: Period of expanding access in the United States due to enrolling Veterans, and the Baby-Boom generation

4. 1980's-today: Shift towards universal access when the need for
   everyone to have some post-secondary training is important.

Phase one saw the founding of Harvard College in 1636, the first university in the new world (Thelin, 2011). Phase two may be defined by federal initiatives and legislation such as the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 which provided funding for land-grant colleges in every state and established what would become known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This era also saw the founding of Joliet Junior College as a preparatory college. Two year colleges would catch one growing by more than 740% between 1963 and 2006. Community colleges are often characterized by their open access mission (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Williams, 2013).

Phase three, which began post World War II, produced the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (The Montgomery GI Bill). The GI Bill which provided educational assistance to military veterans returning from World War II, during which time colleges and universities saw drastic increases in enrollment. In 1947, the Truman Commission Report recognized the need for post-secondary training and suggested that 50% of Americans could benefit from it (Lattuca &Stark, 2009; Thelin, 2011). During this same phase, we see another groundbreaking piece of legislation: the Higher Education Act of 1965 which provided federal assistance to eligible citizens based on income, not military service. A 1972 reauthorization of that act included women and led to yet another milestone in college access and, as a result, college enrollments (St. John, et al., 2013; Lattuca & Stark, 2009; Thelin, 2011). In phase four, our current phase using this model, is defined by the need for all adults to pursue education or training post high school completion (St. John, et al.,

2013) as a way for the United States to respond to globalization and the disparity in educational attainment, training, and skills that still exists (Friedman, 2005).

An important issue which is closely related to access is retention and degree completion. While the Morrill Acts, first two Higher Education Acts, GI Bill and other initiatives focused on access to higher education, there have also been federal initiatives which target retention and degree completion. The 1964 Higher Education Act also created TRiO programs. Starting in 1964 with Upward Bound, a program to encourage college access and retention among low income families, expanded to include Talent Search, additional Upward Bound Programs, Student Support Services, and McNair Scholars programs which were all designed to target and provide support, both social and fiscal, to low-income, first generation, and underrepresented populations (St. John et al., 2013). While TRiO programs have been successful, institutional leaders are challenged to expand support for those students locally (Petty, 2014).

While these federal program have encouraged tracking persistence among program persistence, the climate of increased accountability pressures colleges and universities to track and improve completion rates and degree completion for all students. Graduation and persistence rates for four-year colleges is showing recent improvements while community colleges report persistence rates which are considered very low (St. John, et al., 2013). In fact, some researchers have suggested that historically low completion rates of community colleges contribute to the argument that the mission of the comprehensive community cannot support open

access, a comprehensive curriculum, and have strong completion rates (Williams, 2013).

The previous paragraphs identify only a very small number of some of the challenges facing leaders in higher education in the coming years. As noted, it is certainly not a comprehensive list. Researchers have identified many other challenges facing all of higher education, including an increasingly global education system (McFarlane & Donovan, 2011), rising tuition costs (Kimball, 2014), rising textbook costs, the call for open education resources (Hilton III, Robinson, Wiley, & Ackerman, 2014), compliance and record keeping, governing board management issues, threat assessment and safety concerns, changing technology in the classroom, changing role of faculty and staff (Levin, 2013; Brown & Leavitt, 2013), Greek organizations (Sasso, 2013), responding to GLBQT community concerns (Rahimi & Lison, 2013), privatization (Pittman & Burnett, 2013), increasing popularity of from for-profit colleges (Nuckols, 2013), and the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses (Bedera & Nordmyer, 2015).

Leadership Styles in Higher Education

Some have suggested that particular leadership styles are in more demand and more effective than others in leading America's colleges and universities. *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education for Social Change* (Astin, Astin, & Kellog Foundation, 2000*)* is a report commissioned by the Kellogg Foundation which posits that leaders in higher education should also be concerned with advancing the social good and advocates for specific leadership styles to achieve this goal. The authors of this year 2000 report begin by explaining the need for strong leadership on campuses and argues

that leadership skills have been in decline for several years leading up to the report and, as a result, advocates rethinking leadership practices in higher education. Transformative (also known as transformational) leadership is identified as the most effective leadership style and the effects of transformative leadership on institutions by faculty, student affairs professionals and presidents/administrators are discussed. Brown (2010) argued that Historically Black Colleges and Universities face unique cultural challenges, are often the victims of bad press, and suggests that successful HBCU presidents exhibit transformational or transactional leadership styles.

Similarly, Eddy and VanDerLinden (2006) examined positional or "hero" leadership descriptions and explore whether that model is being replaced by different styles or definitions in higher education. Their research is based on the self-described leadership styles of administrators in higher education and examines the dynamics of gender in leadership, leadership at various levels in the organization, and implications for higher education. This study recognized that leadership in higher education is evolving, fluid, and highly situational. Others have noted the lack of research on the effectiveness of charismatic leadership on organizational performance, but recognize that it is highly effective in increasing applications and fundraising (Bestedo, Samuels, & Kleinman, 2014; Nicholson, 2007). Research also suggests that transformational college leaders also positively affect the job satisfaction of teaching faculty (Bateh & Haylinger, 2014).

Other research focuses on further issues of higher education leadership. Critics of higher education leader preparation programs at colleges and universities and have suggested that these programs could be strengthened by integrating practice and theory and by intentional assessment of the programs (Freeman, Jr, 2012). Lack of diversity

among college and university presidents is discussed by Alexander (2010) whose qualitative research examines the relative low number of African American women in leadership positions in academia. Specifically, the roles of president, vice-president, provost, and dean are examined. The author suggested that self-imposed restrictions on academic potential, self-efficacy, confidence, and other internal factors play a role along with environmental and cultural factors. The paper calls upon all qualitative data, historical accounts, and interviews to compare, analyze, and synthesize experiences.

Amey (2006) described leadership in higher education as an ongoing process which is subject to organizational, contextual, and changing demands on the position and the institution. Her research recognized that a relationship between the cognitive development of both followers and leaders exists and explored the dynamics created by that relationship. Topics of her study include the sharing leadership responsibilities and how to leverage the leadership development process as a means to develop meaningful and long lasting change within the organization.

Community College Leadership

This section provides context by briefly discussing the historical context in which community colleges were founded and some legislation which contributed to their growth. Then, a brief overview of the mission of community colleges is presented. Background information which helps to frame the following section which discusses some important current events facing community college leaders is addressed and briefly expanded upon.

Abbreviated History of Community Colleges

The American community college was conceptualized, in the late 1800's by faculty and administrators at the University of Michigan, the University of Georgia, and the University of Minnesota who sought to separate the burdensome first two years of instruction from upper division baccalaureate and graduate level work (Jurgens, 2010). In the 1920's, William Harper Rainey of the University of Chicago had established Joliet Junior College, which is widely considered the first true community college, as a way to deliver the first two years of a bachelor's degree. This early mission was soon expanded to include technical or vocational training options (Thelin, 2011).

Williams (2013) pointed out that prior to advent of community colleges, higher education was predominantly reserved for white males from wealthy families. A national push to increase access to higher education in the form of legislative action such as the Morrill Act, the GI Bill, the Truman Commission Report, and the Higher Education Acts opened the door to higher education for many traditionally underserved groups. Community colleges embraced the idea of access to higher education for all and it remains a core part of the comprehensive community college's mission still today (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Jurgens, 2011; Thelin. 2011; Williams, 2013). Vaughan (2006) reports that community colleges passionately embraced the "access" portion of their mission and that, combined with these historical events, contributed to rapid growth in both the number of community colleges in existence and the number of students served by community colleges. The GI Bill provided federal financial assistance to servicemen and women returning from World War II for education and training and many of them chose community colleges. The Truman Commission was interested in seeing if the success of

the GI Bill could be brought to a nation-wide scale. The Truman Commission Report

paved the way for other ground-breaking education-centered legislation such as

Kennedy's "New Frontier" and "Johnson's Great Society". The 1972 Amendment to the

Higher Education Act implemented an entitlement financial aid program which was later

renamed the Pell Grant. Fulfilling a Truman Commission promise, the Pell Grant

subsidized the cost of higher education for anyone who met the income requirements,

regardless of military service (Thelin, 2008).

The combination of increased availability of funding for students and the

community colleges' commitment to access led to a period of explosive growth for

community colleges. In the late 1960's, a new community college opened every week

(Floyd, Haley, Eddy, & Antczak, 2009). The growth was sustained. Enrollment at

community colleges grew by 741% between 1965 and 2006, a rate which easily outpaced

growth at both public and private colleges and universities. Today, community colleges

remain committed to access and serving the underserved by serving a more diverse

student population than any other sector of higher education (Williams, 2013). Cohen and

Brawer (2008) attributed this dramatic increase in enrollment to several other factors as

well, including: population growth, increased availability of financial aid, and increased

participation in higher education by women, older students, low ability students, and

minorities. "…to an institution that tries to offer something for everyone in the

community, everyone is potentially a student" (p. 45).

Mission of the Comprehensive Community College

Community colleges, while often characterized by their commitment to access

(Thelin, 2008), actually have a very complex mission. Vaughan (2008) described a tri-

fold mission which includes access, comprehensive course offerings, and community building. Access refers to an institutional commitment to serve the needs of all students who have the ability to benefit from college instruction. This commitment includes keeping tuition affordable, serving students from underrepresented groups, and offering a comprehensive curriculum which serves the needs of all students.

The curricular mission, as described by Cohen and Brawer (2008), traditionally include the following functions:

- Academic transfer programs which represent the traditional junior college approach of providing the first two years of instruction for students seeking baccalaureate degrees at –year colleges or universities.

- Vocational-technical programs which are designed to teach technical skills which lead directly to employment.

- Continuing education recognizes that community members may have educational interests which are needed for workforce development or as personal interest and may not be part of a curricular offering at the college.

- Providing developmental education which seeks to serve academically underprepared students.

- A commitment to community services allows students and community members to serve the community in which the college is located.

In Meier's (2013) chapter in the edited text *Understanding Community Colleges*, the author explored the evolving mission of the American community college by defining its core academic components (transfer, vocational, developmental, general education, community education, and workforce development). Meier provided a conceptual

framework for the traditional mission and explained how it was developed and has

evolved over time in the context of social, economic, and political transitions. This

chapter is valuable to this study in that it provides historical context, briefly discusses the

mission of rural community colleges, and suggests that future community college leaders

must decide how the mission will change and if the traditional comprehensive mission is

still relevant and practical.

Eddy (2013) identified and described five distinct "management eras" in the

evolution of community college, and community college leadership:

- 1900-30's "Bureaucratic Era"- Eddy describes this time period as dealing with

  the political and economic challenges which gave birth to the community

  college. She recognizes challenges related to equal opportunity, education as a

  vehicle for social mobility, changing technology, and the idea that education

  creates social capital.

- the 1940's-50's "Patriarchic Era"- This time period saw the G.I. Bill and

  recognized colleges as "Democracy's College" (Diekhoff, 1950). Various

  legislative acts paved the way for the dramatic growth to come.

- 1960's-70's "Unionization Era"- Eddy characterizes this management era by

  recognizing that a more authoritative leadership style evolved from rapid and

  unprecedented growth in enrollment.

- 1980's-1990's "Shared Governance Era"- Faculty responded to the heavy-

  handed leadership style cultivated in the 1960's and 1970's by calling for

  increased unionization, shared governance, and collaborative leadership.

This time period saw declining resources and calls for increased accountability.

- 2000-present "Collaboration Era". State allocations continue to decline even while enrollment growth continues, leading to increasing reliance on middle-managers, and the need for college leaders to be savvy fundraisers. In the current era of declining state appropriations, some scholars debate whether the current mission is sustainable (Williams, 2013).

Selected Current Issues Facing Community Colleges

This section expands on a previous section by considering some of the modern challenges facing community colleges and their leaders. While there are many challenges facing community college leaders, this section discusses three: declining state appropriations, an evolving institution and mission, and a retiring generation of community college presidents.

Perhaps the most important challenge facing leaders in all of higher education is a recent sharp decline in state funding (Barr & McCellan, 2011; St. John, et al., 2013; Palmer, 2013). Palmer (2013) suggested that the current funding model in most states evolved after World War II when community college enrollment began to increase due to an increased need to serve returning veterans. States were given the responsibility of developing funding models to support higher education as well as many of services for the public good. He reported that in 2008-2009 state support for community colleges nationwide equated about 30% of college support.

The Great Recession of 2008-2009 was a turning point for all state funded or assisted colleges which precipitated a decline both in state funding for higher education

and state scholarship dollars awarded to individual students. The recession also led to a
dramatic increase in Federal Pell Grant recipients. As the economy suffered, tax bases
were affected and competition for state funds among colleges and universities stiffened
(Barr & McClellan, 2011). Declining tax revenues and an increased sense of
accountability of how state funds are spent are forcing some colleges to rethink past
budget models in favor of performance based funding. As of 2013, 29 states had adopted
performance based funding programs which require increased reporting and links funding
to achievement levels such as graduation and persistence. While increasing in popularity,
there is still some debate as to whether performance based funding plans positively affect
graduation and persistence rates (St. John, et al., 2013).

One way in which colleges make up for declining and increased competition is
through fundraising, but the same economic conditions which reduce state funding
negatively affect the ability of donors to donate (Barr & McClellan, 2011). While
fundraising has been practiced by colleges for many years (Cohen & Brawer, 2008),
community colleges with small staffs and limited resources are not as successful at it as
large four-year colleges and universities (Bucci & Waters, 2014).

Earlier, curricular mission of community colleges was examined. While these are
accepted as the basic tenets of the traditional community college, it is important to note
that missions among institutions are evolving and adapting to the economic and political
landscape. There is discussion, both among proponents and critics, that community
college missions have grown to be too encompassing, arguing that they can no longer
attempt to be "All things to all people" (Williams, 2009). St. John, et al., (2013)
suggested that current events are changing higher education, community colleges

included. In fact, the recent cuts in state funding have forced some community colleges, such as those in Florida and California, to limit enrollments. Similarly, it has been suggested that the expansion into early high school initiatives (such as dual enrollment and career coaching) and offering baccalaureate degrees will reclassify some colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Gonzalez, 2007 ; VCCS, 2008) Reclassified or not, the debate is simple. On one hand, early high school initiatives and the community college baccalaureate are praised as avenues which increase access, shorten the path to a credential, and serve an important need of these colleges' service regions (Gonzalez, 2007; Pretlow & Wathington, 2014). On the other hand, critics argue that these initiatives amount to little more than mission creep (Pluviose, 2008).

There is much literature which addresses an expected leadership vacuum left by an entire generation of retiring community college presidents and some leaders are concerned about the potential pool of administrators to fill those vacancies and differing views on how to best fill this leadership void. Some researchers suggest that the changing landscape of higher education will facilitate community college leaders from non-traditional backgrounds such as business and industry, fundraising and development, risk-management, or budgeting (Strom, Sanchez, & Downey-Schilling, 2011). Many argue that succession planning, strategic team building, or grow-your-own leader programs are necessary for colleges to have a roster of skilled administrators from which to promote and hire (Amey, 2006; Basham & Mathur, 2010). In 2009, Betts, Urias, and Chavez (2009) predicted a wave of retiring presidents of the baby boom generation, foreseeing a leadership void left by 84% of sitting community college presidents retiring between 2009 and 2016. The new generation of community college presidents should be aware of

changing demographics of community college students. The authors noted that the proportion of minority community college presidents has not increased at the rate that student bodies have. To address this disparity, they recommend that colleges define clear career paths for aspiring presidents, provide ample professional development opportunities for middle managers, and make institutional commitments to succession planning and increasing diversity.

To help address these needs, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) developed a set of six leadership competencies to assist institutions in finding qualified individuals and to assist those who aspire to a community college president with their leadership development (AACC, 2005). Those competencies are discussed in more detail below.

The American Association of Community Colleges Leadership Competencies

The American Association of Community Colleges (2005) established a set of leadership competencies which are essential to current and future community college leaders to address this leadership void and a pending trend of retiring community college presidents. Their competencies were developed to serve three purposes: aid in the leadership development of future community college leaders, provides leadership development programs with curricular guidelines, and advises human resources officers with direction for hiring and recruiting leaders. The research method included surveying 125 participants in AACC leadership summits. Each competency was listed along with a handful of illustrations to describe the competency within the context of a modern community college. The AACC's Leadership Competencies are:

1. Organizational Strategy

2. Resource Management

3. Communication

4. Collaboration

5. Community College Advocacy

6. Professionalism

Ottenritter (2012) provided historic and developmental overview of the AACC competencies, the relationship with the Kellogg Foundation, and the research study that produced them. The reader should note that Ottenritter was on the research team which developed the competencies and later served in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) as the Director of Professional Development.

In a 2010 qualitative study, the author interviewed leaders in the California Community College System about their perceptions of the competencies and how well they think doctoral programs use these competencies to develop future leaders. The leaders ranked the six competencies. Organizational strategy and resource management were reported as the two most important competencies followed by collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. Additionally, the respondents had the option to add additional competencies. Issues such as strategic thinking, K-12 partnerships, and fundraising were reported as being important, but not in the original list developed by the AACC (McNair, 2010). A similar 2011 study used national data collected community college presidents to examine where they perceive gaps in preparing future community college presidents and how to address those gaps. The article used the AACC leadership competencies as a framework and found that many

community college presidents felt that they were most underprepared in resource management, collaboration, and community college advocacy, and resource management and fundraising. The presidents suggested that aspiring presidents seek out professional development and on-the-job experiences which to help prepare aspiring presidents for resource management and fundraising (McNair, Duree, & Ebbers 2011).

