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Community College Grow Your Own Leadership: A Phenomenological Study of Employee  
Perceptions of Individual and Organizational Leadership Development

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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by

John M. DeLozier

August 2019

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Dr. James Lampley, Chair

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Dr. Don Good

Dr. Hal Knight

Keywords: Community College, Grow Your Own, Leadership Development

## ABSTRACT

### Community College Grow Your Own Leadership: A Phenomenological Study of Employee Perceptions of Individual and Organizational Leadership Development

by

John M. DeLozier

Community colleges often face challenges with leadership as a result of retirements and turnover. In reaction to these challenges some community colleges have developed Grow Your Own (GYO) leadership development programs. Although the topic of leadership and leadership development has been researched extensively, more research is necessary concerning GYO programs and their perceived impact on participants and their colleges. This study was designed to determine the perceived development of GYO participants as well as the perception of a GYO's impact on the organization. Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) in Greensboro, North Carolina has had a GYO program for 30 years.

A qualitative research method with a phenomenological theory design was used in this study. After obtaining permission from GTCC the 10 study participants were recruited through emails. Interviews were semi structured with questions designed to encourage discussion around the topic of leadership development. After each participant was interviewed, transcripts of the interview were made by the researcher and those transcripts were coded to determine themes. After the coding analysis was complete, common themes emerged. Each of the participants

reported to have had previous roles in leadership prior to coming to GTCC. Most of the participants reported positive change because of attendance in the GYO in the areas of relationship building, networking, changed perspective of college role and mission, and better preparedness for future leadership opportunities. These findings supported earlier research that found GYO programs to be successful in creating valuable relationships across the organization. Research also supported the common theme of relationships formed both horizontally and vertically within the organization. Another common theme addressed in earlier research was the development of social capital development within the GYO program. This happens when individuals are brought together around information, given an action point, and asked to solve relevant organizational problems. This study may be useful for community colleges that already offer a GYO opportunity or are considering developing a GYO opportunity. Further research may be needed to determine the impact of the GYO leadership development training on those reporting to the participants of the program.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Peggy DeLozier who always believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my best. Also, to Ted DeLozier who has encouraged me and helped me in things great and small. To my wife April Rainbolt whose encouragement, love, and patience were musts for me to complete the work. To Jonathan DeLozier, Ethan DeLozier, Javan DeLozier, Logan Mallory, Jacey Rediker, and Savannah Smith who have had to endure this process but have been gracious and loving through it all. This work is for all of them!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee: Dr. James Lampley (Committee Chair), Dr. Andrew Czuchry, Dr. Don Good, and Dr. Hal Knight. I have been honored and thankful to work with Dr. Lampley whose knowledge and approach took a fledgling process and product and brought focus and energy that was needed. I would also like to thank Dr. Tim Harrison for his wisdom and encouragement which has been a personal and professional blessing. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Rick Osborn, Dr. John Grubb, and Dr. Deborah Joyner for the encouragement and faith in me that I will cherish forever.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In an environment where public attention to community colleges is heightened the development of community college leaders demands equal attention. For the better part of 20 years, the American community college sector has experienced a reduction in the potential leadership talent pool as a result of retirements from dean levels and up (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). This reduction in the leadership pool is not unique to higher education. Studies (Rappaport, Bancroft, & Okum, 2003) have reported that almost half of the national workforce will be above 55 years of age by the year 2020. However, within the community college sector some scholars (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007) have compared the number of retirements to a tidal wave. Many community colleges, college systems, and organizations have responded to the leadership development need by creating leadership programs locally and training rising leaders from within the ranks.

More emphatic language is used when speaking of the increasing rate of turnover or shorter times of community college presidencies. With the changing skill set of community college presidencies considered a main culprit, these presidents are staying in their positions shorter lengths of time. This increased rate of change has been referred to as a tsunami of leadership change (Gluckman, 2017). Smith (2016) reported that in 2015 at least 269, nearly 25% of community college presidencies saw turnover.

#### **Leadership Development Defined**

Leadership development has been defined as the increase and expansion of someone's capacity to be effective in leadership roles (McCauley, Van Velsor, & Ruderman, 2010). Specific to community colleges, leadership development has been described as a transformation

whereby leaders are encouraged to experiment in order to gain understanding of themselves, the college, the world, and their relationship with others (Roueche & Roueche, 2012). This description includes four areas of transformation, three of which are relationships that the individual forms with others. If the focus is only on the self and the improvement of self, then this development is essentially leader development rather than leadership development.

Organizations of all shapes and sizes invest in developing their human capital to protect it and increase the potential and productivity of talented individuals (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). Traits such as awareness, confidence, and motivation are individual in nature and can be developed (Daft, 2018; Fernandez, Noble, Jensen, & Steffen, 2014). When establishing programs that focus on individual development the organization is essentially developing the person to fill a specific leadership position or multiple leadership positions within the organization. When filling positions or promoting to fill positions is the goal the result is succession planning rather than leadership development. Leadership development is focused on the social dynamic of building relationships that enhance cooperation and resource exchange within the organization (Day & Dragoni, 2015). Increasing the ability to build social relationships is a transformation that can happen laterally and not just vertically through hierarchy. A quality leadership development program includes adding value across the educational institution and not just for executive level promotion (Locke, 2003).