Community College Leaders' Style

Boswell and Imroz (2013) recently conducted a study of community college presidents, vice-presidents, and deans working in community colleges in Pennsylvania to assess these leaders' view on the competencies and how they are developed. While in agreement with the AACC Competencies, they found that participants valued "communication" more than "professionalism". Also, light was shed on how these leaders' felt these competencies were developed. For example, they found that the "organizational strategy" competency was developed through graduate programs, job assignments, workshops, and increasing responsibilities. "Communication" was developed through feedback, personal reflection, coaching, and networking.

The earlier referenced study by McNair, DuRee, and Ebbers (2011) asked community college presidents "What do you wish you had done differently to prepare for community college leadership, knowing what you know now?" Presidents responded by providing feedback on each competency and identified gaps in their skill sets when they were new presidents. For example, for the "resource development" competency, a president suggested that more work experience in budgeting, human resources, and overseeing major construction projects would have been beneficial. Similarly, presidents commented

that a greater familiarity of local and state level government would have been beneficial in developing the "Community College Advocacy" Competency. The presidents in this study were also generally in agreement with the competencies.

The Boswell and Imroz (2013) study and the McNair, DuRee, and Ebbers (2011) study examined leadership style and strengths through the lens of the AACC Leadership Competencies. Other researchers explore the assumptions, pathways, and leadership approaches of community college leaders. The following studies approach community college leadership from that broader perspective.

In a chapter of *Understanding Community Colleges*, Amey (2013) discussed the leadership context pertinent to leading a community college and identifies assumptions, and traditional pathways to community college leadership. She discussed the need for succession planning and the changing context of community colleges and, as a result, community college leaders. She then "reconsiders" a few traditional leadership theories within this context such as cognitive theory, sense-making, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competence. She then discussed contemporary organizational theory such as entrepreneurialism, organizational development and chaos, and collaboration. This chapter has relevance to my research study in that it recognizes that leadership is adaptive and the increased importance of emotional and cultural sensitivity. She also suggested that collaboration is a necessary behavior of modern community college leaders, which could have been undervalued in the past.

Basham and Mathur (2010) discerned the differences between leaders and managers. Leaders provide direction and vision while managers contribute strong

technical knowledge within the community college context. They suggested that community college leaders should consider the mix of managers and leaders on teams. Interestingly, the authors suggested that one is either a leader or a manager and that the two are mutually exclusive, eluding to the idea that leadership is more of a trait which is inherited than a process which can be learned.

Grasmick, Davies, and Harbour (2012) took yet another approach in studying community college leaders. They argued that a participative leadership style is necessary to lead in organizations such as community colleges which have complex missions and rely on shared governance and input from a multitude of constituent groups. Their study targeted nationally recognized community college leaders who self-identify as being participative leaders and study their ability to inspire a shared vision in participative environments.

Stout-Steward (2007) recognized a lack of female community college presidents and suggests that a transformational leadership style is a preferred leadership style for female community college leaders. In her article, she cited her own study which suggested that women community college presidents are more likely to demonstrate a transformational leadership style than men and discusses transformational leadership within the context of the community college. She used community college-specific examples such as sports teams, articulation agreements, and contract renewals. She concluded by suggesting ways for women CEOs to maintain their commitment to transformational leadership and ethical behavior. Gillet-Karam (2001) also noted that women community college leaders are more likely to employ a participative leadership style and self-identify as agents of change

for their college. The author of an examination of community college presidents in the Midwest suggested that transformational leadership styles are most effective (Jacobs, 2013) while a survey of community college leaders in the southern states reported that presidents in the south tend more towards servant leadership (Lehning, 2013).

Still other community college research focuses on ethical considerations (Brenner, 2007; Davis, 2013; Hellmich, 2013). Brenner (2007) employed two broad theories to frame community college leadership: virtue theory and transformational leadership theory, in the context of various cultures and philosophers such as Aristotle, Confucius, and Lao Tzu. He defined each theory, briefly discussed their theoretical background, and then discussed the theories of contemporary leadership scholars. He concluded by relating these theories to leadership in the modern community college and advocated for a blended leadership style which he calls "normative combined theory." This theory considers traditional virtue theory, transformational leadership theory, and the unique mission of community colleges as important considerations for community college leaders. Similarly, Davis (2007) recognized the importance of presidents and governing boards recognizing ethical challenges and collaborating to solve them. Davis described ethical behavior and the need for ethical behavior among leaders in higher education. He then provided several categories of ethical dilemmas which face community college presidents and boards such as: the "truth or reputation dilemma" which addresses transparency issues; Inertia as the enemy of responsible behavior which deals with the reluctance of college faculty and staff to change; market demands versus academic standards;

lack of ethical consensus in society; conflict between local vendors and college profit; temptation to "bend the law"; violation of ideals of loyalty and obedience; and the tension between candor and respect. Each dilemma is discussed using both hypothetical and real world examples. The need for intentional ethical behavior and training is stressed in today's community college leadership environment.

Wallin (2007) noted the nature of a pluralistic society in which many ethical perspectives exist. The author then discussed the "four myths of leadership" as defined by George Vaughan and provides relevant and contemporary examples to illustrate her point that community college presidents must be aware of and sensitive to these issues as they endeavor to lead complex institutions daily.

Eddy (2010), in her book *Community college leadership: A multidimensional model for leading change*, discussed the need to re-envision community college leadership to address the needs of the future within the community college context. She advocated for a multidimensional approach to community college leadership: "Unlike traditional leadership models, a multidimensional model of leadership provides flexibility and a constructions based on an individual's core experiences, beliefs, and capabilities. Furthermore, a multidimensional model recognizes that many of the leadership dimensions a leader possess are part of a continuum and will change over time."(p. 31).

The authors previously mentioned focused their research on applying traditional leadership models to community colleges, examining community college leaders within the context of the AACC Competencies, or ethical approaches to

leadership. The following section briefly discusses the pathways to the community college presidency and structured leadership development programs.

Pathways to the Community College Presidency

In a 2011 article entitled "Inside-Outside: Finding Community College Leaders", Strom, Sanchez, and Downey Schilling, (2011) highlighted the pending (now current) wave of retiring community college leaders and suggested that academic preparation programs, such as Master's and PhD programs, currently include a strong academic and theoretical base, but lack practical learning experiences. The authors suggested that further training is needed in key areas such as: business and industry workforce development, instructional technologies, media relations, development, facilities management, budgeting, and risk management.

In a similar study, researchers surveyed 400 community college presidents to get their perceptions on how well community college leadership graduate doctoral programs prepare students for leadership positions. While the results were substantially positive, leaders did suggest that curricula should be changed to be more practitioner focused (Hammons & Miller, 2006).

Opposing university preparatory programs are researchers like Reille and Kezar (2010) who advocate for colleges to locally develop "grow-your-own" leadership programs to prepare for future shortages of leaders in community colleges. Their qualitative study utilized action research, which attempts to make and evaluate changes in real time and in the context of existing organizations. The authors suggest that grow-your-own programs can be effective, but must address the challenges of developing a strong curriculum, program delivery, and customization. If addressed

properly, these challenges can become strengths of the program and adequately prepare future leaders better than university academic preparatory programs.

<center>**Rural Community College Leadership**</center>

Rural Community Colleges

While the issues previously discussed are challenges for all community colleges, leaders at rural community colleges face additional challenges. Eddy (2012) suggested that because of their unique challenges, rural community colleges will be most challenged to fill the pending leadership void. In 2012, community colleges served 42% of all undergraduate enrollment (Hirt & Frank, 2013) and the Rural Community College Alliance (2013) reports that 64% of all community college are classified as rural. Indeed, most community colleges are rural community colleges.

Cejda (2012) discusses rural America and the role of the community college within those communities. He suggested that differences exist in how the mission is viewed and constituents served between rural and urban or suburban community colleges. He then examined the AACC competencies in the context of rural community colleges and found that rural community college leaders rely more heavily on on-the-job trainings such as challenging work assignments and less on formal leadership development tools such as Ph.D. programs or grow-your-own leader programs than urban or suburban community college leaders. While the purpose of this article is to discuss the AACC competencies in the context of rural community colleges, it also presents a strong argument for the case that rural community colleges and their leaders differ from their urban and suburban peers because of their relationship with constituents and the unique challenges faced by

their communities. Williams, Pennington, Couch, and Dougherty (2007) also recognized that rural community colleges and, by effect, their leaders, face unique challenges. Rural leaders must be prepared to meet those challenges and more innovative approaches by both community colleges and colleges of education are required to produce leaders who are prepared to be successful leaders at rural community colleges.

In a 2013 article, Eddy examined the AACC leadership competencies in the context of rural community colleges. She begins by discussing the upcoming (now current) leadership void among community college presidents and then explores the AACC's role in defining those leadership competencies most needed and leadership development experiences. She recognized that leaders at rural community colleges face challenges unique to their locale. She also recognized that the demands of rural community college leaders differ from their urban and suburban peers and that many who relocate from those areas to rural areas struggle with this different role. She discussed how rural areas affect programming and support services. Eddy's article also suggested that rural community colleges have a high demand for leaders who are strong in resource development and organizational strategy, but these areas are weaknesses among many current leaders. She found that rural community college leaders gained knowledge and training primarily through on-the-job experiences and discusses the implications for developing future leaders.

Similar to the 2013 Eddy study, Jones and Jackson (2014) used non-intrusive data collection techniques to examine the qualifications and prior experience of 102 community college presidents hired between 2010 and 2012 in the United States. The

study found that most community college presidents have extensive community

college experience, a smaller portion had higher education, but not community

college experience, and relatively few came from outside of higher education. 16%

were internal hires, 4.9% first served as interim president at the institution which

hired them, 33% of presidents had previously served as a president at another

community college, 62% were in their first presidency, 27% in their second

presidency, and 9% in their third. Most presidents held multiple community college

administrative positions prior to their first presidency.

Challenges Facing Rural Community Colleges

America's rural regions often have high levels of illiteracy, unemployment, and

low levels of educational attainment which leads to extreme poverty (Katsinas, 2012;

Murray, 2012). The problem seems to be a repeating cycle. The persistent low

educational attainment and poverty are related because, as Murray (2007) reported, an

education is often seen as not only a ticket out of poverty but also a ticket out of the rural

community, suggesting that outmigration contributes to the economic woes of these

communities. Poverty and unemployment play an important role in calculating student

aid packages. As such, community colleges in these areas are particularly sensitive to

changes in the Federal Pell Grant. Katsinas (2012) conducted a quantitative study related

to the 2012 restrictions of the Federal Pell Grant and found that many small, rural

community college students and, by extension, community colleges are particularly

dependent upon the Pell Grant. Community colleges in these states saw dramatic

enrollment declines as a direct result of the changes to the Pell Grant.

These colleges serve communities which are likely to have lower incomes and higher poverty rates than their urban and suburban counterparts. These rural communities often have access to fewer financial resources making the community college very important to rural development (Fluharty & Scaggs, 2007). Community colleges are often the only real educational choice for students in rural areas, but both access and success have declined due to a national trend of states to reduce appropriations to higher education (Katsinas, Alexander, & Opp, 2003).

Hardy and Katsinas (2007) argued that rural community colleges are challenged by their typical small size and lack of economies of scale. Small, rural community colleges with relatively small enrollments struggle to fund all aspects of the traditional community college mission, especially those programs which are of higher cost. While it is a very real challenge, it is not a new one. The Commission on Small/Rural Community Colleges (1992) identified this trend in 1992 and Cohen and Brawer (2008) recognized it again in 2008.

Many faculty members and leaders are attracted by features of many rural community colleges: scenic locale, short commutes, safe communities, leadership opportunities, and the ability to lead curriculum among them (Eddy & Murray, 2007). It is important to discuss, however, that rural community colleges face challenges which are substantially different from their urban and suburban counterparts (Katsinas, 2013). Morelli (2003) cites several challenges which are unique rural community college are different: limited resources, geographic isolation, and a static economy among them. In a qualitative study of 15 rural community college presidents, Leist (2007) found that these presidents felt that large, geographically isolated service regions, funding policies which

favor large institutions and an understanding of rural culture were among their greatest challenges. Leist went on to suggest that presidential job advertisements should be "ruralized" to better describe the context of the community in which the college exists. Rural community college presidents also rely more on on-the-job training than presidents from other institution types (Eddy, 2012).

Rural community colleges rely less on adjuncts that suburban or urban colleges (Charlier & Williams, 2011), yet they have a more difficult time recruiting and retaining senior leaders and teaching faculty than urban or suburban community colleges (Leist, 2007; Murray, 2007). Rural community college faculty often have sole control over curriculum, few, if any, peers in the same field, and are paid at lower rates that urban and suburban faculty. Women and minorities are less likely to be faculty leaders at rural community colleges and faculty development tends to be centralized at urban colleges yet led by an individual at rural community colleges (Eddy and Murray, 2007).

Rural Appalachia

The case in Appalachia is unique. 42% of Appalachians live in rural areas, compared with only 20% of the rest of the United States (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2014). Compared to the rest of the nation, rural and non-rural alike, Appalachia experiences higher poverty rates and lower earnings (Baumann, 2006; Bolliner, Ziliak, & Troske, 2011). Baumann (2006) theorized that increases in educational attainment in the region have not contributed to closing the substantial wage gap in the region and that it remains today the same as in 1970. For fiscal year 2015, the Appalachian Regional Commission (2014) lists 112 of them as "At-risk", 89 at "distressed", only 10 as "competitive", 2 as "attainment", and 209 as "transitional".

Community colleges serve more first generation college students than any other sector of higher education (Malcom, 2013). Appalachia has a lower educational attainment rate (18%) than the rest of the country (25%) and research suggests that first generation students from Appalachia are at a higher risk of failure than first generation students from other geographic regions (Bradbury & Mather, 2009). A 2008 study of academically successful first-generation college students in Appalachia suggests that success these students value the input of family and community members and strongly identify with Appalachian culture (Hand & Payne, 2008).

Students from rural Appalachian regions tend to have a strong commitment to their communities and associate higher education with out-migration. Some students want to use their education as a vehicle out of Appalachia and others want to use it as a tool to improve Appalachia (Wright, 2012). Family and community friends who are graduates tend to have a positive influence on under-served populations and exposure to teachers who claim Appalachian culture as their own tends to improve self-efficacy and college going rates (Ali & Saunders, 2006; Williams, Leatherwood, Boyd, & Pennington, 2010); Winter, 2013).

Rural Initiatives

To meet these challenges, some community college leaders have participated in initiatives targeting rural areas which are designed to aid in economic development, closing wage gaps, or increasing educational attainment. The Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI) is an example of one such initiative. The initiative was funded by the Ford foundation and sought to increase educational attainment and improve economic development in economically depressed regions such as tribal regions, the Southeast

Delta Region, the Southwest, and Appalachia. The RCCI provided consulting services, grant monies, and individual coaching to help selected colleges cope with the unique challenges of their areas (Torres & Viterito, 2008). Kenneman and Katsinas (2011) report that the RCCI was the "…largest philanthropic project aimed at rural community colleges in the history of our country…" (pg. 1). They report that since the RCCI ended in 2002, the long-term gains have been modest. Two professional organizations, the Rural Community College Alliance and Community Colleges of Appalachia were established as a direct result of the RCCI.

Leadership in Rural Community Colleges

Cejda (2012) argued that the AACC Competencies and leadership development is more important in rural community colleges that at urban or suburban community colleges. He cited some of the unique challenges facing rural communities such as outmigration of young people, immigration of more diverse populations, low educational attainment, and broad wage gaps. A demand for new leaders who are aware of rural contexts, sensitive to cultural issues, and ready to deal with economic challenges amplifies the challenge facing rural community colleges and calls for additional research of how the AAC competencies apply to rural community colleges. Some of the challenges facing rural communities, especially the rural areas of Appalachia, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

An example of a state-wide initiative is Virginia's Rural Horseshoe Initiative (RVHI). The RVHI recognizes an education attainment gap in Virginia. While Virginia typically ranks very high in educational attainment, that attainment is relatively geographically isolated. For the rural areas of Virginia, which is geographically 75% of

Virginia, the educational attainment is low and the economic impact broad. The Virginia

Community College System (2012) reported:

"Nationally, Virginia ranks among the top 10 states in educational attainment,

with 33% of its citizens over the age of 25 holding at least a bachelor's degree.

However, if the Rural Horseshoe were its own state of nearly 2.1 million

residents, it would be tied with Arkansas at 50th and ranked between Mississippi

and West Virginia with only 19% of its residents holding a bachelor's degree or

higher. Conversely, if the non-Horseshoe region of Virginia were a state, it would

be ranked 2nd in the nation with over 38% of its citizens having at least

bachelor's degree. This is particularly troubling as Virginia is rapidly becoming

two states economically. This trend will only be exacerbated since most forecasts

project that by 2020, 66% of all jobs will require a career certificate or a college

degree. Despite Virginia's top 10 ranking for higher education attainment, we

rank 19th from the bottom in percentage of the population with at least a high

school equivalency. It should concern all Virginians that 1 in 4 people across parts

of the Rural Horseshoe has less than a high school education" (p. 1).

Of Virginia's 23 community colleges, 14 of them are part of the distressed "Rural

Horseshoe" region. Of the 14, eight serve counties recognized by the Appalachian

Regional Commission as being economically distressed (2014). Over half of all of

Virginia's Community Colleges and one-third of RVHI colleges serve economically

distressed regions of Appalachia. Murray (2007) observed that in many rural areas of the

United States education is seen as a tool for out-migration which contributes to the

economic disparity of the region. Wright (2012) pointed out that students from

Appalachia feel connected to their communities and associate higher education with outmigration in general and Cejda (2012) explored the connections between educational attainment, outmigration, and the economic weaknesses of many rural areas.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used to collect and analyze data for this study drew heavily from research on organizational culture from Schein (2004) and Martin (2002), studies related to preparing future leaders (Brocksmith, Jr.,1997) in general and specifically at rural community colleges (Amey, 2006; Amey, 2013; Bashum & Mathur, 2010; Eddy & Murray, 2007). This study builds upon the American Association of Community College Competencies for Community College Leaders (AACC 2005) and deepens understanding about the perceptions that community college leaders in South Central Appalachia have of those competencies. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed to define meaning, and describe perceptions, and experiences of community college leaders.

Summary

This chapter followed a basic pattern: it summarized basic leadership theory, discussed leadership in higher education, focused on leadership in community college, and the drilled down to discuss leadership at rural community colleges. Some challenges for all of higher education were discussed, then those facing community colleges, and then some of the unique challenges which face rural community colleges. Rural community college leaders face all of these challenges in addition to the challenges of

serving in geographically isolated, economically distressed, and very rural community colleges.

The purpose of was study is to discover 1) if rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia assessments of the leadership competencies necessary for success in their current roles are congruent with the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders and 2) the professional development experiences and formal academic preparation that rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their leadership successes. The following chapter explains the method for exploring this topic and contains the following sections: (1) research questions, (2) research design, (3) research participants, (4) measures, (5) data collection procedures, and (6) data analysis.

This study sought to address this purpose with the following guiding research questions:

1. What leadership competencies do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their professional success or the successes of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

2. What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area?

3. How do 1) position within the institution, 2) professional background and academic preparation, and 3) institutional role effect leaders' perceptions of which

leadership competencies have contributed to their professional success or the success of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

4. Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed?

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to discover 1) if rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia assessments of the leadership competencies necessary for success in their current roles are congruent with the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders and 2) the professional development experiences and formal academic preparation that rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their leadership successes. This chapter explains the method used to explore this topic and contains the following sections: (1) research questions, (2) research design, (3) research participants, (4) measures, (5) data collection procedures, and (6) data analysis.

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success of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

4. Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed?

Research Design

Leedy and Ormond (2013) defined research as "…the systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information-data-in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned" (p.2). There are three broad categories of research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods (Creswell, 2009; Leedy & Ormond, 2013; Roberts, 2010). Creswell (2009) explained that quantitative research is often framed in using numbers and closed-ended questions, while qualitative research uses words and open-ended questions. He went on to describe quantitative research as a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables and qualitative research as a means for exploration and understanding the meaning we ascribe to a problem. Mixed-methods is any research design which combines the two. Newman and Benz (1998) suggested that research methods be viewed as a continuum with quantitative at one end, qualitative at the other, and mixed-methods designs residing somewhere in between.

Leedy and Ormond (2013) advocated for a qualitative approach to research when the researcher wishes to gain new insights, develop new concepts, or discover problems related to a phenomenon and that it can also be used to describe situations, people,

processes, and relationships. Qualitative researchers employ inductive analysis, which is the idea that theory can be driven or phenomena more deeply understood through data. In qualitative research, data are collected to focus on research questions and create theory, not test hypotheses. Patterns and themes surface through data collection and leads to a fuller understanding of a phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012). Qualitative researchers collect data in a natural setting or where the problem is experienced. They collect data by speaking with individuals and through face-to-face interactions. Qualitative researchers gather data from multiple sources, give value to the meaning that research participants ascribe to a problem, and seek to develop a complex holistic picture of the problem. This requires reporting multiple perspectives from multiple sources and framing the research within a larger theoretical lens (Creswell, 2009).

Hays and Singh (2012) identified several qualitative research traditions: case studies, grounded theory, phenomenology, heuristic inquiry, consensual qualitative research, symbolic interaction, semiotics, life history, hermeneutics, and narration. This research uses phenomenology. Phenomenology aims to "…discover and describe the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences…" (p. 50). Phenomenologists practice epoche to disregard their own assumptions regarding phenomena and focus on the participants' lived experiences and capture the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2013) described phenomenological research as a method which involves a small number of participants through extensive engagement and as an emergent research design strategy, recognizing that it could change over time. Qualitative researcher approaches, specifically phenomenological approaches, have been successfully applied to the study of leadership in community colleges. Recent

phenomenological studies of community college leaders assessed the need for technical skills versus visioning skills (Basham & Mathur, 2010), examined community college leader development in Pennsylvania (Boswell & Imroz, 2013), an assessment of how well prepared community college presidents feel relative to the AACC Leadership Competencies (McNair, DuRee, & Ebbers, 2011), the lack of a participative leadership style among community college leaders (Grasmick, Davies, & Harbour 2012), and the experiences of women in leadership positions within community colleges (Stroud-Steward, 2007), and explored the role of leaders' gender in building authentic relationships (Eagley, 2005).

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. 18 interviews were conducted and data saturation was reached. Interviews were the most appropriate data collection method because they allow researchers to explore information about peoples' perspectives, feelings, motives, past behaviors, and conscious reasons for actions (Leedy & Ormond, 2013). Since this study sought gather this information about rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia, semi-structured interviews allowed me to engage in meaningful dialogue, clarify points, and explore the lived experiences of participants.

Researcher's Relationship to the Study

As briefly discussed in Chapter One, it was important for me to recognize my own relationship with research participants and recognize how this relationship may affect access to and interactions with participant, and how data were interpreted (Hays & Singh, 2012). Relevant to this study, I should disclose that I am a native and life-long resident of South Central Appalachia. At the time of this writing, I am employed at

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, a small, rural institution located in the Alleghany Highlands of Virginia. I have been employed here since 2009 and I am the Director of Student Services and the Interim Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. I also serve as the Chair of the Council of Deans and Directors for the Virginia Community College System for the 2017-2018 year. I have preexisting professional relationships with some of the research participants, many of those located in Virginia. As such, I recognize that I may have opinions and biases based on what I have observed in my professional career concerning rural community college leaders, rural community colleges, and Appalachia.

Research Participants

This study utilized purposeful sampling methods. Purposeful sampling is when the researcher develops specific criteria (Patton, 2002). For this study, interviews were conducted with community college leaders serving at community colleges in South Central Appalachia. While leadership can take place at any level of the organization, the purpose of this study was to reach those who are serve as vice presidents or presidents of these rural institutions. The criterion which was required of participants was that they are currently serve as president or vice-President. Among Vice-Presidents, those serving in executive vice-president or Chief Academic Officer positions were targeted. The sample was relatively homogeneous in that all participants were leaders at community colleges in South Central Appalachia. A homogenous sample is appropriate for this study because it allows information to be collected about a specific subgroup (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 166), in this case, rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia. By seeking leaders from these two administrative areas and in both executive and non-

executive roles, there is an element of stratified purposeful sampling, since findings could be compared on these criteria (Hays & Singh, 2012)**.**

Epoche as defined by Hays and Singh (2012), is important for qualitative researchers, specifically phenomenologists, as a way to identify and disregard their pre-existing assumptions related to the phenomena being studied. After an exercise in epoche and bracketing, I identified the following personally held assumptions related to this study:

- Leaders at rural community colleges, specifically those in South Central Appalachia, face unique challenges due to their institutions' often small size, geographic isolation, weak local economies, and relatively underdeveloped infrastructure compared to leaders at urban and suburban community colleges.

- Because these challenges are different, leaders may value some of the AACC Leadership Competencies over others

- Leaders' background and professional position may affect the leadership competencies which they value most.

- Leaders at rural community colleges in South Central Appalachia are aware of the economic challenges facing their colleges and alter their leadership style to meet these challenges.

Sample

Participants from community colleges in South Central Appalachia were be invited via email to participate in semi-structured or in interviews either in person or via telephone. South Central Appalachia includes portions of West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. See Appendix B for a map of the subregions of Appalachia. A description of the participants and the institutions they represent is presented in Chapter Four.

Sample Size

Creswell (2009) suggested a sample of 10 participants is usually sufficient for a phenomenological study if the sample is relatively homogeneous. For this study, the target minimum sample size was 10 interviews or until the point of data saturation. To ensure data saturation, 18 interviews were conducted and data saturation was achieved. The point of saturation refers to the point at which the researcher recognizes that no new information is being collected, it is only confirming the information shared by previous participants (Hays & Singh, 2013).

Triangulation

Not only presidents, but also vice-presidents representing other administrative levels and areas are included in order to gather several perspectives. Additionally, a document analysis of their professional resumes or curriculum vitae was conducted as a way to triangulate data collected from multiple sources. Documents were requested in person or were otherwise available from public sources such as college websites, networking websites such as LinkedIn, or news sources. Triangulation is a strategy for

ensuring trustworthiness and is discussed in the data analysis section of this study. This collected data from a variety of sources in order to be able give a meaningful description of the phenomenon and inform institution action (Leedy and Ormond, 2013).

Protection of Human Subjects and Ethical Considerations

Institution review boards (IRBs) exist to protect the rights of human subjects and are concerned with ethical issues like informed consent, protection from harm, and confidentiality (Roberts, 2010). Exempt status from College of Education Human Subjects Review Board at Old Dominion University was granted for this study. Risks to participants were minimal and confidentiality was protected at all levels of data collection and analysis. The informed consent/confidentiality agreement, interview protocol, semi-structured interview questions, and table of specifications can be found in Appendices D, E, F, and G. At the time of the study, I was certified through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) managed by the University of Miami. Certification remained current throughout the entire data collection and analysis processes. There were no perceived benefits to participating in the study.

Hays and Singh (2012) identify ethical considerations specific to qualitative research. They are autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, fidelity, and veracity. I was aware of these considerations and utilized informed consent and maintained the confidentiality of all participants through the use of pseudonyms. The participants' names, employers, hometowns, and other information that could personally identify them was not reported. Interview recordings and transcripts were stored on secure server space provided by Old Dominion University, was password protected, and will be deleted at the conclusion of this dissertation.

Hays and Singh (2012) also identified ethical considerations specific to interviewing such as the interview becoming too intense for the participant, an inherent power imbalance, the possibility of a manipulative dialogue, and privileged position that the interviewer is in as compared to the participant. To address these points, I carefully took action during the interview to minimize their effect.

Measures

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, digitally recorded, and transcribed. An interview protocol guided me through the process and ensured consistency in how interviews were conducted. It contained the date and location of the interview, the interview participant, instructions on conducting the interview, an opening statement, a brief description of the confidentiality agreement, interview, questions, probing and follow-up questions, a space to take notes, and a thank you statement. The interview protocol was pilot tested with a community college leader in South Central Appalachia and was edited, a technique recommended by Creswell (2013). Semi-structured interviews were most appropriate for this data collection for several reasons. First, they utilize an interview protocol as a guide, way to start, and way to standardize the interview. Even with this structure they allow the researcher the ability to adapt the interview to by skipping questions, asking probing questions, changing the sequence, altering the pace, or asking clarifying questions. Hays and Singh (2012, p. 239) go on to point out that "We believe that although this type of interview does not ensure consistency of data collection experience across participants, it makes up for this

disadvantage by including more participant voice, as appropriate, to provide a richer picture of a phenomenon under investigation."

Sample interview questions include:

Q3: What is your academic preparation for this position? Q4: Please describe your career path leading to this position.

Q5: Are you familiar with the list of competencies of community college leaders created by the American Association of Community Colleges?

Q6: Which of the AACC competencies do you think are most important for leading here at this college?

Q7: What competencies do you possess that you think have led to your success as a community college leader?

Content Validity

Creswell (2013) defined qualitative validity as the measures taken by the researchers to check the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Gibbs (2007) recommended several methods for guaranteeing reliability, three of which were employed during this study: transcript checking, checking for drift of definitions and codes, and the use of an external auditor. Creswell (2013) also recommended several strategies for ensuring qualitative validity which will were used in this study. Pilot testing the interview protocol, triangulation of data sources (interviews and document analysis), presenting descriptions in rich detail, clarifying researcher bias, and presenting discrepant information were all applied in this study.

Trustworthiness

Hays and Singh (2009) recognized several proven techniques for maximizing trustworthiness, many of which were used in this study. They include the use of field notes, memoing, the use of probing and clarifying questions, triangulation of data sources, keeping a detailed audit trail containing physical evidence of data collection and analysis, and using thick descriptions of participants' experiences.

<div align="center">

Data Collection Procedures

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In May of 2016, an email was be sent to all presidents and vice presidents who serve as Chief Academic Officer working at community colleges located in South Central Appalachia inviting them to participate in the study via interview. In-person and phone interview options were offered. Interviews were scheduled and additional details coordinated by email directly with the participant or, in some cases, with their administrative assistant. All interviews will be conducted in an environment free of distractions and where both the participant and the interviewer are comfortable. I provided each participant with an informed consent form and will briefly explain what it means. I asked for permission to record each interview. At the beginning of the interview, I thanked the participant and explain that their confidentiality will be respected through the use of a pseudonym and that any personally identifying information will be excluded from the final product. The predetermined interview protocol was closely followed, including the use of probing and clarifying questions. The interview ranged in length from about 35 minutes to nearly two hours. In addition to the recording, notes were taken during each interview. I shared my contact information and contact information for my dissertation committee with each participant they can add information later if they

choose. The recordings were then stored on secure server space provided by Old

Dominion University. Once transcribed, the transcription and information about

participants such as names, institutions, titles, phone numbers, emails addresses, and

other information was also stored on the secure server. Data collected during the

document analysis were also stored on the server. The data collection took place in May

and June, 2016 and was analyzed in July, 2016.

Data Analysis

Analysis

Prior to data collection, I sought to identify my own preconceived notions through

a process called bracketing in order to be more objective throughout the entire process

(Hays & Singh, 2009; Leedy & Ormond, 2013). After data were collected, it was

analyzed using a multi-step process. Raw data, in the form of recordings and public

documents were stored on secure server space provided by Old Dominion University.

The recordings were transcribed and stored on the secure server space. These data, in the

form of recordings, transcripts, notes, and documents, were organized by participant and

prepared for coding in a processing called "memoing" (Hays & Singh, 2009). All data

were read multiple times to gain a general sense of the information. It was then coded.

Coding refers to the process of categorizing text, responses, or other qualitative data and

connecting keywords and ideas. This step strengthened consistency among codes (Hays

& Singh, 2012). Creswell (2009) suggested then using codes to describe what is

happening and then generate themes that appear as the major findings of the study. After

that, he recommends advancing the description to consider how it will be presented in the

narrative and, finally, interpreting the results. This information is then used to generate a

thick, rich description of the phenomenon being studied while examining the individual experiences of participants. These steps suggested by Creswell (2009) were closely followed for each participant.

Throughout the data collection and analysis processes, a comprehensive audit trail was maintained. The audit trail included all communications, transcripts, worksheets, field notes, and other documents necessary to document the data collection and analysis procedures. Data, collection process, and findings were be audited by a trained qualitative researcher who ensured that the participants' voices were fairly heard and represented.

Limitations

A potential limitation of this study was a relatively small sample size or failing to reach a representative sample. This limitation was minimized by including 18 participants and achieving data saturation. A larger sample could have been sought, but community college leaders are busy and may not want to spare the time to participate in this study or recognize its importance. For that reason, data collection began in mid-May, 2016 (after graduation at most colleges) continued until the point of saturation or when the researcher feels that a representative sample has been reached. Data collection continued through the month of June and was fully concluded by July, 2016

A second potential limitation was the possibility of researcher bias. There was a possibility that I had a preexisting relationship with interview participants. While this did aid the researcher in building rapport and gaining access, it could also have exposed biases. To minimize this limitation, I participated bracketing exercises to intentionally identify and document my own preconceived notions and biases. This encouraged objectivity when asking probing questions, coding, and presenting data effectively. It

should be noted that at the time of this writing, I was employed in the Virginia Community College System at a college located within the South Central Appalachian Region.

Finally, it is important to note that qualitative research, particularly the use of interviews in phenomenological research, has limitations in and of itself. Leedy and Ormond (2013) note that interviews in phenomenology are highly collaborative in nature and require the researcher and participant work together. Those interviews should seem more like a conversation than a data collection method. This means that phenomenological researchers using interviews must be highly skilled at listening closely and sensitive to the meaning of non-verbal communication such as pauses, sighs, expressions, and body language. To minimize this limitation, I followed the pilot-tested interview protocol, recorded the interviews, and took copious notes.

In the following pages of Chapter Four, I provide context for the study by presenting a description of each state community college system in South Central Appalachia which is represented, a description of each college represented, and then a description of each participant. Major themes are identified and supported. Chapter Five contains discussion on each theme, a discussion on surprises, implications for practice, and opportunities for further research.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover 1) if rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia assessments of the leadership competencies necessary for success in their current roles are congruent with the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders and 2) the professional development experiences and formal academic preparation that rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their leadership successes. Through 18 interviews with community college leaders in South Central Appalachia, a description of their perceptions and experiences emerges and provides and understanding of their opinion on these topics. In this chapter, I review the data collection methods, provide a brief description of the state systems in which these leaders operate, describe each participant and the institutions where they serve in detail sufficient to provide context, but in a way which protects their identities.

Review of Methodology

This study utilized a phenomenological approach which involved interviewing 18 presidents and vice presidents currently leading at community colleges in the South Central Appalachian Region. The interview protocol was semi-structured to allow the researcher to remain focused on the topic, but also allow for the exploration of other topics. The purpose was to engage in an open dialogue, clarify points, and have a meaningful discourse on points surrounding the research questions. All interviews were conducted by a single researcher. The researcher engaged in bracketing and epoche exercises to identify and disclose pre-existing beliefs and assumptions prior to the data

collection. The research participants are discussed in further detail in the next section.