Therefore, it can be posited that the development of leaders results in a transformation within the organization as employees within are developed. Rouche and Rouche (2012) asserted that leadership development involves three social partnerships constructs: (1) interacting with the school and its mission, (2) the world in general, and (3) others. Leadership development has to be practiced; employees can actively develop leadership skills while engaged in work versus

being removed from the work environment to be told how to lead (Moxley & O'Connor Wilson, 1998).

The idea of leadership development in lieu of leader development is the result of a shift in the literature that can be traced back to the Total Quality Management philosophy of W. Edwards Deming (Bresso, 2012). The authority within the organization being pushed or passed down to lower levels is the action necessary to bring about organizational change or improvement (Carmichael, 2005). If the goal of the organization is organizational change, contemporary leadership development models should address individuals across the organization and developing them in relation to one another and the mission or culture of the organization (Day, 2000).

### **Leadership Development Programs**

There are several leadership development program options for community college administrators. One formal option is through the traditional credit-bearing doctoral programs in educational leadership (East Tennessee State University, 2017; Vanderbilt University, 2018). The practitioner-scholar doctorate in education is often cited as a formal leadership development program for individuals interested in college administration (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016; Orr & Bennett, 2012). These doctoral programs are a place where the focus is not just on developing the individual by exposure to theory but a necessary place for academics and practitioners to interact (Jones, Harvey, Lefoe & Ryland, 2014).

A second option for leadership development is through one of the numerous professional organizations and associations affiliated with community colleges. These associations have offered many forms of leadership training programs. Some programs focus on those aspiring to higher level positions such as presidencies (League for Innovation in the Community College,

2011; American Association of Community Colleges, 2011a), while other programs are state or system level opportunities that are more specific to the particular organization's unique needs (Association of California Community College Administrators, 2015). Both provide networking for professionals that address, on a small scale, the relationship building components critical to leadership development.

A third and less publicized strategy in leadership development is the in-house or Grow-Your-Own (GYO) program that provides a hybrid form of traditional succession planning and leadership development. The GYO leadership development model addresses localized institutional culture and generates leadership development concurrently across the organization. Community colleges have missions that are very unique which in turn require leadership skills to be unique. Meeting the immediate or imminent need to fill positions is possible as a result of a GYO program. Furthermore, with the ability to customize content and deliver programs in high-need areas, it is not surprising that many community colleges have chosen GYO approaches as a response to their leadership development needs (Reille & Kezar, 2010). One example of a GYO leadership development program can be found at Guilford Technical Community College (Don Cameron, personal communication, 2015).

### **Guilford Technical Community College**

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest community college in North Carolina. It serves more than 40,000 students in curriculum programs and continuing education programs combined (Guilford Technical Community College, 2012). Under the leadership of President Don Cameron, GTCC developed a GYO leadership program called the President's Leadership Institute in 1996. Now called the President's Leadership Seminar (PLS), the program originally stemmed from a member of the college's governing board who had

requested a succession plan during a time when Dr. Cameron was being pursued for a potential presidency at another college.

The GTCC PLS was not only focused on replacing higher-level leadership but also deliberately designed leadership development training across all levels of the college. Dr. Cameron estimated that from its inception through the year 2011, when he retired from his position as president, 300 employees had completed the program. Employees from across the college were allowed to apply through a self-nomination process or from being nominated by supervisors. Many PLS program completers have pursued advancement opportunities in higher leadership positions at other schools; most have remained at GTCC and have received promotions into positions over time or have become quality leaders in the roles that they were in upon entering the PLS. Cameron (2015) added that succession planning is often about filling positions with quality replacements and that is important but that the goal of the PLS was to develop leaders horizontally across the organization to improve quality and as a result increase the pool of position fillers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) is a large and diverse community college that shares the leadership shortage trends found in most community colleges. The PLS program at GTCC is one representation of a GYO method of leadership development at a community college. Numerous scholars have examined the impacts of leadership development programs and findings have included, but are not limited to: positive change in the individual's self-efficacy as a leader (de Haan, Grant, Burger & Eriksson, 2016; Seibert, Sargent, Kraimer & Kiazad, 2016), the development of skills and aptitudes that increase ability to form and sustain professional relationships (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014), and positive

organizational improvements as participants apply their newly acquired understanding and experiences to their work within the organization (Day et al., 2014). Thus, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the leadership transformation experiences of PLS participants at GTCC. For the purpose of this study, leadership transformation experiences will be defined as: (1) perceived change in the quality of one's own leadership abilities, (2) relational impacts within individual's professional networks, and (3) perceived changes in the organization with regard to the implementation of leadership development skills (Fernandez, Noble, Jensen & Steffen, 2014).

### **Significance of the Study**

A majority of leadership development study within community colleges is focused on the top executive. While numerous studies have been conducted concerning the retirement of presidents or their shorter average tenures, there is a gap in existing literature with regard to the development of leadership within community colleges at lower and mid levels across the organization. GYO leadership programs do not appear to exist to develop only those potentially positioned to become the college president. Therefore, more study should be done to determine the impact GYO programs on the individual and the organization.

Leadership development in higher education is costly. Collectively, colleges and universities spend more than a billion dollars a year on leadership development (Riggio, 2008). With the leadership talent pipeline dwindling and the large investments in leadership development programs, it is important to understand the individual, relational and organizational benefits of a less costly GYO leadership development program. Conducting interviews with PLS program participants at GTCC will provide valuable insight related to the individual and organizational outcomes.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe their individual leadership abilities to have changed after participating in the program?
2. How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact on work relationships as a result participating in the program?
3. How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact of the program on the leadership development of the organization?

## **Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are used for this study:

1. **Grow-Your-Own Programs:** Leader development or leadership development programs created and conducted by community colleges with the specific purpose of developing leaders and/or leadership within the organization (Shults, 2001).
2. **Leader Development:** Development focused on the individual (Day et al., 2014).
3. **Leadership Abilities:** The collection of individual knowledge and skills associated with formal leadership roles that allow people to think in new way (Coleman, 1988).
4. **Leadership Development:** A process of development that inherently involves multiple individuals (Day et al., 2014).
5. **Succession Planning:** Developing key candidates in anticipation of future openings (Wallin, Cameron, & Sharples, 2005).



## **Limitations and Delimitations**

This study is limited by the appropriateness of the theoretical framework in determining the development of those attending an in house or grow-your-own leadership program. It is assumed that the interview questions and the process for data collection are valid and reliable. It is also assumed that the methodology adequately addressed the research questions. Further, it is assumed that participants responded during interviews honestly and that the sample was representative of the population. This study is also limited by the usefulness of the results to the stakeholders.

The study is delimited to GTCC employees who have attended the PLS at the school and are still employed by the school. This study is further delimited to participants that chose to be interviewed. The results may be generalizable to other GYO leadership development program attendees at other institutions but caution should be taken when transferring themes and conclusions from this study to participants and programs.

## **Overview of Study**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study as well as an explanation of the significance of studying perceptions of participants in the President's Leadership Seminar at Guilford Technical Community College. The chapter contains a statement of the problem, significance of the study, a list of terms and definitions, and a discussion concerning delimitations and limitations. Chapter 2 includes research on the topics of leadership, leadership development, self-perception theory, and community college leadership needs. Examples of other leadership development strategies and models are also included. Chapter 3 is the qualitative methodology discussion that outlines the data collection procedures, ethical considerations, role of the researcher and data analysis plan. Chapter 4 provides findings from

the data collection and analysis and will include direct quotes and themes as well as similarities and differences between participants. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the research and how the findings from this research confirm, support, contradict or further prior research findings related to experiences in leadership development programs in higher education. Further, the chapter concludes with recommendations for policy, practice and further research concerning this topic.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For many years community colleges have been impacted by retirements of leaders at the mid and upper levels of leadership. Historically, different types of leadership development programs have been available but their short supply or the lack of participants resulted in a lack of qualified leaders ready to matriculate upward in their college organizations. In the early 2000s, some colleges began addressing the shortages on their campuses with succession planning or internal leadership development. These internal initiatives have become known as grow-your-own (GYO) development programs (Ebbbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010; Reille & Kezar, 2010). To provide a synthesis of the research related to leadership development in community colleges, this literature review includes the following topics related to the study: leader development, succession planning, leadership development, adult learning theory, community college leadership needs, leadership theory and social networking or social capital within organizations.

#### **Leader Development**

Leader development focuses on the development of an individual and their skills and abilities. It is defined as the intrapersonal development of the individual, which distinguishes it from leadership development and its interpersonal focus (Day et al., 2014). Similar strategies exist between leader development and management development with both focusing on developing the human capital areas of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities (Keys & Wolf, 1998; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). The intended result of this intrapersonal development is for the individual to be able to think and act like a new person - a developed leader. This developed leader is competent in the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation (Neck & Manz, 1996).

For most of organizational history the investment in the development of the human capital of an individual was viewed as unnecessary. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Great Man Theory prevailed in organizational circles, suggesting that leaders were born and not made (Organ, 1996). By the end of the twentieth century, progressive views and different strategies became more evident within organizations. The shift to training leaders had taken place as organizations began to identify those within their organizations who were trainable or had potential to lead. Further, organizations would develop training to help prepare future leaders for specific leadership roles that would become vacant (Calareso, 2013).