The sample was comprised mostly of presidents, but also of vice presidents of academic

affairs, and one vice president of financial and administrative services. In addition to the

interviews, a document analysis was conducted to triangulate information collected. The

document analysis included publicly available sources such as social media profiles,

biographies found on institutional website, and, when possible, curriculum vitae and

resumes.

Measures were taken to protect the identity of research participants. The

researcher is certified in protecting the rights of human research participants by the

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Risks to research participants are

minimal and the research was approved and given exempt status by Old Dominion

University's Institution Review Board (IRB). Data were stored on secure server space

provided by Old Dominion University. Participants were assigned pseudonyms during

the coding phase of data analysis and identifiers were removed.

Measures to ensure the content validity were transcript checking, checking for

code and definition drift, the use of an external auditor, the interview protocol was pilot

tested, data were collected from multiple sources (triangulation), clarifying researcher

bias, and presenting dissenting information.

Interview Participants

Participants

Eighteen interviews were conducted from May 3rd, 2016 through June 10, 2016.

Interviews were either conducted in person in the participant's office or via phone. The

sample consisted of 10 presidents and eight vice presidents. Of the 10 presidents, eight

are male and two are female. One of the presidents has served as president for over 20 years, one for 15-20 years, two have served 10-15 years, two have served 5-10 years, three have served 1-5 years, and one has served less than a year. Four of the ten presidents interviewed are native to Appalachia and five of them have spent most of their community college careers in Appalachia. In all, half of the participants have only worked at colleges in South Central Appalachia while half have experience working at community colleges in other geographic regions.

Of the vice presidents, seven are female and one is male. One vice president has served in this capacity for 10-15 years, one for 5-10 years, four for 1-5 years, and one for less than one year. Four of the vice presidents interviewed are native to Appalachia and the same four have spent their entire community college careers working in Appalachia.

Figure 1. Participants' Time in Current Role
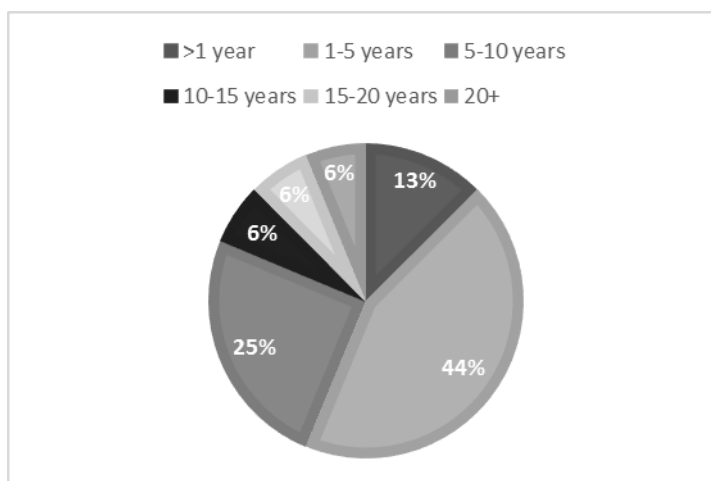
Figure 2. Gender of Participants
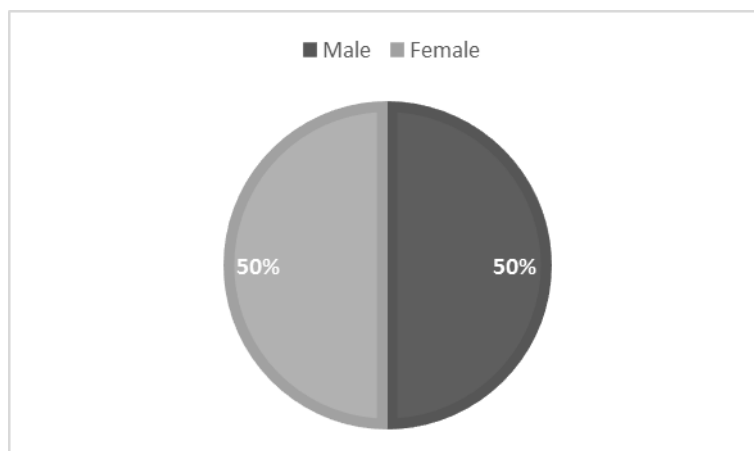
Figure 3. Native to Appalachia
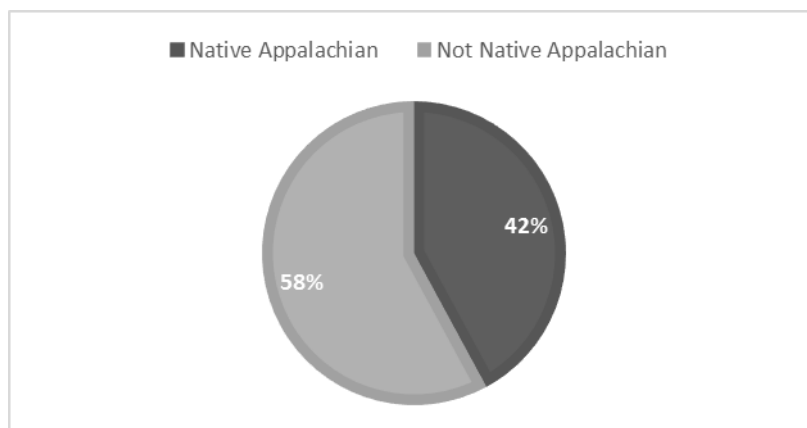
State Systems Represented

In order to understand the context in which these individuals lead, it is important to have a cursory understanding of the state community college systems in which they operate. Interviews were conducted with leaders of community colleges in South Central Appalachia. Three of the states in the South Central Appalachian region, Virginia, North

Carolina, and Tennessee, were represented. Twelve of the participants serve in Virginia, five in North Carolina, and one in Tennessee.

Friedel, Killacky, Katsinas, and Miller (2014), reported that the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has 23 colleges and 40 campuses. There is a 15 member State Board of Community Colleges with each member being appointed by the Governor of Virginia. Each college has a president who serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and an advisory board with representatives from each of the counties and localities in the service region. Colleges are primarily funded in two ways: state allocations from Virginia's General Assembly and tuition and fee revenues collected from students. While the target base funding from the state is 67%, it was only 39% in 2014 and is expected to continue to drop. Significant challenges facing the VCCS are changing state demographics, declining ratio of full-time faculty, funding in areas which are growing in population, and declining federal financial aid allocations to students. Twelve of the interviewees, five presidents and seven vice presidents, are currently serving at institutions located in Virginia.

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is one of the largest community college systems in the United States and consists of 58 colleges. Every resident of North Carolina is within 30 miles of a community college. It is governed by the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges. It is made up of 21 members, ten of which are appointed by the Governor of North Carolina with other ex-officio such as the Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, and the President of the North Carolina Community College Student Government Association. Each college has a board of trustees with 12 representatives from their service region. Four of the local members are

appointed by the Governor. Boards of trustees approve the hiring of college presidents and writes local policy. As of 2012-2013, on average, 58% of college funding came from state appropriations, 20% from tuition and fees, 12% from local funds, and 9% from other sources, although the appropriations from counties ranged from 7% to as high as 26%. Like many states, the NCCCS is challenged by a recent sharp decline in state funding combined with an enrollment spike (Friedel, Killacky, Katsinas, & Miller, 2014).

In Tennessee, the Tennessee Board of Regents is charged with oversight of the State Universities, Community Colleges, and Technical Colleges. Most community colleges in Tennessee are not comprehensive, meaning they do not serve as technical colleges as well. Instead, the technical colleges are part of a separate system called the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT). By law, there is a system-wide articulation agreement system that governs transfer of credits from Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs to public four-year colleges and universities. The Tennessee Board of Regents is made up of 18 members, including 12 lay citizens, all of whom are appointed by the Governor and represent Tennessee's Congressional Districts. Tennessee's community colleges are funded primarily by state appropriations, tuition and fees, and other sources, and leaders are challenged by declining state appropriations, a new completion agenda, and the demand to develop new collaborative partnerships (Friedel, Killacky, Katsinas, & Miller, 2014).

Participants and the Institutions They Lead

Interviews were conducted with individuals from 12 different institutions. Seven of the institutions are located in Virginia, four in North Carolina, and one in Tennessee. The following paragraphs briefly describe each participant and the institution they lead,

but names, locations, and defining characteristics of both the participant and the institutions are withheld to protect the identity of participants. Instead, institutions are referenced by an alphabetic designation: Institution A, Institution B, etc. Individual participants are assigned a pseudonym: "Tracy", "Bruce", "Roberta", etc. Interviewees did not choose their own pseudonym.

"Tracy"

"Tracy" is a female president at Institution A and has been in that role for less than one year, but previously served as president at another community college in Appalachia, albeit in a different subregion of Appalachia, for over ten years. She is not native to Appalachia, but has spent most of her career working at institutions within Appalachia, although she has experience working at community colleges in other geographic regions as well. She is a former entrepreneur and cites that experience as being very valuable to her leadership development and her approach to dealing with all constituents. She does not feel that leading in Appalachia is very different than leading in other rural areas, but does suggest that Appalachia has some "…extreme rural…" areas which pose their own unique challenges. She sees the challenges of Appalachia as similar to other regions with similar economic disparity, but does not think that those challenges are uniquely Appalachian.

Institution A is located in Tennessee and has one campus and several sites and identifies as suburban. It serves several counties including some with very rural communities. Institution A serves over 10,000 credit and non-credit students annually. Geographically, it lies on the fringe of the Appalachian Region with a portion of the service region being part of what the Appalachian Regional Commission considers South

Central Appalachia and a portion not. It is located in a small city which identifies strongly with Appalachian culture.

"Bruce"

"Bruce" has been president of Institution B for over 20 years and is the longest standing college president included in this study. He is not native to Appalachia, but has spent most of his career at community colleges in this region of Appalachia. His institution has multiple campuses, one of which he considers to be in the Appalachian region and one he does not. The Appalachian Regional Commission considers the entire service region of his college to be within the Appalachian region. He does, however, believe that there are significant differences between the campus which he considers to be more Appalachian and the other which is not: "…certainly there is a huge difference in running an institution that has one foot at 3500 (feet), one campus which is one foot at 3500-3700 feet and the other in the flatlands…". He recognizes that the differences in those two campuses, and perhaps differences in leading in Appalachian regions versus non-Appalachian regions, lie in rurality, economic development challenges, and Appalachian culture.

Institution B is a multi-campus institution located in the Appalachian region of North Carolina and serves about 4,000 credit and 8,000 non-credit students each year. Both campuses are located in small towns and serve rural communities. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission sub regions, the entire service region lies in South Central Appalachia.

"Sam"

"Sam" is a male president at Institution C. He has served as president at this institution for one to five years, is a Native Appalachian, and remains committed to spending his entire career in South Central Appalachia. He has experience in two state systems, both in Appalachia. He was at his first community college for many years and held several administrative positions and believes that through this experience, he has developed an in-depth understanding of how colleges in Appalachia function and what it takes to be successful as a leader. "Sam" feels a strong connection to Appalachia and the challenges facing Appalachian colleges and students, stating:

"…I know there are other first generation populations, but *I grew up in the foothills*. My parents, my grandparents are in the region. One of the reasons I did not pursue career advancement in higher education is because my home is important to me and I'm broadening a sense of what home is. I mean home at that time was northwest North Carolina. You know, it incorporated southwest Virginia, but I'm still only an hour and a half from where I grew up, but the sense of place was very important to me. I think it's very important to a lot of our first generation students, and to the extent that I can contribute to my fellow first generation folks- that's something that's important to me. *Very important to me."*

Institution C is located in Virginia and is centrally located within the South Central Appalachian Region. This single campus, multi-site college has about 4,000 students in credit courses and many more in non-credit workforce development programs. Two leaders at Institution C were interviewed during this study, the President and the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services.

"Lawrence"

"Lawrence" is one of the longest standing presidents who was interviewed,

holding the position of president for nearly 20 years at one institution. Lawrence is native

to South Central Appalachia and felt that he sacrificed advancing in his career in order to

remain in his community for his wife and children. He considers himself a "…very

different sort of president…" and is deeply committed to the ideas of transparency in

leadership and connecting strategic priorities to budget decisions. He has held many

different administrative positions at multiple institutions, all of which were located in

South Central Appalachia, including a stint as an interim president. He was quick to point

out that he had several opportunities to advance to other positions at system offices,

larger colleges, and other areas, but remained through a commitment to his home. He

believes that leaders need the ability to adapt to the culture where their institution is

located and, while Appalachia does not require special skills, one should be deeply

committed to serving low income and first generation students.

Institution D serves approximately 5,000 students in Virginia and the entire

service region lies in Appalachia. In addition to the main campus, it operates a center

located in another part of the service region. Two leaders at Institution D were

interviewed for this data collection, the President and a Vice President and,

coincidentally, both are native to South Central Appalachia, and are two of the longest

standing leaders included in this research.

"Richard"

"Richard" has been the president at Institution E for less than five years and is not

native to Appalachia. He considers his professional background in workforce training and

institutional advancement represents a non-traditional path to the presidency. While he does not feel that Appalachia requires special leadership skills, he believes that working at small colleges is very different from working at larger ones and that a leader at a small college needs to be more of a generalist and less of a specialist.

Institution E is a small community college located entirely within the South Central Appalachian region of Virginia. It is a single campus institution with a center at another location. Its enrollment hovers around 2600 annually and it serves a geographically large, mostly rural, service region with some areas that could be considered isolated due to their distance from major highways or towns. Two leaders from Institution E were interviewed, the President and the Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services.

"Howard"

"Howard" has served as president of institution F for less than five years and is not a native to Appalachia. He has served both in and out of Appalachia for many years, including holding the position of Vice President of Academic Affairs at two community colleges, one in a rural South Central Appalachian community and one in a non-Appalachian area. He believes that leading in Appalachia is "…absolutely different…" and like several other leaders who came to Appalachia from other regions, cites a feeling of being an outsider to a closed community. "Howard" is not native to Appalachia, but feels a commitment to the region and is committed to spending his career at small Appalachian colleges.

Institution F is a small, rural community college nestled entirely in the South Central Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. It serves about 3,300 credit students

and about 8,400 workforce development students annually. Featuring a graphic of mountains on their logo, this institution seems to identify more with the idea of being in mountainous Appalachia than others included in the study.

"Gregory"

At the time of the interview, "Gregory" had been selected as the next president of institution G, and was scheduled to take that office just a few weeks later. He is a proud native of Appalachia, has spent his entire career at community colleges in Appalachia, but sees himself as committed to rural America more so than the Appalachian region. He feels that Appalachian communities are different from other communities and that leaders should be aware of that and prepared to adapt, drawing connections between rural Appalachian communities and inner-city communities: "…Appalachia is an awful lot like inner city. It is very much the women of the household who push the children towards education rather than the men of the household. Very clannish…Very family oriented. Neighbor oriented. …without working in another region other than Appalachia I can't speak to it from experience…it seems to me that education is important."

Institution G's service region is located entirely within the Appalachian region of North Carolina, but just on the southern fringe bordering non-Appalachian areas. It is a relatively small institution, which serves approximately 1,100 students in credit courses annually.

"Grace"

"Grace" was the first of two female presidents who were interviewed for this data collection and perhaps the one with the most diverse work experience both in and out of education. She has served as the president of her current institution in South Central

Appalachia for less than five years, but previously served as president at another community college in Central Appalachia for several years, administrative positions at four-year universities, as well as managing multiple non-profit organizations, and owning several of her own businesses. She also has the most diverse academic experience holding multiple undergraduate degrees, multiple master's degrees, a Ph.D., and a J.D. She is not native to Appalachia and while she recognizes that understanding Appalachian culture is important, she feels that having an in depth understanding of the economic development needs of the community is most important, stating: "Both of my Presidencies were in Appalachia and it does clearly define for me, that, and this is the same as some other parts of the country, I don't think that it is completely unique to Appalachia… If you are a successful Community College President in Appalachia, you must understand and be engaged in the economic development process".

Institution H is located in Virginia and is on the fringe of the region defined by the ARC as South Central Appalachia. It has one campus that serves about 3,200 credit seeking students in multiple counties and one city. Two leaders at Institution H were interviewed for this data collection, the President and the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services.

"Erik"

"Erik" has been the president of Institution I for just over a decade, is native to Appalachia and, like some of the other native Appalachian, speaks fondly of his connection to the area. While he has experience at both four year universities and community colleges, he has spent his entire professional career at colleges in Appalachia. He believes that understanding the culture is important for leading at community colleges

in Appalachia. In fact, he believes that he was selected for his current presidency, in part, not because of his community college experience (he had none at the time) but rather for his experience in higher education combined with his knowledge of the Appalachian culture and ability to adapt to an institution's culture. While reflecting on how he was selected for this position, he recalled:

> One of the things that Glenn (Dubois, Chancellor of the VCCS) does that I think is interesting technique for an administrator, when a job search is going on for a higher-level administrator like a president, I think the first thing he does is look at the pile of people who have been rejected before he looked at the pile of people who are moving forward in the search, and so he was looking at the reject pile, and I was in it. He asked the HR Director there in Richmond "what's wrong with this guy? He looks kind of interesting to me…", and she said he doesn't have any community college experience, and Glenn said "just because he can't check that box off we're going to throw him out of the search? He's from the area so he knows the culture. He's had a lot of careers as an administrator…"

"Erik" serves at Institution I, a rural community college located deep in the South Central Appalachian region of Virginia. It serves about 4,000 students annually and has deep cultural roots with Bluegrass music and Native American history, two things both of the leaders from this college who were interviewed enjoyed speaking of. It is a single campus institution in a very rural with pockets that could be considered geographically isolated. Two leaders from Institution I were included in this study, the President and the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services.