### **Succession Planning**

Similar to the unique individual approach of specific leader development, succession planning was also focused on filling specific roles within an organization. Over time the corporate idea of succession planning has shifted from training persons for specific positions to building a pool of potential successors or to fill the pipeline with high performing individuals (Charon, Drotter, & Noel, 2001). From its earliest acknowledgements to recent reviews the underlying reason for succession planning in a variety of organizations is to bring stability to the organization (Calareso, 2013, Klein & Salk, 2013). Instability occurs when individuals leave their position or the organization itself. When individuals leave an organization there is an immediate knowledge gap. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2015) the motivation for organizations to invest in succession planning is to address the knowledge gap by increasing employee retention and to increase morale that occurs as a result of the investment in current personnel.

There are many different approaches to succession planning with no best practice or single approach agreed upon as the best method (Gorvine, 2014). Traditionally succession

planning was conducted with senior level executive positions in mind. The aspect of knowing an individual within the organization to fill and open position is often valuable especially with regard to senior level executive positions. Berchermann (2005), pointed out that 65% of senior level executives who are recruited externally fail within two years; thus, outside hiring can be more risky to the organization both culturally and fiscally.

Over time succession planning evolved into developing pools of talent to fill more than senior administrative positions. In fact organizations that develop talent from lower levels are viewed as exemplars in quality succession planning (Karaevli & Hall, 2003). A more systematic effort to ensure leadership continuity throughout the organization is viewed as the most effective form of succession planning (Rothwell, 2005). Furthermore, succession planning is viewed by some as a way to ensure the success of leaders of an organization (Axelrod, 2002).

Older models of succession planning where only a few positions were considered in the planning efforts were focused on specific skill development of the person who had been identified as the next to fill a particular position. The selection of the person preceded the deliberate training. As thought has changed, human resource professionals propose that succession planning is about preparation and not the pre-selection of individuals (Engaging in Succession Planning, 2009; Calareso, 2013). The shift in thought has driven succession planning into lower levels of the organization where employees already fit the organizational culture. Organizational experience and fit creates pools of talent or multiple people that are developed for multiple roles or opportunities (Byham, Smith, & Paese, 2002; Fulmer & Conger, 2004; Rothwell, 2005).

Driving development to lower levels of the organization not only puts training at the forefront rather than the preselected individual, but also provides the opportunity for skills gaps

to be addressed. The result is that employees are being developed both in their current role and being prepared for their possible next role (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). Essentially succession planning within all levels of the organization leads to the organization being developed horizontally by increasing skills and abilities. The organizational focus of developing pools of talent versus developing particular individuals for predetermined positions is a move away from traditional leader development and toward leadership development.

### **Leadership Development**

Leadership development is expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes (McCauley et al., 1998). Where leader development is intrapersonal and individual focused, leadership development is interpersonal and enhanced capacity focused (Day et al., 2014). Leadership development training and processes that are interpersonal by design see increased social interactions and connections that provide for increased organizational capacity and flexibility (Bilhuber Galli & Müller-Stewens, 2012). The focus on increasing capacity is an organizational strategy that is not aimed at an individual or a particular position but is instead focused on multiple individuals across the organization as well as the organization as a whole. It is this multiple foci or dualistic approach that makes leadership development unique as it introduces interpersonal factors to the development process that traditionally was focused on intrapersonal development.

Interpersonal leadership development leans heavily on the development of mutual trust and respect between individuals within the organization (Day, 2000). Time spent together in training and solving problems brings increased quality to social interactions. The development of both the human and social capital strengthens the organization (Day, 2000; Hitt & Ireland, 2002). Historically, social relationships have been considered in leadership research but most

work has focused on the relationship between leaders and their subordinates. The leader's development was judged by how well the followers followed.

### **Leadership Development Theory**

The concept of emotional intelligence has generated increased discussion in the leadership development realm over the past 15 years (Sadri, 2012). There appear to be some definitions and descriptions of emotional intelligence accepted by the academic realm and others accepted in the non-academic realm. The concept is still very broad (Locke, 2005) as it moves back and forth between the ability to understand the emotions of others and one's own emotional self-awareness (COMMENTARIES on "Seven Myths About Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings, and Implications, 2004). Some research has shown that methods presented as emotional intelligence training strategies already exist in more widely accepted leadership development theories (Conger, 2004; Hays & Kim, 2012). Essentially, emotional intelligence as a leadership development theory is viewed as a theory that is a collection of other more established theories.

Some of these theories that also address intrapersonal leader development and interpersonal leadership development have evolved over time and have stood up to scrutiny and challenges. Transformational leadership theory (TL), leader-member exchange theory (LMX), team-member exchange theory (TMX) and authentic leadership theory (AL) occur in the literature related to leader and leadership development. The focus of each of these theories is uniquely different yet each includes both leader development and leadership development constructs.