"Bryan"

"Bryan" is the president at Institution J and has served in that capacity for just over five years. "Bryan" is not native to Appalachia and this is the first college which serves Appalachian communities at which he has worked. It is important to note that Institution J's service region is only partially in Appalachia. The majority of the geographic service region and the majority of the students are from areas not traditionally considered Appalachian. This, however, allows "Bryan" to compare the more rural Appalachian communities within his service region to the more suburban and urban areas. He recognizes the importance of understanding Appalachian culture and approaches leading in those communities differently than in other parts of his service region. He proudly described his service region as a microcosm of the entire state of North Carolina, saying:

> You got a lot of people who are commuting from [a more urban area] and that area, and then the further you go north, the more traditional it becomes, and if you go north above [interstate] 40, you go back to this really wonderful, rich Appalachian kind of base region that's just beautiful. And I feel there is different culture, and we see and trends with the voting and that kind of thing, so there's a dichotomy kind of microcosm, if you will, of the state as a whole…"

As stated above, Institution J only serves a small pocket located in the mountains of Appalachian. Serving approximately 3,500 credit seeking students on two campus and at multiple sites, leaders at this college commented on their diverse workforce training and early college initiatives. Two leaders from Institution J were interviewed for this study, the President and the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

"Bill"

"Bill" is the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services at Institution K. He has served in this capacity for just over five years at his current institution and in a similar position for over eight years at a prior institution, located in a different sub region of Appalachia. He is not native to the area, but prefers working at smaller colleges more than large urban colleges. Bill does not think that special considerations need be made for leaders serving in Appalachia, but rather believes that leaders should be skilled at leading at small institutions and sees major differences in the size of the college instead of rural versus non-rural, or Appalachian versus non-Appalachian.

"Bill" serves at Institution K, which is located in the northern portion of this subregion of Appalachia in Virginia. Portions of the service region fall into subregions of Appalachia other than South Central. It is a single campus, multi-site institution which serves about 7,000 students in for credit programs.

"Erin"

"Erin" is the Vice President of Instruction and Student Affairs at Institution L and she has served in this capacity for almost five years. She is not native to the region and doesn't consider Institution L to be an Appalachian college despite its locale and service region with community college experience that includes work both in and out of Appalachia. She does not see Appalachia as being more challenged that other regions, but recognizes that the more rural, mountainous portions of the service region face unique challenges that make pursuing higher education more difficult. She says:

> …the [rural] County student-they have come from a high school where their
> senior class had 50 students. They have very little access to dual enrollment. We

do some dual enrollment, but not a ton. So, they have grown up in a very different environment from, say, that students who come from [a larger high school] and those students have a lot more access to dual enrollment classes because it is such a large high school. And they are, in most cases, in such close and easy driving proximity to [this campus] that they can come to [this campus], whereas the [rural] County kids have to come over a mountain to get to [college]. The likelihood of them doing so is much less. So there is a difference for those kids in terms of what they have and the opportunities they have.

Institution L is a suburban community college located entirely within the South Central Appalachian region of Virginia. It serves approximately 12,000 credit students, making it the largest college in the study. Its service region serves a diverse group of large, suburban and small, rural high schools.

"Roberta"

"Roberta" is the Vice President for Instruction and Chief Academic Officer at Institution J, which was described earlier. She reports directly to "Bryan" who was also included in this study. She has served in this role for less than five years, is not native to Appalachia, and does not consider her institution to be Appalachian at all, despite the more rural and mountainous parts of the service region. She thinks of the entire service region as a bedroom community for the nearest large city. She does, however, point out that many people in the Appalachian portion of the service region are not interested in commuting into the city and says that those citizens are committed to the rural areas and are more attracted to technical programs like agribusiness.

"Wanda"

"Wanda" is the Vice President for Academic and Student Services at Institution H and reports directly to "Grace" who was also part of this study. She has served in this capacity at Institution H for less than five years, but is actively applying for presidencies and intends to advance to a presidency in the next few years. She is not native to Appalachia and this is her first leadership position at a community college in Appalachia. "Wanda" believes that it is very important to thoroughly understand the culture of the service region, but does not think that community colleges in Appalachia require a specific set of skills or competencies. Instead, the competency that should be developed is the ability to adapt to an institution's culture. Also, while she believes that the AACC Leadership Competencies are all valuable skills, she says that it excludes many essential skills required of today's leaders such as emergency manager, public relations expertise, and economic developer.

"Hazel"

"Hazel" is the Vice President of Learning and Student Development at Institution C and reports to "Sam" who was also included in this study. She has been in this position for less than a year, is native to South Central Appalachia, and referenced a commitment to spending her career in this region. While she has experiences outside of higher education, all of her experience within higher education has been at Institution C where she advanced from adjunct instructor to Vice President. While she admits that only working in South Central Appalachia limits her frame of reference, she is strongly committed to serving students in this part of Appalachia, proclaiming:

I have no frame reference because I've only been here. *These are my people*, you know? This is where I grew up. This is where I live. These are the folks I can relate to, so I think for me, I don't know. I can't say it's any different. I'm sure it is different, but I don't know how because I don't want to serve another population. I want to serve the population that is here….*I speak Appalachian*. This is my language, you know? I understand where they're coming from. I understand the challenges they have. I get what the students come through to go to school here. I know if you're from [names a rural community] you're not going to have access to the internet. You know, I get what their challenges are, and someone who comes in from another area, they have a hard time believing that our students have some of the barriers that they have.

"Harriet"

"Harriet" is the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services at Institution D, where she serves with "Lawrence" who was also included in this study. At nearly 15 years, "Harriet" is the longest standing of the Vice Presidents who were interviewed and, interestingly enough "Lawrence" was one of the longest standing presidents who were interviewed. "Harriet" is native to South Central Appalachia and also feels a strong commitment to her home and the service region of her college. While she has worked at other community colleges, they have all been located in Virginia and in close proximity to where she grew up. She believes that you have to have an understanding of Appalachian culture to be a strong leader at these colleges and pointed to examples of presidents who she considered to be both strong leaders and possess a strong Appalachian identity.

"Gloria"

"Gloria" is the Vice President of Financial and Administrative Services at Institution E, where she works with "Richard" to whom she directly reports. She is unique in that she is the only Vice President included in the research study who is not responsible for Academic Affairs. She is native to South Central Appalachia and only has higher education experience at Institution E. While she recognizes that the service region faces challenges, she believes these challenges stem from a large, geographically isolated, rural service region and not necessarily from being located in Appalachia.

"Francis"

"Francis" is the Vice President of Academic and Student Services at Institution I where she works with President "Erik". She is a native of Appalachia and is proud to call that part of Virginia her home. She has worked at Institution I for more than 30 years with the last six as Vice President. She commented that she believes the ability to adapt to Appalachian culture and to the culture of the institution is an overlooked skill, saying:

> I think it is a unique individual that leads in Appalachia and, no offense to an individual from the North, I will say, or a different geographic region, when they come in to lead they have to develop an understanding of first of all the dialect, they have to have an understanding of family, *because we put our families first in Appalachia...* It's about fit, cultural fit. So when someone does come in from the outside, they may not stay as long as someone that loves the Appalachian culture. They may adapt very well but, in large part, they spend the first few years trying to figure out how to work collaboratively and effectively with those that they are working with.

Interviews took place over the course of five weeks during the spring and early summer of 2016. Throughout those interviews and conversations, many themes emerged. While many themes were related to research questions, there were also some insightful threads which are valuable, but may not be directly related to research questions. The following sections identifies those themes, threads, and surprises. In chapter five, the findings are interpreted, connected to the literature review, and explored further.

Major Themes

Theme I: Communication, Collaboration, and Resource Management

When asked questions about the American Association of Community College's Competencies for Community College Leaders, a common thread quickly emerged. While many leaders commented that each of the six AACC competencies are valuable, three emerged as being the most valuable for community college leaders in Appalachia: collaboration, communication, and resource management. 15 of 18 participants (83%) discussed communication and collaboration as being deeply connected and the two competencies most needed to successfully lead community colleges in Appalachia. 55% of participants, including 2/3 of presidents interviewed, and also mentioned resource management as an imperative competency. The remaining competencies were all also mentioned, though with less frequency. Community college advocacy was mentioned by five participants, organizational strategy by five, and professionalism by four.

Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration were almost always discussed together and were by far the two most mentioned and expanded upon. While some participants, such

as "Hazel" saw communication and collaboration as prerequisites that one must master before they can achieve the other competencies. When asked which of the competencies she believes to be the most important she answered, without hesitation:

> Collaboration and Communication. Because you get have anything done without either one and I think if you have the collaboration and the communication you can manage the resources, you can manage the structure, the organizational structure, and obviously if you have communication and collaboration it leads to professionalism.

> Similarly, "Grace" observed: "Communication is always the number one because if you can't manage the communication then you can't do any of these others. Every other competency is founded on communication."

"People come up my driveway…"

In perhaps the most representative sentiment related to this topic, President "Erik" points out that communication and collaboration are important in all of higher education, but especially at small colleges in rural areas where presidents are expected to be accessible to faculty, staff, students, and members of the community. He spoke of a previous institution where he worked and never met the president versus his current institution where people come to visit him at home when they have a concern:

> Communication is one of the things about being a higher education administrator in a community college is even who you are whether you're president or vice president. ["Francis"] and I, as far as I'm concerned, this place is ran with a two-person team. It's me and the academic vice president. Not that the others aren't important, but the most important is the academic vice president, and whether it's

at the VP level or the president level, community college leaders live so close to the ground. *People come up my driveway* when they have concerns or questions, and so communication is key because you're going to be battling constantly with rumors and issues, and what the counselor at [a prior institution], a good friend of mine, well he just left and retired. I don't know the new lady, but when [the previous president] was there, you couldn't get to the man if you wanted to. If you wanted to go to his office and say 'I want to talk to the president', you have to talk to 15 people before you ever get there. They come up my driveway. So the communication part is key for the communities and dealing with people in the community because everybody thinks they know what's going on at the community college. They think they know what's going on, and the other part of communication isn't just with the people who work here- faculty and staff and students, we never want to be far, and I think *communication and collaboration can't be separated.* If you don't collaborate, you're not communicating. Some of these things, organizational strategy, resource management, community college advocacy. I guess one point I would like to think of those things as you better be the type of leader who can pick people to be part of your team who can help you do those kind of things, especially resource management. I don't have the time or the inclination to manage a 16 million dollar budget except from on high, so I want the 5 miles view, and that means I have to hire somebody who rolls like that. [Someone] who can get in the weeds and clearly understand all the aspects of that, in any of these things what makes a good leader is that you can find good people

and hire good people and keep good people to do those things, but the ones you've got to do without a doubt for me would be the communication and collaboration.

While most of the participants spoke of communication and collaboration in general terms, some gave specific examples of how they use these skills to deal with some of the challenges unique to their area or their service region. Some common examples include collaborating with K-12 to expanding dual enrollment as a way to combat population decline, partnering with business and industry in creative ways to confront economic development challenges, using institutional leaders in fundraising to deal with declining state appropriations, and rethinking communication channels to increase transparency as a response to increased public accountability.

Resource Management

The third most referenced leadership competency was resource management. 10 of 18 participants (55%), including six of nine presidents (66%) discussed resource management as being an imperative competency for leading in this region of Appalachia. Declining state appropriations, declining enrollments, performance based funding, responsible use of public funds and weak local economies were all cited by leaders as pressing reasons to make resource management a priority at the highest levels of management at community colleges in South Central Appalachia. A representative quote of this theme can be found in "Gloria's" response when asked which of the AACC competencies she thinks are most valuable for leading at Institution E, she replied:

> I would say organizational strategy and resource management because they kind of go hand-in-hand. We have to be strategic because we are losing population. We have to manage resources so we can be open for the future, and sometimes that

means doing more with less. That's hard as far as sustaining your people because we know we're asking them to do more than they have in the past or then we have someone in that position in the past just so we can maintain resources and be strategic and still be here for our students.

Similarly, President "Grace" recognizes the importance of resource management and development in a rural Appalachian community, which operates in a community college system which is committing to a performance based funding model:

Resource management, we are all managing resources, but we understand that the Appalachian [region] is a region of deficit. So you are automatically in a deficit resource situation. So it's not just managing the resource if you have zero plus, your always backfilling. You're always trying to level the playing field. Its resource management in a deficit economy. It's one thing not to have enough to do the stuff you want to do , it's another thing to not have enough to do what you absolutely need to do and the depleting population is part of our greatest enemy. And really the disconnect sometimes can dilute what policy makers understand. We can only control another grown human beings behavior so much. While I applaud funding based on completion to some degree, you're really putting the college in a role of trying to manage behavior and manage, that we have no control over. It's akin to big government controlling what we can do and individual responsibility, but now we've put the funding models in colleges based on student behavior that we do not control.

Additional Competency: Adapting to Culture

Interviewees were also asked if they felt the list of leadership competencies is complete or, if they could add important competencies to the list, what would they add for leaders in Appalachia. Many agreed that the list was complete, but made several suggestions of competencies that they feel are important to leading at colleges in South Central Appalachia. All of the suggestions of additional competencies, along with the number of participants who discussed each, are listed below:

- Cultural awareness and ability to adapt to culture- 14

- Entrepreneurial mindset- 4

- Authentic leadership style- 3

- Ability to manage change- 3

- Empathy-3

- Emotional intelligence- 2

- Staff development-1

- Ability to use data- 1

- Model behavior-1

- Emergency planner-1

- Transparency-1

- Board relations-1

- Patience-1

The majority of participants, 14 of 18 or 78%, discussed the importance of the ability for community college leaders to be able to adapt to the regional, local, and institutional cultures of the institutions they serve. This theme became evident early and

was one of the most discussed topics of the interviews. These leaders feel that adapting to culture is a leadership competency which was overlooked by the AACC study and should be considered as professionals seek to advance to higher leadership positions or seek to implement change at their organizations. Most of these leaders also pointed out that South Central Appalachian community colleges also have their own unique cultures, challenges, and opportunities that aspiring leaders should be aware of. President "Tracy" pointed out "I think the competencies translate across the board. There are qualities that an individual leader translates naturally. That is part of what it is saying, that you understand the environment in which you are placed."

Similarly, "Francis" described a similar sentiment in saying:

… I have said that the competencies, I think it applies everywhere for effective leaders, Matt. But I think it is a unique individual that leads in Appalachia and, no offense to an individual from the North, I will say, or a different geographic region, when they come in to lead they have to develop an understanding. First of all the dialect, they have to have an understanding of family, because we put our families first in Appalachia… So, you know, it's about fit for the leadership. It's about fit, cultural fit. So when someone does come in from the outside, they may not stay as long as someone that loves the Appalachian culture. They may adapt very well but, in large part, they spend the first few years trying to figure out how to work collaboratively and effectively…

"Hazel" provided additional insight by recounting a recent leader who was hired at her college who did not attempt to understand the local culture and has struggled professionally in his position. She recalled:

"…the idea of being able to adapt to the culture of that Institution. I'm going to give you a good example. Are we speaking confidentially? …So we hired someone who is racially diverse to be a leader at the college, and we thought bringing that diversity here was going to be wonderful. I was surprised that that person when they came here felt themselves be different and did not make an effort to learn our culture. That surprised me because I think the people here, the employees here really wanted to embrace and learn about his culture, but he didn't seem to understand when he came here it was critical for him to understand the culture here…This particular individual came into the door talking about how he was not bringing his family here because the schools here we're not good enough for his children. Now if you want to offend people right off the bat, please come in and say that to us. We're all the product of these schools and so are our children and, you know, private, high- dollar private schools are not an option for us here.

Theme II: Adapting to Appalachian Culture

While discussing the importance of a leader being able to adapt to culture, many leaders had an opinion on characteristics or challenges of South Central Appalachian culture which leaders and aspiring leaders should be prepared to adapt to. For example, President "Erik" observed:

…So we have that challenge too but you also have that challenge of there is not a culture of Education in the Appalachian Mountains. There's a culture of family, and that's great. There's a culture or religion. I personally think that's great too. There's not a culture of higher education.

President "Bryan", whose service region lies both in and out of Appalachia, lent perspective on the Appalachian portions of his service region, saying:

My perception is that anytime you're president of an institution you're going to find uniqueness and cultural things and heritage things that you have to have a good perspective of and have a feel for, so I would say Appalachia has a culture and a heritage and history one has to recognize and be cognitive of. It probably is different than what you might find in eastern North Carolina with the coastal regions and even the central part of the state, piedmont. Our piedmont North Carolina has become an area of you know a lot of relocated people, and I think with the Appalachian region you have less of the movement of folks in and out, and you have a culture and a heritage that there and very stable and very strong that doesn't change much, so from that point of view, I think anywhere you are there is a culture that you got to be aware of, but I would think that in the Appalachian regions, in my perception, there is less movement in and out, so you're not going to have as great of diversity in my opinion as you would some other regions in the state, and I think that's a good thing, not necessarily a bad thing at all.

Participants observed several things which they consider to be challenges that their institutions currently face as a result of their location in South Central Appalachia. Of those who commented on those challenges, 10 of 18, do not feel that these challenges are unique to or more prevalent in Appalachia, but rather are characteristic of all colleges which are small, rural, or located in economically depressed areas. Five participants commented that they do not feel they are qualified to speak to challenges that colleges in

other regions face since they are limited to only working in South Central Appalachia. A list of those challenges and the number of participants who referenced them is listed below:

- Declining enrollments due to declining population and outmigration- 12

- Workforce development challenges such as dependence on one industry, industry leaving, or job loss- 8

- Geographic isolation in all or part of service region- 6

- Lack of internet access in parts of service region- 4

- No public transportation- 2

- Overdependence on grants- 2

- Difficulty attracting qualified faculty- 2

- Drug use-2

Addressing a few of the many of the challenges of leading at community colleges in South Central Appalachia such as low-income students, self-efficacy, and what he called "Appalachian Pride" President "Lawrence" observed the following:

Any President should understand that dealing with a population that is like 75%, either first generation or low income that's what backs you into the student success, into a deeper understanding of what it takes to be successful. Taking students who are insecure, taking students who have not been good students, taking students who are coming from homes where the language in that home never included going to college. It's all foreign to them and if we, as Presidents don't understand and differentiate, it doesn't necessarily mean that my leadership style is any different, it just means my focus and my strategic planning, and taking

ownership in the kind of change processes to influence everybody to be in the

most biggest, the biggest collaborative at their college that's ever been put in

place… .

He went on, recounting a story of a student who would not admit to being unable

to afford text books:

"…a student could not afford a book and he was trying to get along without a

book and ended up getting an A in the class since they solved that [problem].

There's a lot of pride in Appalachian people. I couldn't stress that enough to you,

the different shapes the Appalachian culture. Their proud people so they don't

want people to know the real reason that things are not working for them in their

life. Life's getting in the way; issues are huge to these students.

Reflecting a similar theme of student self-efficacy and Appalachian culture,

President "Sam" said:

I guess we all carry our own bias perceptions of what somebody says as

Appalachia. My experience growing up at the foothills region is that there is a lot

of pride and integrity. I think people want to be independent, and I think in some

ways that works against a certain segment of our population that we serve because

they don't avail themselves of some of the support. It's a pull yourself up by the

boot straps mentality.... I do think there's an element of that that runs in the

culture of the Appalachia.

As stated earlier, many participants stressed that one need not have a special set of

skills or be from a certain area, but rather the skill of understanding and adapting to

regional and institutional cultures. As "Bruce", the longest standing president interviewed

for this study, put it "I wouldn't want for external people to think: 'by God you got to have a special 'whatever' to go up in them hills!' You know what I mean?"

Theme III: Professional Development Experiences

Most Influential Experiences

As part of this study, participants were asked to discuss what they believe to be the most influential professional development experiences which have best prepared them to lead their community colleges in South Central Appalachia. Each response, along with the number of participants who referenced it, is listed below:

- On the job training- 9

- Formal academic experiences- 8

- Mentors-6

- Formal leadership training (AACC,SACSCOC, etc)- 4

- Professional experiences outside of higher education- 4

- Owning own business-3

- Membership in professional organizations- 2

- Military- 1

While eight different types of professional development experiences were discussed, no one experience was brought up by the majority of participants. On-the-job training experiences were the most often discussed, as brought up by eight participants. Every respondent, however, discussed multiple experiences and the combination of them as being influential, formative, and, in combination, what makes them unique. A representative excerpt is "Erin's" views her own most influential professional

development experiences. She cited formal academic training, on the job experiences, and professional organizations as all being important:

I did the ODU CCL (Community College Leadership) program as I was a dean. Having that education while I was directly involved in community college leadership was priceless. While I was writing a paper I was applying it to [her institution]. I was living it every day and learning about what I was doing every day. I would say that has been the most significant professional development that I have done. I have done some other programs, I did the American Association of Community Colleges Leadership program and that was great. I did the VCCS leadership program, which was also great. Most of them made me think. I, like most deans in the VCCS have learned, trial by fire, on the job.

Similar to "Erin", "Sam" explained how on the job training has been most important for him, but it is the combination of experiences that develop effective leaders. In the following statement, he references on the job training (OJT), mentors, and professional organizations:

It clearly is a combination. If I have to say the most effective thing, it's OJT. It's having someone first of all believe in you and recognize that you know you've got some potential, and we're going to give you some opportunities, and from there it's up to you to make it or break it, but I think that OJT and just dealing with the day to day issues that come up whether that's in student services or whether that's in instruction and understanding the challenges those folks faced through experience of time, making a database of your own with information to draw on, and I think that helps, and I think it also helps, Matt, to get broad experience, and

I don't know if everybody has the benefit of that opportunity, but the IE/IR part allowed me to literally work one on one with every faculty member at the institution, every full time faculty member. It allowed me to work with student services. It allowed me to work with the development office. It allowed me to work with the business office. You know so the IE/IR experience was extremely valuable in learning in depth about the institution, but also in forming relationships with people and good working relationships. On the instructional student services side, I think it's just the day to day. You know if there's a student crisis you know this student has an appeal, this faculty member has run into a problem with their curriculum, it's dealing with that and amassing that. That being said, it is important for people to go to the professional development opportunities. It is like New Horizons or like the North Carolina Community College System conference and part for the value of that is of course hearing inspirational speakers getting good ideas from other institutions, but it's also a chance to pick the brains of your colleagues while that is going on.

Entrepreneurial Experiences

One category of "most influential professional development experiences" that surfaced in this study is the experience that presidents who are former entrepreneurs gained through owning and operating their own businesses. While many leaders claim to have had a "non-traditional" set of experiences or path to the presidency, three presidents reported having experience owning and operating businesses not related to higher education. In all three cases, the presidents were adamant that this experience uniquely prepared them to lead community colleges by instilling uncommon value and developing

unique skills necessary to lead community colleges. Those three presidents are "Tracy", "Howard", and "Grace". "Howard" said:

> Well, this is going to sound a little strange. But, the best preparation that I had for doing anything in my professional life is the 11 years I spent owning a small business. I learned more about how to deal with people and how to deal with problems in that 11 years and there is nothing that focuses your attention more than if you are sitting there looking at somebody and you are about to lose money and that money goes to feed your children and put gas in the vehicle and keep the business doors open. That focuses your attention way better than all the other things that you sit in on. So, I know it is probably the common answer or the answer you were looking for, but being self-employed I used to tell people that everybody should be self-employed and have to do it to stay alive because it really is the best training ground of anything I have ever done. It was very much the school of hard knocks. You don't go off to special training sessions, you are just dealing with people one after another, after the other, after the other.

Similarly, "Grace" commented:

I don't know if that is because I'm an entrepreneur and have been an entrepreneur. I don't know if it's just a reality of the way entrepreneurs operate, function within their world, entrepreneurs create their future. You're really creating everything, every day. That's why you're an entrepreneur, that's different than being a small business owner. Entrepreneur is very different and I think that the community college president probably overall but most especially economically challenged area, entrepreneurial skills really come front and

foremost. It's a different kind of leadership because you are really looking at what do I have. You can't operate off a wish list of student funding going up or getting this or getting that. That's not reality so you're much more focused on what do I really have, like a good entrepreneur.

Theme IV: Being from "Off"

All of the previous themes were directly related to the research questions. However, one additional theme surfaced which is not directly related to the research questions. While this theme was discussed in detail by a small number of participants, one should note that these participants were similar in specific ways and described very similar experiences. Many participants who moved into to Appalachia from areas outside of Appalachia, noted that they struggled being accepted into the local community or earning the trust of key constituents. In all, three presidents and two vice presidents commented on this phenomenon. President "Bruce" commented: "There is this culture, and I realize that from me being in [a previous institution], because I was referred to at [that institution], and I didn't take it disparagingly, I was referred to as the man from off. Because I lived 'off the mountain.'".

This same phrase came up again in President "Gregory's" interview, when he recalled: "That is the thing. If they are from "off". I have been here 25 years and I am not a local. My son was born here, he is not local. Nobody knows my grandparents so I have got to earn people's trust and it took quite a while". He also discussed the need to be patient when earning trust, recognizing that it will take longer for an outsider to earn trust than someone who is from the region: "The folks who have settled here tend to be multigenerational. So anybody who is not from up here knows- they are looked upon

with skepticism- not necessarily overtly, but kind of covertly. The thing we laugh about up here is if somebody is from "off" means they are from off the mountain. The folks here will be very friendly, but they take their time to make sure that new person in the community is square. Patience, I think, is really important.

"Bill" also admits to feeling like an outsider when working in the community, remembering a recent meeting: "I went to a forum advisory, agriculture advisory committee meeting, probably six months ago and the first thing that…everybody is introducing themselves and again, whether this is Appalachia or valley culture, but everybody had to basically identify who they knew that was related to the person at the table… It was almost like it was checking the boxes as we went around the room." He went on to point out that the president of his institution (who was not interviewed for this study) comments that he still feels like at outsider after 22 years as a president.

The concept of not readily accepting new leaders into the community also surfaced from natives of South Central Appalachia who views it not as an inconvenience, but a necessity of operating in these communities. In general, "Bill" considers being native Appalachian an advantage to gaining trust early.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the purpose statement and research questions and the methodology used for this study. Context was provided via a brief discussion of the state systems in South Central Appalachia and a brief description of each participant and their college. The major findings were presented. The major findings of the study are

I. Community college leaders in South Central Appalachia recognize the importance of all of AACC's Competencies of Community College

Leaders, but especially value communication, collaboration, and resource management.

II.   In general, they feel that the competencies are representative of what is needed for success, but they stressed the importance of the ability to adapt to regional and institutional cultural nuances.

III.   While many influential professional development experiences were discussed, leaders in South Central Appalachia most value their on the job training and formal academic training experiences. Of note was that the participants felt that their leadership style is the product of many experiences and they are not defined by one or two experiences. Similarly, leaders who had any previous experiences owning their own business adamantly cited that experience as the most valuable.

IV.   Some leaders who are not native to Appalachia and serve in rural, somewhat isolated service regions commented on their feeling of being an outsider and struggling to gain the trust of constituents. This feeling was still prevalent even after many years of service and was observed of other leaders in Appalachia.

Chapter five will summarize the findings and explain how they answer the research questions and will present a brief discussion on each of the findings. Findings will be discussed within the context of the literature review. Implications for practice will be discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research will be suggested.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of this study, the purpose of which was to discover 1) if rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia assessments of the leadership competencies necessary for success in their current roles are congruent with the AACC Leadership Competencies for Community College Leaders and 2) the professional development experiences and formal academic preparation that rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their leadership successes. In this chapter, research questions and methods are briefly reviewed, each theme described and connected to a research question, discussed, then linked, and compared to findings in the literature review. Implications for practice and opportunities for further research are also presented and discussed.

Research Questions and Methods

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What leadership competencies do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their professional success or the successes of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

2. What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area?

3. How do 1) position within the institution, 2) professional background and academic preparation, and 3) institutional role effect leaders' perceptions of which leadership competencies have contributed to their professional success or the success of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

4. Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed?

For this phenomenological inquiry, interviews were conducted with 18 community college leaders currently working in South Central Appalachia. Interviews were conducted with leaders in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. All interviews were either conducted in person or via phone, and each interview lasted about an hour utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol which had been pilot tested. Additional information was collected as part of a document analysis. Publicly available information such as curriculum vitae, resumes (when available), press releases, profiles on social media, and other information was collected. Then interviews were transcribed, coded, combined with the information collected through the document analysis and the results organized into themes. Themes were identified and synthesized using textual narrative synthesis. Once synthesized, quotes most representative of the themes were identified. Information was stored on secure server space provided by Old Dominion University and it was audited by an independent auditor trained in qualitative research methods.

Discussion of Findings

Theme I: Communication, Collaboration, and Resource Management

Community college leaders in South Central Appalachia recognize that all six of the American Association of Community College's Leadership Competencies are valuable, but they perceive three as being absolutely imperative for leadership success: communication and collaboration were almost always discussed together as if they are competencies that are so closely linked it is impossible to have one without the other. Resource management was also discussed quite often, especially when the topics of declining enrollments, unstable state appropriations, or performance based funding was brought up.

Other competencies were brought up by participants but not as frequently. One competency which surfaced much more than all of the other competencies espoused by the AACC is the idea of cultural adaptability. Participants felt that leaders must have the ability to understand regional and institutional cultural nuances that make an institution unique and adapt to the institution's cultural environment. In the context of this data collection, many leaders, especially those native to Appalachia, discussed this in terms of adapting to Appalachian culture, but also almost invariably would point out that the ability to adapt is necessary for success in any organizational culture. These findings directly address research question two and four:

> Research Question 2: What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area? **In South Central Appalachia,**

community college leaders most value communication, collaboration, and resource management.

This study suggests that communication, collaboration, and resource management are the most valuable leadership competencies for successfully leading community colleges in Appalachia. This finding is strongly supported by the literature review, as many presidents cited reasons similar to concepts discussed in other studies. Specifically, the concepts of meeting the challenges facing contemporary community colleges through collaboration and savvy resource management. Eddy (2013) argued community college leadership has entered into the "Collaboration Era" which is different from other eras because leaders are forced to collaborate to deal with declining state appropriations, rely on middle managers, and spend a great deal of their time fundraising, all of which were strong threads of discussion throughout the interviews. The idea of a collaborative leader instead of a "hero" leader as discussed in the literature review strongly supports this finding.

RQ4. Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed? **In South Central Appalachia, community college leaders feel that the ability to adapt to culture is a skill overlooked by the AACC Leadership Competencies.**

`   The current study suggests community college leaders need the ability to adapt to the regional and institutional culture of the institution and communities they serve. While the importance of being aware of South Central Appalachian culture was discussed by

many participants, the clear finding was that the essential competency for leadership is the ability to adapt to any culture in which a leader desires to work. While South Central Appalachian culture provided the context for the discussion and some of the defining characteristics of Appalachia were discussed, most participants agreed that the trick is adapting to the culture in which the institution is located. Appalachia has its own uniqueness, as does every region, institution, and student body. By in large, those interviewed felt that the ability to adapt to regional and organizational culture is absent from the AACC Leadership Competencies, but is essential for success. Some of their observations on adapting to South Central Appalachian Culture specifically are addressed in the next theme. This theme was absent from the literature review.

Theme II: Adapting to Appalachian Culture

The second theme which surfaced is closely related to the first. Leaders recognized that one needs the ability to adapt to the culture in which they wish to lead, but went on to discuss their observations on South Central Appalachian culture. Leaders commented on a culture of pride, integrity, family, and self-sufficiency. Some leaders observed that some of these traits when combined with challenges of the region like a high proportion of first generation students, economic development challenges, low educational attainment, and geographic isolation create additional challenges for students in Appalachia.

This finding is partially supported by the literature review, but only in terms of common challenges which institutions in rural areas face, not specifically South Central Appalachia. Since most of the institutions in the data collection are rural, it is not surprising that these challenges were discussed. Appalachia, which is by in large very

rural, exhibits similar challenges. The threads of additional economic development challenges such as overdependence on one industry, e.g., coal, timber, furniture, or textile mills, is also supported by Appalachian Regional Commission data (2016). These are but a few of the specific cultural idiosyncrasies of which leaders at community colleges in Appalachia should be aware. In terms of leadership theory, this finding is supported by contingency leadership theories, cultural leadership theories, and social/emotional intelligence. This finding addresses research question four:

> RQ4: Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed? **In South Central Appalachia, leaders should be sensitive to the economic development challenges of the area and culture of self-sufficiency and family. These characteristics, when combined with a low sense of self-efficacy, can make it difficult to convince students of the value of education or hard to provide support services.**

Theme III: Professional Development Experiences

This study also sought to discover which professional development experiences participants found to be most valuable in preparing them to lead in South Central Appalachia. On the job training and formal academic experiences were the most popular responses, but nearly every respondent was quick to recognize that their professional development cannot be summed up by one or two key experience. These leaders felt strongly that their careers represent a lifetime of professional development experiences, personal experiences, and opportunities. This finding addresses research question two:

Research Question 2: What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area? **Community college leaders in South Central Appalachia most value their on the job training and formal academic experiences for professional development, but feel they were developed by a combination of many factors and experiences.**

This finding is partially supported by the literature review. Cejda (2012) found that leaders at rural community colleges are more likely to rely on on-the-job training while leaders at urban or suburban colleges were more likely to cite formal academic experiences as the most useful. Nine leaders in South Central Appalachia cited on the job training and nearly as many, eight, cited formal academic experiences. However, most of the participants who cited formal academic work admitted that it was most valuable when combined with their experiences. Because of this difference, this also represents a new contribution to the literature.

Similarly, there is another interesting finding. Three of the participants who had previously owned their own business passionately cited that experience as the most influential professional experience in their careers. Furthermore, they explained how this experience has placed them at a distinct advantage over other presidents and cited the lack of an "entrepreneurial mindset" as a potential skill that needs to be developed among community college leaders. This observation is both new to the literature and warrants further study. It also addresses research questions two and three:

Research Question 2: What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area?

Research Question 3. How do 1) position within the institution, 2) professional background and academic preparation, and 3) institutional role effect leaders' perceptions of which leadership competencies have contributed to their professional success or the success of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?

Community college leaders in South Central Appalachia with entrepreneurial experiences strongly feel that they are better prepared because of those experience and cited them as the most influential professional development experiences in their respective careers.

Theme IV: Being from "Off"

Related to themes of adaptability and thoughts on South Central Appalachian culture, many participants who are not native to Appalachia commented on feeling like an outsider, not being accepted into the local community, or being looked upon with suspicion. Two different presidents used a colloquial term, "from off", to describe how others spoke of them. While the leaders did not seem offended or discouraged by this feeling, they did comment that it is something that new and aspiring leaders should be aware of and prepared to adapt to. This finding addresses research questions two:

Research Question 2: What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for

effectively leading institutions in a rural area? **As an extension of the theme of adapting to culture, community college leaders in South Central Appalachia who are not native to the region feel it is important to recognize that a leader will be seen as an outsider by many constituents for many years.**

Interestingly, this theme came up in multiple ways. Current leaders who are not natives commented on this feeling and how they have come to accept it. Leaders who are native to South Central Appalachia commented on the need for leaders to understand the regional culture and be confront those unique challenges. Some even gave examples of skilled administrators who failed to build that equity or failed to recognize the uniqueness of culture and described how their careers may have suffered. However, it should be noted that while leaders feel that an awareness and understanding is important, they also strongly feel that non-natives can, and regularly do, adapt nicely to rural Appalachian culture and become fine leaders. To reiterate another theme, the unique skill is not adapting to Appalachian culture, but rather ability to understand and adapt to the culture in which you lead, including Appalachia.