## **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational leadership theory (TL) has extensive and related empirical research in the past decades and is viewed as one of the more dominant theories in leadership study (Day, 2014). Much of the focus on transformational leadership is on the charisma of the leader who is attempting to share vision and influence followers (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Bass, 1985, 1990; Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990). Burns (1978) first presented TL by arguing that the purpose is to transform followers into leaders but to do so by having followers and leaders raise each other simultaneously. The transformation takes place by meeting needs and developing followers to then perform successfully in leadership roles (Avolio, Bass, & Jung 1999; Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016). TL also includes the goal of taking followers past individually focused development and toward organizational goals and vision (Edwards, Knight, Broome, & Flynn, 2010). Influence, motivation, stimulation, and consideration are the transformational strategies used by leaders to influence, inspire, and essentially transform followers.

Studies show that transformational leadership can be taught and learned at all levels within an organization (Bass, 1999; Bridgman, 2013; Waldman et al., 1990). Keys to success in transformational leadership training are strategies that include interaction and participation leading to the development of the individual but more so their role in the betterment of the team or organization (Edwards et al., 2010). While TL is a leader and follower theory, the individual's relationship to the organization is a substantial part of the model.

## **Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

The origins of leader-member exchange theory (LMX) are found in transformational leadership research conducted in the 1970s (Burns, 1978; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975).



LMX theory, like TL, focuses heavily on the vertical organizational relationship between leader and subordinate; furthermore, the constructs of LMX include the goal of interpersonal development within the organization. In LMX the leader provides information, opportunities and support in exchange for effort, commitment, and proactive behaviors from subordinates (Banks, Batchelor, Seers, O'Boyle Jr., Pollack, & Gower, 2013). Both individual and organizational workplace outcomes such as job performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions have resulted in empirically proven relationships (Banks et al., 2013).

### **Team-Member Exchange Theory**

Building on or growing from LMX is another social construct theory team-member exchange theory (TMX) which attempts to describe the social exchange relationships between team or group members within an organization. TMX is essentially as a team member's perception of the quality of the exchange between members of the team in relation to work completed and interactions that result (Banks et al., 2013). The quality of the exchange measured vertically in LMX is measured horizontally within TMX. Interestingly the TMX research is careful to state that LMX relationships and TMX relationships should be developed simultaneously as improvements in one suggest improvements to the other in the given area (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Liao, Liu, & Loi, 2010).

### **Authentic Leadership Theory**

Authentic leadership theory (AL) is centered on the idea of self-actualization. Its origins began with a study of leadership that measured leadership inauthenticity (Seeman, 1960). The construct validity of AL was questioned, and researchers turned away from using AL theory over time (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). After the Seeman 1960 study, scholars introduced a new AL

scale (Henderson & Hoy, 1982); the focus was still on inauthenticity until a positive focus was eventually developed for what now is labeled AL (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Essentially, authentic leaders are seen as those extremely aware of not only how they think and behave but also how others perceive their thinking and behavior (Avolio, Luthans, & Walumbwa, 2004). Therefore, AL is viewed as positive psychological capacity and a highly developed organizational context, which results in increased self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

AL is described to exist at the individual, follower, and team levels which make it difficult to measure (Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005). The broadness of AL and the ability to assess individuals lead to questions about the applicability of AL as a stand-alone theoretical construct (Banks et al., 2013; Luthans et al., 2003). AL does not suggest that a leader is transformational (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). AL is grounded in the idea that self-understanding provides direction and understanding for followers which benefits the organization but does not necessarily transform the individual.

In each of these theories the exchange between individuals, groups, or oneself is viewed as the place where development begins. The exchange can be between leader and follower, within teams or groups, or the individual understanding oneself more. Each theory posits ideas about the development of individual skills as well as the development of the organization either by teams or as a whole (Day, 2011). Nowhere is it suggested that interpersonal development is superior to intrapersonal development. What is suggested in modern, contemporary constructs is that both forms of development exist. In fact, Day (2000) suggested that leadership development transcends the development of the individual leader but does not replace leader development. Day (2011) further offers that leadership development is different because it is both multilevel

and longitudinal. Due to the multilevel and longitudinal nature of leadership development both the intrapersonal and interpersonal development processes are present over time (Day et al., 2014). The intrapersonal development of the individual leader does not take into consideration the social exchange dynamics that develop over time within the organization while the interpersonal development of peers or teams within an organization is left without a means to test the individual's development and resulting impact.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a theory that has been tested to understand many different kinds of dyadic relationships and communications. The foundations of SET appear in many different disciplines such as anthropology, social psychology, and sociology (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). At the center of leader and leadership development theory are dyadic relationships although the unique constructs of each theory are somewhat different. Whether leader or follower focused, these theories all contain the concept of dyadic relationships. SET focuses on exchanges between those in dyadic relationships and the value that each of the participants gain from the exchange(s) (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, & Virk, 2012). According to Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005), the social, bidirectional transactions produce obligations leading to the development of commitment and trust between those involved in the exchange.