This finding is supported by the literature review. Contingency leadership theory, social/emotional intelligence, and transformative leadership styles all support this finding. Amey (2006) recognized that cultural and organizational contextual influences strongly effects leadership effectiveness. Her research posits that the cognitive development of leaders (i.e. understanding and willingness to adapt to the community) and the cognitive development of followers (i.e. constituents accepting non-native leaders into their communities) are important and can lead to strong shared leadership, collaborative leadership, and can assist in initiative meaningful change.

This theme surfaced in another way which was not immediately evident. Some of the college presidents who are native to Appalachia and have served in their communities for many years, sought to test the credibility of the researcher conducting the interview. On one occasion, before the interview began, the president inquired as to where I am from and then engaged in a discussion about the Scotch-Irish influences on how place names are pronounced. In this case, the discussion was about McDowell County, West Virginia which, I understood, is locally pronounced as "MAC-dowell". That same president was interested in my hometown, family name, and so on. Other leaders wanted to know why this topic was chosen and were hesitant to describe their home as more challenged than other areas, despite what data may suggest. Another president constantly tested my knowledge of higher education practices by asking questions like: "can you explain that to me, son?" and "…now tell me why that is important." While this did help the researcher to build credibility and rapport, it became clear later that the participant who were native to the region needed to know my background, a little of my history, and trust I was not going to portray Appalachia in a disparaging way.

Implications for Practice

This study and these findings related to community college leadership in South Central Appalachia, adapting to local and organizational culture, and influential professional development experiences have several implications for practice. Implications for current community college leaders, aspiring community college leaders, leadership development programs, and search committees, boards of trustees, and other hiring managers are discussed in this section. For leaders currently leading in this part of Appalachia, it is valuable to recognize that it is common for leaders not native to the

region to feel like an outsider or a sense of not belonging. If leaders are aware that this is a common experience, they can take steps to recognize their cultural awareness and expedite adaptation. Leaders struggle with adapting may choose to learn about cultural leadership models, reach out to other leaders to discuss, or find new ways to connect to the community.

Aspiring leaders can use these findings to better understand how they will be received in a leadership role within these communities. They should take care to learn about the regional culture, especially the economic development and educational attainment challenges facing the region. If they are native to the region they may be able to use that privilege to build credibility and rapport, but if they are not they can develop a heightened sense of awareness of the region and consider ways to adapt. Professionals who aspire to leadership roles at community colleges in Appalachia who are not native to the region can accept realistic expectations and know that they may not be immediately or wholly accepted as part of the community. This should not serve as a deterrent, however, but only as a consideration. Leaders who are not from this area can expect this period of assimilation to be prolonged and know that they may always be considered an outsider.

Leadership development programs may use these findings to supplement curricula to include material on how to adapt to the unique culture within different institutions. While focusing on a region as specific as South Central Appalachia may be too narrowly focused to benefit every student, discussions on regional economic development, how to assess the culture of an institution for fit, and how to adapt to a leadership role once there could be beneficial.

Those responsible for posting, screening, and selecting institutional leaders such as search committees, boards of trustees, and other hiring managers can also benefit from these findings. Leist (2007) advocated for the "ruralizing" of job descriptions to better describe the context in which the organization operates. This is a practice which institutions in this part of Appalachia could expand upon by including information of economic development trends, descriptions of the communities served, and so on. Hiring managers should be aware of the importance of institutional fit is and consider the ability of a leader to adapt to the local culture as part of the hiring process. Hiring managers, search committees, and boards of trustees can make potential leaders aware and take action to aid in their assimilation.

Future Research

As a result of this study, I have several recommendations and see many opportunities for future research related to these which could further advance the topic. Specifically, further research surrounding the experiences, strengths, and successes of community college leaders with entrepreneurial backgrounds should be addressed. While leaders with this type of experience in their background are certainly the minority, their unique career paths, outlook or organizational behavior, and leadership is certainly different and would make for a useful insight into that phenomenon. With an increased need for collaboration, creative thinking, and resource development, community colleges could see more leaders with an entrepreneurial background in the coming years.

While this study focused on South Central Appalachia, and other studies have looked at other geographic regions, a future useful study would be to expand the geographic region and compare the findings to other regions. For example, the entire

Appalachia region could be studied examining similarities and differences between subregions or areas could be compared based on economic development engines. Such an inquiry could compare, as an example, the coal producing regions of West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky with the furniture dependent regions of Virginia and North Carolina.

A third suggestion is to compare the perceptions that leaders from this region have with other regions, compare by institution locale, type, and other variables. A clear theme emerged in this study in that leaders value communication and collaboration (which they largely considered to be an inseparable and mandatory pair) and resource management. These colleges are all located in South Central Appalachia, most are small in size, and most are located in rural areas. While this allowed me an in depth look at these leaders, it also offers an opportunity to expand this study to other regions with other defining characteristics and challenges.

Further Reflections and Conclusion

In this concluding section, I connect my findings to the existing literature, briefly discuss some of the thoughts and feelings that I had, challenges that I faced, and a few of the defining realizations or "Ah-Ha!" moments that occurred during this data collection. My research connects to, advances and is supported by the work of many other researchers whose works are discussed in the literature review. Specifically, I found the works of Dr. Pamela Eddy (2010) to be especially relevant, especially her work on multidimensional leadership in complex organizations, career pathways, leadership development, leader/constituent relationship, and application of the AACC Leadership Competencies to various practical contexts. While not specific to community colleges,

Edgar Schein's (2004) work on defining organizational culture, assumptions about external adaptation, cultural typologies, and model for assessing cultural dimensions strongly support my findings on relating to Appalachian culture and explaining why some leaders feel as outsiders. Several traditional and contemporary leadership theories explored in the Northouse (2013) text also support how leaders view themselves, how they adapt to organizational culture, how they hope to influence organizational culture, and inform their approaches, both intentional and unintentional, to dealing with constituents. Of particular application to this study are contingency, transformational, servant, and team leadership theories and his discussions on culture and women in leadership.

I selected this topic because of my academic background in strategic leadership, observations made in my professional career, and my connection to Appalachia. I love Appalachia and it will always be my home, despite where I live, work, or study. When I read about rural colleges, I always gravitate towards those in Appalachia, especially in the South Central Region. I found this sentiment to be strong in many of the native Appalachians whom I interviewed. The first, and maybe most important revelation for me, is how important it is to adapt to the local culture where you want to lead. This data collection focused on South Central Appalachia, but that is not to say that the importance of recognizing and adapting to culture isn't necessary in other regions. The skill is adapting to culture and having a passion for helping students, whoever *those* students may be. For me, it is Appalachia and everything that goes along with it. But for many, it is low-income students, first generation students, aspiring nurses, or maybe students from an underserved population. That thread, while not addressed in any of the findings of this

study, was an underlying theme for many of the interviews and I now feel more pride than ever to be part of community colleges and all that we represent. As one interviewee said: "These are my people."

As for the data collection, I found it to be quite enjoyable. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the conversations that I had with community college leaders, the inspiring men and women, who entertained my questions about leadership competencies, adapting to culture, and influential professional development experiences. The responses were not taken lightly. Responses were detailed and carefully delivered. I personally conducted the interviews, listened to the recordings multiple times, transcribed, coded, and themed each one. By the end, I felt connected to each of these leaders in a much more meaningful way. I could not have achieved this level of depth by any means other than a conversation (semi-structured data collection), by reading body language, asking follow up questions, and delving deeper. In some cases I had a professional relationship with the leaders I interviewed. In others I had to spend time to develop a little rapport with them. Once the interviews, transcriptions, and analysis was complete, I felt overwhelmed. I had hours of recordings, hundreds of pages of notes, data collected from multiple sources that I now needed to do something with. It wasn't until I stepped away for a few days that I was able to synthesize the information and make broader connections. In all, it was an enjoyable experience and I am grateful for the opportunities.

One of the many "Ah-ha!" moments that I had was after one of the interviews. I had left my house at 4am to arrive at an 8am interview in person with a president, in his office. After the interview he showed me around campus and we discussed his college, bluegrass music, and the service region. He asked why I was drawn to the topic. When I

explained he said: "Matt, do you think it takes a special person to lead here?" I replied

yes. He told me that he has been in Appalachia his whole life, spoke openly about his

love for the region, and for community colleges and then said that successful leaders

come from all kinds of areas. Appalachia, because of its challenges, often loses talented

leaders to other areas. He said that the skill is to adapt to Appalachia culture. That comes

easier for an Appalachian, but the skill is in how you adapt. That interview came fairly

early on in the data collection. I immediately went back to the previous interviews and

found similar comments, then began to notice that thread become more and more evident.

Another realization came during the data analysis. Eighteen interviews were

conducted. 18 individuals with different backgrounds, professional development

experiences, values, and other characteristics were interviewed. Some ideas surfaced, but

were not prevalent enough to warrant calling it a finding of the study. For example, many

of the longest standing female leaders spoke openly about how they feel they must serve

as role models for other women in higher education. This didn't come up among younger

leaders, but those who have been in positions of leadership for many years clearly saw

themselves as modeling the way for other women at their institutions.

Similarly, the idea that the demands of a president change so quickly that

presidents quickly become outdated. One president, who insisted that I not include this

statement on the recording, said that he no longer feels qualified for his job. He said that

if he were in a presidential search now with the credentials he had when he was hired,

that he wouldn't give himself an interview. Another president commented on the "shelf-

life" of a president being seven to ten years, while another commented (again, off the

record) that a president has time to build enough social capital to write one strategic plan,

implement it, and then must move on, with that being the contribution of his career, or his legacy, to his college. These candid conversations meant a lot to me and forced me to reflect on my own expectations. These comments all came from leaders with whom I did not know previously, which makes me wonder if other leaders feel the same way, but did not want to tell me since I am a colleague at another college.

Finally, there was a third topic which emerged, though not from the majority of participants. Many interviewees observed that they could have advanced either to other colleges, to system offices or consulting firms, or even from the role of vice president to president if they were willing to leave South Central Appalachia. Many leaders who are nearing the end of their professional careers noted that while they could have advanced, and a few even had job offers, they would rather serve their communities. They feel a strong sense of place. One president, speaking of his Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services, said "she could be a president tomorrow if she would leave [her hometown]. But she loves it here and that love is stronger than her desire to advance."

In conclusion, this journey has been very demanding and fulfilling. I sincerely hope this research is expanded upon by future researchers and used by those practicing in the field. While I believe the findings to be significant, I am especially struck by how strong the themes of communication and collaboration were throughout this entire study. Appalachia is different from other regions in the country. Knowing well the challenges facing community colleges in South Central Appalachia, I feel a sense of optimism, and of pride.

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Appendix A

Description of the American Association of Community Colleges' *Competencies for Community College Leaders*

Organizational Strategy: An effective community college leader strategically improves the quality of the institution, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends.

Resource Management: An effective community college leader equitably and ethically sustains people, processes, and information as well as physical and financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.

Communication: An effective community college leader uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community, to promote the success of all students, and to sustain the community college mission.

Collaboration: An effective community college leader develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promote the success of all students, and sustain the community college mission.

Community College Advocacy: An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college

Professionalism: An effective community college leader works ethically to set high standards for self and others, continuously improve self and surroundings, demonstrate accountability to and for the institution, and ensure the long-term viability of the college and community.

Appendix B

Appalachian Regional Commission Subregions in Appalachia
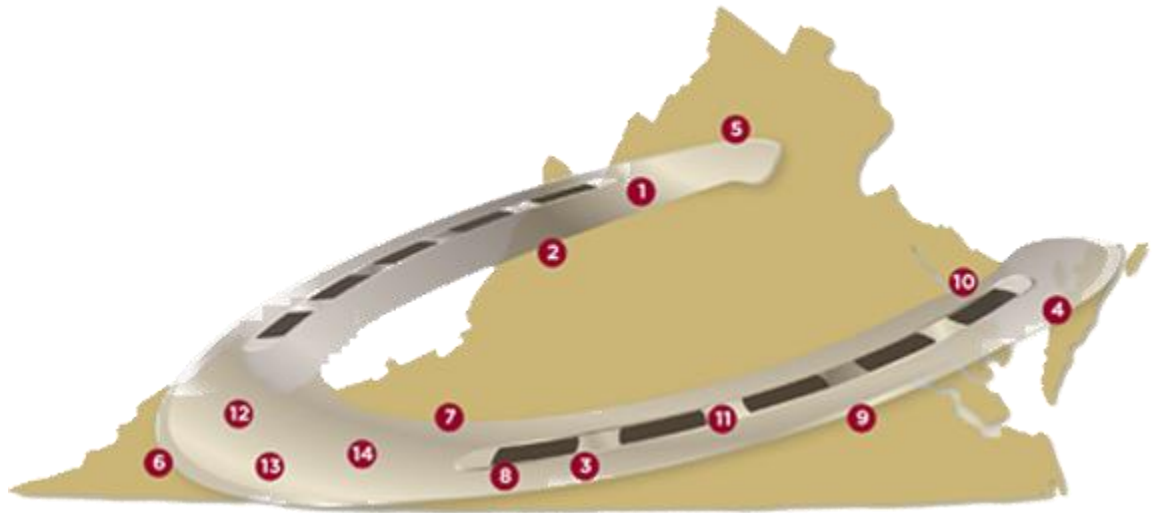
(Appalachian Regional Commission, 2009)
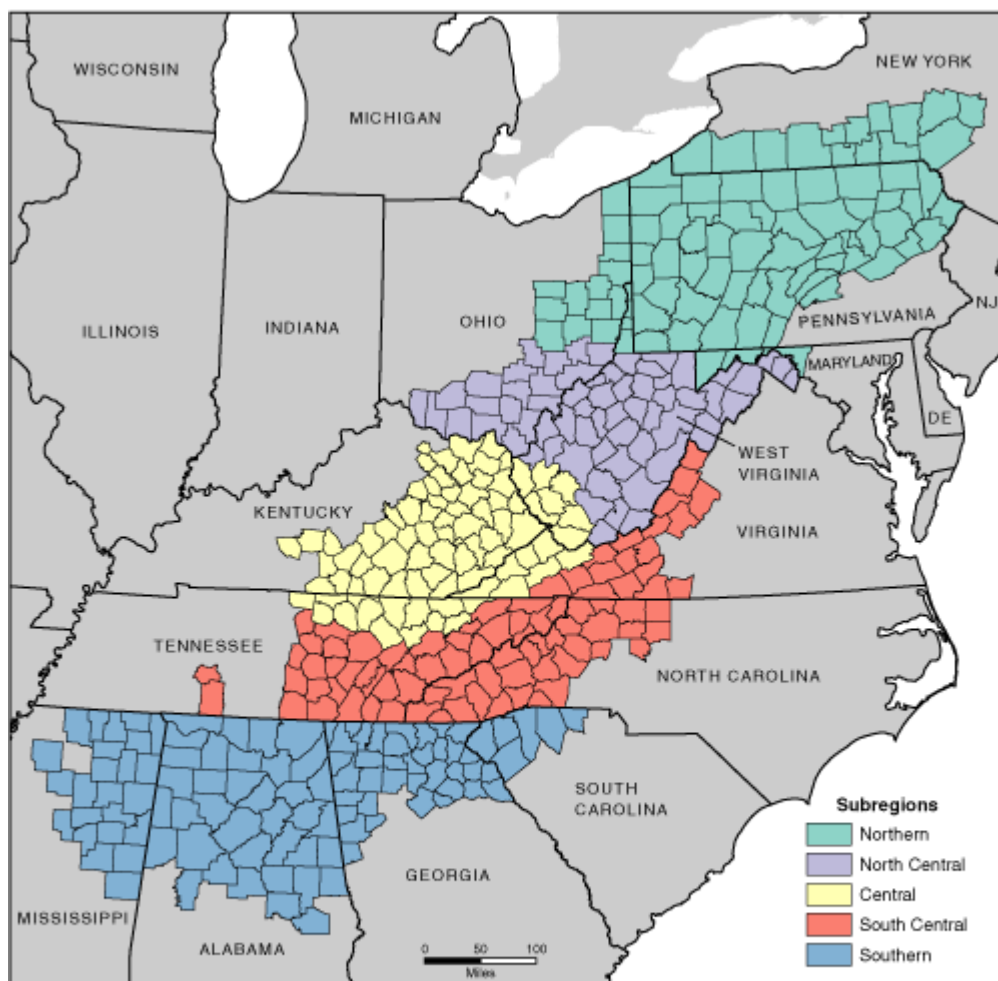
Map by: Appalachian Regional Commission, November 2009.

Appendix C

Virginia's Rural Horseshoe

- Blue Ridge Community College
- Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
- Danville Community College
- Eastern Shore Community College
- Lord Fairfax Community College
- Mountain Empire Community College
- New River Community College
- Patrick Henry Community College
- Paul D. Camp Community College
- Rappahannock Community College
- Southside Community College
- Virginia Highlands Community College
- Wytheville Community College

Appendix D

Informed Consent/Confidentiality Agreement

Purpose:
The interview that you are being asked to participate in is part of a research study on the perceptions of leadership competencies among leaders at community colleges in South Central Appalachia. The purpose of this study is to expand understanding of leaders' perceptions and better inform practice and research. Insights gathered from you and other participants will be used in writing a qualitative research report as partial fulfillment of a dissertation.

Your Participation:
Your participation in this study will consist of a single interview lasting approximately 30 minutes to one hour. The interview will be audio recorded to help the researcher accurately capture your experience in your words; however, your name will not be part of the recording. The recording will only be heard by the researcher for the purpose of this study. Participation in the study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. There is no compensation for participating in the study. There is no penalty or negative consequence for discontinuing participation.

Benefits and Risks:
The benefit of your participation is to contribute information that leads to better understanding of the role and use of student evaluations in the evaluation of faculty instruction. There are no risks to participating in this study beyond those encountered in everyday life.

You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the study. Please contact me or anyone on the dissertation committee at the emails or phone numbers listed below.

By signing this consent form, I certify that I _____ have read and agree to the terms of this consent form.   (Print full name here)

_____   _____
           Signature   Date

Mr. Matthew McGraw   Dr. Shana Pribesh
Principal Investigator   Associate Professor
Student, Old Dominion University   Old Dominion
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Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Opening Script

Good (morning, afternoon, evening). Thank you for speaking with me today. Do you

mind if I record today's interview? Thank you. The recording will only be used to

supplement my notes. We are now recording. Here is a copy of the confidentiality

agreement (provide two copies of agreement). It explains the study, explains that your

participation is voluntary, and has the contact information for me and my dissertation

committee Please sign one copy and keep the other for your records. I am investigating

the perceptions that community college leaders in South Central Appalachia have of

leadership competencies. This interview is comprised of 12 questions and, depending on

your responses, I may ask short follow-up questions. The interview should last

approximately 30 minutes to one hour. Your identity will be protected in this interview

through the use of a pseudonym. Would you like to select the pseudonym we use to

represent you? What would you like the pseudonym to be? Thank you. Your name and all

other identifiers will be removed from the final report. This interview and its transcription

will be stored on secure server space provided by Old Dominion University. Your

participation in this interview is voluntary and you are free to stop the interview at any

time. If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable please let me know. Your input is valuable

and will contribute a lot to my research.

Closing Script

Thank you so much for your time. I want to remind you that participation in this study is

totally voluntary. If there is anything you think of that you would like to add or change,

feel free to contact me. My email address is on that form I gave you earlier. If I have any questions would you mind if I contact you and ask you to clarify? *<Wait for response>* Great. What is the best way to reach you? Thank you. Is there anything you would like to mention before we leave? Again thank you, I really appreciate your time. Your input is very important to our research and will strengthen the quality of our work. Thank you very much.

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Q1: What position do you hold at here at the community college?

Q2: How long have you been in this position?

Q3: What is your academic preparation for this position?

Q4: Please describe your career path leading to this position.

Q5: Have you worked in community colleges in regions other than Appalachia?

Follow up if "yes": Do you think working and leading at a community college in Appalachia different than other areas in which you have worked? How so or why not?

Follow up if "no": Do you think working and leading at a community college in Appalachia is different than other areas? Why or why not?

Follow up: Do you plan to remain in Appalachia? Why or why not?

Q6: Are you familiar with the list of competencies of community college leaders created by the American Association of Community Colleges?

Follow up: If no, ask if they would like to see a list.

Q7: Which of the AACC competencies do you think are most important for leading here at this college?

Follow up: Why?

Q8: What competencies do you possess that you think have led to your success as a community college leader?

Follow up: How about the competencies of other community college leaders whom you have observed?

Q9: Does the AACC list accurately reflect the competencies needed by community college leaders in rural areas of South Central Appalachia?

Follow up: Why or why not?

Q10: Do you believe that being a successful leader at a rural community college in South Central Appalachia requires unique leadership skills or competencies?

Follow up: Why or why not?

Q11: How is leading in a rural community different from leading at a community college in a more urban or suburban setting?

Q12: What would you say are the most significant professional development experiences you have had that have prepared you to lead in this setting?

Probing: Consider things such as on the job training, formal academic experiences, work experience, professional memberships, etc.

Appendix G

Table of Specifications for Interview Protocol

Research Question	Interview Questions
1. What leadership competencies do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia perceive to have contributed to their professional success or the successes of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?	Q3, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9
2. What do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia consider to be the most important leadership competencies for effectively leading institutions in a rural area; and are some competencies more important that others?	Q3, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9
3. How do 1) position within the institution, 2) professional background and academic preparation, and 3) institutional role effect leaders' perceptions of which leadership competencies have contributed to their professional success or the success of other rural community college leaders whom they have observed closely?	Q1, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q11
4. Do rural community college leaders in South Central Appalachia feel the AACC Leadership Competencies are representative	Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11

of the competencies that have led to their success or the success of other community college leaders whom they have closely observed?	

Appendix H

Prospectus Approval

	Office of Graduate Studies	Result of Doctoral Examination
♕ OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY I D E A FUSION	2019 Koch Hall Norfolk, VA 23529 Phone: (757) 683-4885 Fax: (757) 683-5499	or Requirement D3

An updated copy of this form shall be submitted immediately following completion of EACH examination/requirement.

Student's Name: Matthew McGraw   UIN#: 00948852

College: Education   Degree and Program: PhD in Community College Leadership
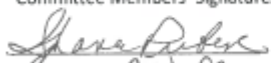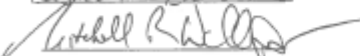
This is to certify that the student above took the examination(s) checked below:
(Signatures of appropriate chair or examiner or committee members required for all examinations.)

	Pass/Fail	Chair Examiner (Print)	Signature	Date	GPD's Initials
Diagnostic Examination	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				
Research Skills Examination (Specify Skill)	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				
Foreign Language Skill	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				
Completion of Course	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				
Candidacy Examination	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				
	Oral ____ Written ____ Both ____				
Dissertation Prospectus	☑ Pass ☐ Fail Dana D. Burnett		4/6/2016	
Oral Dissertation					
Defense Examination	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				
Other _____ (Specify Requirement)	☐ Pass ☐ Fail				

Remarks:
_____
_____

Working Dissertation Title:
A Phenomenological Inquiry of Leadership Competency: Perceptions among leaders in South Central Appalachia
_____

Committee Members' Signatures:

_____   _____   _____

Graduate Program Director:

Steve Myran   _____   4/6/16
Name   Signature   Date

Original: Office of the University Registrar   Doctoral Form: D3
Copies: Graduate Program Director   (Rev. 05/15)
           Committee Chair
           VISA (For F-1 and J-1 Visa Holders)
           Student

Appendix I

CITI Certification

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- Name: Matthew McGraw (ID: 3538043)
- Email: mmcgr018@odu.edu
- Institution Affiliation: Old Dominion University (ID: 1771)
- Institution Unit: Community College Leadership

- Curriculum Group: Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- Course Learner Group: Same as Curriculum Group
- Stage: Stage 3 - SBR 201 refresher
- Description: Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- Report ID: 18194711
- Completion Date: 04/01/2016
- Expiration Date: 04/01/2017
- Minimum Passing: 80
- Reported Score*: 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
SBE Refresher 2 - Instructions (ID: 12629)	04/01/16	No Quiz
SBE Refresher 2 – History and Ethical Principles (ID: 12702)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects (ID: 15040)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Defining Research with Human Subjects (ID: 15038)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Informed Consent (ID: 12620)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 12622)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Assessing Risk (ID: 12624)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Research with Prisoners (ID: 12627)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Research with Children (ID: 15043)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – Research in the Public Schools (ID: 15042)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
SBE Refresher 2 – International Research (ID: 15045)	04/01/16	1/1 (100%)
Completing the SBR 201 Refresher Course (ID: 12630)	04/01/16	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

Vita

Mr. Matthew Scott McGraw
Curriculum Vitae

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Covington, VA 24426   540-863-2866 (O)
mcgrawms@gmail.com   https://www.linkedin.com/in/mattmcgraw1

Academic Background

Ph.D. Candidate	**Mountain State University**	**Concord University**
Old Dominion University	**Master of Science**	**Bachelor of Science**
Community College	**Strategic Leadership**	**Business Administration**
Leadership	**GPA 4.0**	**Concentration:**
Current GPA 3.98	**December, 2009**	**Management**
Anticipated Completion:		**Cum Laude**
Fall, 2016		**December, 2004**

Dissertation: A Phenomenological Inquiry of Leadership Competency Perceptions among Community College Leaders in South Central Appalachia

Master's Thesis: Student Ambassador Programs as Leadership Development Tools

Relevant Professional Experiences

Director of Student Services and Interim Director of Institutional Effectiveness
(July, 2016- Present)
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, Clifton Forge, VA.

Chief Student Affairs Officer.

Member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Description of Student Services responsibilities listed below.

Coordinate college-wide institutional effectiveness programs.

Design systems for the college's institutional effectiveness program and managing the development, implementation and coordination with all college personnel.

Serve as accreditation liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), responsible for reviewing college compliance with accreditation criteria, notifying SACSCOC of changes to college procedures and programs, and making recommendations to senior administration for necessary compliance activities.

Coordinate SACSCOC accreditation activities, including fifth-year interim report, decennial reaffirmation requirements, and substantive change reports as needed.

Oversee institutional effectiveness efforts for the college's Quality Enhancement Plan, including rubric development, electronic portfolio development and training, and assessment of learning outcomes.

Supervise the creation, administering, and reporting of institutional surveys, evaluations, and assessments, including CCSSE, Great Colleges to Work For, Graduate and employer surveys.

Lead the college strategic planning process to develop a set of long-term goals and strategies to guide college-wide decision-making and a method for assessing the plan's effectiveness.

Direct the college's institutional research activities, including research design, data gathering, aggregation, and analysis, in addition to the completion of ad hoc research requests by members of the college community.

Direct all facets of the college's comprehensive assessment program, including both academic and support functions, annual and longitudinal studies, with input from both campus and community.

Work closely with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, implement and coordinate college-wide systems of academic program reviews.

Serve as the college Reports Coordinator for the Virginia Community College System, ensuring that state and federal data are reported to external stakeholders in a timely fashion.

Director of Student Services (July, 2009- July, 2016)
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, Clifton Forge, VA.

Chief Student Affairs Officer.

Member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

Lead and manage the following functions of student services: admissions and records, financial aid, registrar functions, academic advising, placement testing, student conduct, College Success Coach Initiative, Career Coaches, dual enrollment, and student activities. Administratively responsible for the Rockbridge Regional Center and Federal TRiO Student Support Services program. Manage the College Success Course (SDV 100) program offerings including scheduling courses, assessing course success, hiring, evaluating, and training faculty; directly manage up to 26 employees including full time, part-time, administrative, and adjunct faculty.

Examine admissions and retention goals, objectives and suggest efforts for improvement; manage reciprocity agreements with bordering states and applicable programs;

Develop, implement, and lead DSLCC's Threat Assessment Team; Serve on DSLCC's Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Chair the Student and Community Services Committee, the DSLCC Strategic Planning Committee, DSLCC Accreditation Leadership Team for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/ Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), DSLCC Compliance Committee for SACSCOC, and Quality Enhancement Plan Selection (QEP) Committee.

Developed articulation and transfer agreements connecting DSLCC to the following universities: Old Dominion University, American Public University, George Washington University, and East Tennessee State University.

Increasing responsibility: Since accepting this position in July of 2009, I have consistently grown professionally and accepted more responsibility.

July, 2011: assumed responsibility for both the Rockbridge Regional Center and The Achievement Center (TRiO-Student Support Services).
July, 2012: assumed responsibility for the College Success Coach Initiative.
July, 2014: assumed responsibility for both the Career Coaching and Dual Enrollment Programs.
July, 2016: Assumed position of Director of Student Services and Interim Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

Administrative Faculty Rank: Instructor 2009-2014. Assistant Professor 2014- Present.

College implementation team leader or member for following VCCS initiatives: Rural Virginia Horseshoe GED Incentive Program (2015), Workforce Enterprise System (2015), Blackboard Financial Aid Call Center (2014), SAILS Academic Early Alert System (2014), QUINN Dashboard Analytics (2013), Financial Aid Back Office Processing (2013), and Virginia Placement Test (2011-2012).

Adjunct Instructor (August, 2009- Present). Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. Clifton Forge, VA.

SDV 100- College Success Skills
BUS 111- Principles of Supervision
BUS 200- Principles of Management

Intern-Department of Workforce Solutions (July, 2015- December, 2015) Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, Clifton Forge, VA

Requirement for Ph.D. program. Minimum 160 hours.

Worked closely with Vice President of Workforce Solutions.

Assisted in college implementation of Workforce Enterprise System.

Attended Virginia Community College System Workforce Development Council Meetings
.
Visited local employers with Vice President of Workforce Solutions.

Admissions Counselor (August, 2005- July, 2009). Concord University, Athens, WV.

Responsibilities included but were not limited to: Understanding, communicating and working within the admissions and financial aid offices; management of applicants throughout the application process.

Responsible for the university's 2nd largest application market (the state of Virginia and the southeast quadrant of the US); prepared and conducted presentations before large groups of students, parents and professionals.

Directed the Ambassador Program and supervised over 40 student workers.

Organized and conducted visitation programs including open house, receptions and special events; trained workers for new student registration events; planned, promoted and marketed community outreach programs.

Extensive travel representing Concord University in a variety of markets; worked closely with the public relations, alumni, financial aid, registrar's, housing, and business offices; assisted in the marketing direction and goals of the University; served on Scholars of Distinction and Bonner Scholars Selection Committees.

Resident Manager of West Woods Complex (January, 2005- August, 2005) Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV.

Responsibilities included, but were not limited to: direct management of six residence halls; supervision of student paraprofessionals; coordination of activities, security tasks, conflict resolution and student retention.
Served on various committees designed to address potential problems on campus (crisis team, alcohol task force, safety committee).

Resident Assistant selection and hiring process coordinator; summer conferencing assistant; read, investigated, and adjudicated students in violation of Shepherd University Policy.

Other Relevant Experience: Assistant Coordinator of Intramurals at Concord University from August, 2004-December, 2004; Resident Assistant/Hall Director in Wooddell Hall and College Courts at Concord University from June, 2002-December, 2004; Founding member and player of the Concord University Lacrosse Team from August, 2001-December, 2004. Advisor to the Shepherd University Club Lacrosse Team from December, 2004-August, 2005. Advisor to the Concord University Outdoors Club from December, 2005- July, 2009.

Selected Leadership Experiences

Virginia Community College System's (VCCS) Council of Deans and Directors (CODD). July, 2009 - Present.

> CODD Chair 2016-2017.
> CODD Vice-Chair 2012- 2013.
> CODD Executive Committee and served as the Student Services Representative to the Academic and Student Affairs Council for the VCCS. September, 2010- August, 2012.

Virginia Student Success Leadership Institute. 2015-2016.

Virginia Community College System State Appeals Panel. 2012-2013 and 2016-2017.

VCCS Faculty and Administrator Leadership Academy 2012.

Member of the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV) State Committee for Transfer. July, 2013- Present.

Member of the Alleghany Highlands Area Transportation System (AHATS) Advisory Committee. April, 2012- Present.

Served on DSLCC's Accreditation Leadership Team, Compliance Committee, and QEP Selection Committee related to SACSCOC reaffirmation. Serve on DSLCC Credentialing Committee. Familiar with VCCS 29 related to hiring and promotion of faculty.

Publications and Selected Presentations

Consultation: Rural Community College Faculty Perceptions of Student Evaluations of Teaching. Tidewater Community College. Norfolk, Va. August, 2016.

Presentation: "Rural Community College Faculty Perceptions of Student Evaluations of Teaching". New Horizons. Roanoke, VA. April, 2016.

Technical Report: Barr,J., Bullard-Clark, C., Emge, W., Evans, R., Howard, R., Hughes, T., Knight, C., Malogianni, C., McCauley, D., **McGraw, M.,** Piazza, C., Preble, B., Rabel, K., Ross, M., Tucker, A., Waters-Bailey, S., & Pribesh, S. (February 2015). *A Qualitative Examination of CACREP Program Mission Statements*. Norfolk, VA. Old Dominion University.

Presentation: "Learning from Transitions: Building Sustainable Institutional Effectiveness Processes". SACSCOC Annual Meeting. Nashville, TN. December, 2014.

Presentation: "Prescription for Partnerships". HIRE Ed Conference. Hot Springs, VA. December, 2013.

Presentation: "Bridging the Gap between Educators and Businesses to Better Prepare Tomorrow's Workforce". Western Virginia Workforce Investment Board's Business/Educator Roundtable. Planning Committee, Moderator, and Presenter. Roanoke, VA. August, 2013.

Presentation: New "Virginia Education Wizard Best Practices". New Horizons. Roanoke, VA. April, 2013.

Presentation: Graduation Ceremony Keynote Speaker: Augusta Correctional Center. Craigsville, VA. May, 2012.

Professional Affiliations and Memberships

Member of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR). August, 2016- Present.

Member of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). July, 2012-Present.

Member of the Virginia Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (VACRAO). August, 2005- Present.

Awards and Recognitions

DSLCC Five Year Service Award. August, 2014.

Council of Graduate Schools Fellowship. Old Dominion University. Summer, 2014.

Nominee: "2012 Workforce Development Professional of the Year". Western Virginia Workforce Development Board. March, 2012.

Emergency Planning Experience/Safety and Security Certifications

FEMA IS 907. Active Shooter: What Can You Do?

FEMA L363. All Hazards Emergency Planning for Institutions of Higher Education.

FEMA ICS 100 HE. Introduction to the Incident Command System for Higher Education.

FEMA ICS 200. ICS for Single Resources and Initial Incident Action.

FEMA ICS 300. Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents.

FEMA IS 700. National Incident Management System: An Introduction.

FEMA IS 800. National Response Framework: An Introduction.

Research Interests

Rural Community Colleges

Leadership Competencies of Community College Leaders

Labor Market Indicators as Predictors of Community College Enrollment

Community College Faculty Perceptions of Student Evaluations of Teaching