There are expected elements of exchange when considering SET. Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) focused primarily on the elements of reciprocity and negotiated rules. The element of reciprocity is simply stated as the action of one party leading to the response of the other party. According to Molm (2003), instead of bargaining, actions are contingent upon the other's action reducing risk and encouraging cooperation and trust (Cropanzano & Mitchell,

2005). These exchanges appear to produce long-term effects on the relationships between the parties. The second element of exchange is that of negotiated rules where an agreement or arrangement is made between parties. Negotiated rules tend to be more detailed and include clear expectations from each party involved. While these are social exchanges they tend to be identified by details rather than the relationship that results from the exchange and the relationship does not seem to be impacted long-term (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Meeker (1971) suggested that when social exchange happens within organizations the result are rules that become the normal behavior for those involved in the exchange. Meeker's rules are summarized here:

- Rationality is a logic-based exchange resulting in an end or consequence.
- Altruism is an exchange seeing one party seeking to benefit another even at their own expense.
- Group gain is an exchange that is communal rather than one-on-one where benefits are taken from and given from a collective pot.
- Status consistency is an exchange of benefits as a result of one's standing within a social group.
- Competition is one party benefiting from the exchange to the detriment of the other.

Understanding SET is valuable to many types of relationships and organizations. Buyer-seller relationship studies have used SET to understand the dynamics of supply chains (Tanskanen, 2015). Direct-marketing strategies and micro-blogging researchers use SET concepts in the design of their communications to build lasting relationships with their users (Liu, Min, Zhai, & Smith, 2016). Leadership development theories appear to embed elements of

SET with regard to developing relationships that produce commitment, obligation, and trust between those involved in the exchange. Whether it is the importance of trust in the TL, the employee supervisor relationship of LMX, the peer-to-peer nature of TMX, or the self-improvement of behaviors required for AL, all rely heavily on the gains or added value that social exchange brings to relationships.

### **Human Capital and Social Capital**

The value added to relationships by social exchange is viewed by social and organizational theory as the building of both human and social capital (Granovetter, 1992). Viewing leader development as the development of human capital and leadership development as the development of social capital allows for the understanding of distinctions between the two as well as how critically linked these two disciplines are to one another. Organizations view their human capital as perhaps their most important resource but acknowledge that the existence of community relationships or internal social capital is also critical (Hitt, Keats, & Yucel, 2003).

The development of human capital is focused on the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities of the individual. In the knowledge-based economies of today, human capital is becoming more important as the uniqueness of individuals can result in competitive advantages for organizations (Hitt & Ireland, 2002) and may be viewed as a determinant for economic growth for individual organizations and even nations (Hitt, 2002). Because research posits gains in productivity (Hitt, Keats, & DeMarie, 1998), organizations look to leverage their human capital by offering many types of training and educational opportunities to increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals. Most organizations use classroom settings where explicit knowledge that is often unique to the organization is presented for development purposes (Hitt & Ireland, 2002). Many organizations also add opportunities for more tacit knowledge

gained through the use of learning by doing models where less experienced individuals or groups are instructed or mentored by more experienced representatives from the organization (Hitt & Ireland, 2002).

Social capital is more than social relationships that are formed within an organization. Social capital creates new value for the organization by providing a place for action, application, and interaction of human capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Internal social capital is concerned with relationships between members of an organization and at its core is the development of trust. There is much discussion in research about social capital development and the existence of organizational justice and fairness (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003), open communication (Hutt, Stafford, Walker, & Reingen 2000), and the organizational setting (Moran, 2005). It is important to note that each variable includes the importance of building trusting relationships.

Early on, most human and social capital research was focused on the development of individuals. Skill development of individuals as well as individual professional success, advancement, promotion, employee evaluations of leaders, and managerial evaluations of leaders received the most attention. While social capital was acknowledged, social capital was viewed primarily as a collection of individuals who had been developed. As a deeper understanding of social capital began to emerge researchers began investigating how social capital is developed as well as where social capital is developed within organizations. Granovetter (1992) introduced the concept of embeddedness which Naphapiet & Ghoshal (1998) further refined through additional research as two constructs: structural embeddedness and relational embeddedness.

The first form of embeddedness is structural embeddedness, which is the impersonal linkage of people and units (Naphapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Structural embeddedness is

characterized by central processes, hierarchy, and predefined networks or formal sub-units within an organization. These areas within an organization develop the necessary trust to produce genuine social capital but it is not relational trust, instead it is trust in the exchange process or in the group or network, which Coleman (1988) called calculated trust. The developmental power of structural embeddedness is seen in its closed nature where a smaller more defined group has more robust and valuable exchanges (Coleman, 1990) and appear to reinforce the norms of exchange within SET discussed earlier (Moran, 2005). This form of social capital development is easier to assess as closed groups have a narrower focus where actors are more closely connected resulting in easier measurement of accomplishments and performance (Coleman, 1990). A problem that exists when accepting structural embeddedness as the more useful or accurate means for social capital development is that it suggests those with more limited or thinly dispersed networks of contacts benefit most (Moran, 2005).

The second area of social capital development defined by Naphapiet and Ghoshal (1998) is relational embeddedness where the qualities of relationships developed over longer histories of exchange are the focus. The characteristics of relational embeddedness are interpersonal trust, trustworthiness, overlapping identities, feelings of closeness, and interpersonal solidarity (Moran, 2005). Relational embeddedness leans heavily on the ideas of relational closeness and relational trust. Moran (2005) posited that relational closeness is lasting and durable and includes the willingness to share resources such as information, know-how, and aid. Contacts or actors that share closeness are more likely to support and encourage innovation and entrepreneurial thinking. Relational trust can be viewed as a level of social capital development beyond closeness where the expectation of exchange is present during problem-solving and

where there is an increase in willingness to be engaged in more interactive and adaptive changes as goals and values become more aligned (Hosmer, 1995).

Human capital by nature is mobile while social capital is more tightly bound to the organization. Although human capital is viewed by scholars as the most important resource for organizations, social capital has strong support for sustaining organizational health. The relational trust of social capital creates an anticipation of value as it encourages even more building of social capital (Moran, 2005). As interpersonal trust deepens relationships, new levels of accountability arise that are separate from organizational structures (Rousseu, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Additional value is present with regard to trust as organizational actors with close and trusting relationships on display will often motivate others to enter into similar exchange relationships (Moran, 2005).

Programs designed to increase value areas created by social capital are time intensive and as a result more costly than programs aimed at the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Social capital is not the same as networking as it moves beyond introductions and familiarity toward more enduring and intimate ties that develop with recurring and integrative exchanges (Baker, 2000). The durability of social capital and close ties to the organization provide those within organizations with the opportunity to be more flexible as needed (Moran, 2005), thereby providing a sustained advantage (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Human capital and social capital appear to exist simultaneously but the development of these two constructs can be viewed as different strategies for organizations. Placing human capital into groups does not automatically generate social capital though levels of trust appear to rise during organizational development of both. Therefore, finding examples of social capital development, that is the detailed dynamic of the social exchange found within leadership and



leadership development theory would be strategically advantageous to community colleges or other organizations seeking to invest in leadership development (Granovetter, 1992).

### **Community College Organizational and Mission History**

In 1901 the public school board of Joliet, Illinois created a postsecondary academic program for students graduating high school. In 1917 the board removed the program from the school and developed the program into the stand alone Joliet Junior College (Vaughn, 2006). From those simple beginnings, junior colleges became community colleges with comprehensive missions that some critics say are far too large in scope (Alfred, 1998; Graham & Stacey, 2002; Quigley & Bailey, 2003). Other reviewers suggested that the community college's mission of being the college for the entire community forces it to have a comprehensive mission that must consider every individual (Boggs, 2011; Shannon & Smith 2006) and every possible political or societal pressure (Boggs & Mcphail, 2016).

As community colleges began to develop across the country their missions were constantly in flux as a result of the diversity of students within open door schools and the rapidly changing complex societies and individual communities they served (Boggs & Mcphail, 2016). Deegan & Tillery (1985) summarized the changing missions of community colleges into four generations that had occurred up to the time of their study.

1<sup>st</sup> Generation (1900-1930) Extension of Secondary School. The junior college mission was to help high school graduates transition to four-year colleges or universities.

2<sup>nd</sup> Generation (1930-1950) Junior College. The mission was to stabilize schools as unique institutions academically, administratively, and with concern to governance.

3<sup>rd</sup> Generation (1950-1970) Community College. The mission was to expand postsecondary opportunities to larger populations across the service area including those

who previously had no access to higher education due to the lack of academic preparedness or economic limitations.

4<sup>th</sup> Generation (1970-1985) Comprehensive Community College. The mission was to open the door to even more community constituents, including the expansion of for credit and non-credit programs. Local employer needs and workforce training became a consideration during this period (pp. 17-18).

The Boggs and McPhail (2016) followed with four more generations:

5<sup>th</sup> Generation (1985-1990) Contemporary Community College. The mission was to respond to the individual needs of the student population that was becoming more diverse.

6<sup>th</sup> Generation (1990-2000) Learning Community College. The mission was to respond to an academic shift from quality instruction to teaching and learning. The measurement of educational success shifted to the quality of student learning.

7<sup>th</sup> Generation (2000- 2010) Entrepreneurial Community College. The mission was to create new streams of revenue as college funding became more restricted.

8<sup>th</sup> Generation (2010-Present) Completion Agenda Community College. The mission is to focus on students completing their academic pursuits. New accountability demands by legislators as well as new support staff and programs to assist in completion are prevalent across the community college landscape (pp. 18-21).

It is important to note that each new generation did not mean the previous generations ceased to exist; instead, the generational missions coexist. As the community college mission has changed and the scope has grown larger, so has the community college's place as a unique sector within higher education. There are more than 1,100 regionally accredited community

colleges in the United States and 40% of all first-time freshmen enrolled in community college institutions nationally (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018). What was at one time an aspiration for some students has become a viable option for many. Community colleges are expanding vertically toward grades 11 and 12 of secondary education with dual enrollment initiatives offering college credit early and toward grades 15 and 16 with some schools offering bachelor's degrees (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Further, since the late 1990's the need for community colleges to become more entrepreneurial is a result of reduced state allocations, state governments leveraging workforce training components for economic development purposes, and an increased focus on globalization (Downey, Pusser, & Turner, 2006; Levin, 2001).

According to Cohen et al., (2014), some changes are predicted for community colleges with concern to governance structure. State and federal level influence will continue which will impact all sectors of higher education. The major areas of predicted change or growth will be in the areas of collecting data for compliance and funding purposes, program coordination of new specially funded programs designed to meet specific clients needs, and an increase in campus security efforts. Adding these predicted changes to the community college mission that has expanded so rapidly provides insight into the demands that community colleges face as organizations. Whether it is the widening social mission, vertical integration, financial pursuits, or state and federal government mandates, the flexibility of community colleges and the leadership of these organizations is essential (Cohen et al., 2014).

## Community College Leadership

Community college leadership has changed over time just like its missions. During the first few generations, leaders of community colleges were from either the public school system or the university. The background of a leader was often related to the local perception of a particular college (Weatherspoon, 2010). If the school was viewed as an extension of secondary school, the K12 sector leadership experience was valued; however, if the college was viewed as an extension or feeder to the university, university leadership experience was preferred over K12 leadership experience.

As the colleges have gone through rapid mission changes, the leadership type for the schools has changed although not with as much frequency. In the 1st generation the leaders of junior and community colleges were primarily white males, many with educational backgrounds and military experience. These leaders used very traditional and hierarchical styles that were common in their training and experience. Sullivan (2001) provided an overview of four generations of leadership within community colleges and referred to these early leaders as the “founding fathers” of community college leadership. The 2nd generation of leaders was a period of good managers who managed the rapid growth of community colleges and helped create a uniquely American high quality higher education system (Sullivan, 2001). These first two generations of leadership ended in the 1990’s, which is approximately the 6th generation of the learning community college offered earlier by Boggs & McPhail (2016). It is at this point that Sullivan (2001) suggested the leadership type for community colleges changed to a collaborative style where shared governance and teams became the expected leadership style. This third generation of community college leaders was more diverse with respect to gender and race;

many third-generation leaders held the backgrounds, experiences and educational credentials of first and second generation leaders.

During a large part of the community colleges' first century (1900 – 2000), the focus on leadership and leadership development was related to the president of the college or the senior levels of leadership. Advanced degree programs in higher education administration were a common credentialing route to prepare individuals for the upper levels of leadership within community colleges (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). In the early 2000s, many college presidents as well as full-time faculty and administrators were reaching retirement age (Shults, 2001). According to Weisman & Vaughn (2007), the impending retirement issue still exists as 86% of community college presidents surveyed in 2006 planned to retire by 2016. The pending retirement issue was not exclusive to presidents or higher-level administrators. According to faculty surveys, a significant number of faculty were readying for retirement in 2008 (Diaz, Garret, Kinley, Moore, Schwartz, & Kohrman, 2009). Further, research (Luna, 2010) suggested that hundreds of thousands of positions would become available within community college faculty ranks through 2016.

The reaction to the predicted shortfall of prepared leaders was to increase leadership development training (Hull & Keim, 2007). The early process of succession planning was to identify a specific person for a position and prepare that person for the unique position. With a traditional leadership and management style for most of its first century, community colleges were without a pipeline of individuals prepared for leadership (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007). The multiple missions and the uniqueness of community colleges and their constituents, suggest a need for leadership development that is able to include the college's uniqueness in its programming.

## **Community College Leadership Development**

### **University Training**

As community colleges moved through the third, fourth, and fifth mission generations, universities began to respond to the training needs of community college leaders to be prepared for leadership in very traditional and hierarchical organizational cultures (Young, 1996). Young illustrates the growth of these programs by stating that between 1945 and 1963 the number of colleges and universities offering graduate level coursework in higher education grew from 27 to 87 and Wright and Miller (2007) state that now there are more than 300 higher education leadership programs at colleges and universities. Despite the vast offerings in leadership programs, only 63 schools have programs that focus on community colleges (Council for the Study of Community Colleges, 2017).

The impact of the increase of programs is illustrated by Sullivan (2001) who stated that a noticeable difference between the third generation leaders and the leaders of earlier generations was that many of the third generation leaders possessed advanced degrees in higher education administration. The doctorate earned through university programs has become a necessity to earn higher level positions within community colleges. Some have called it a passport necessary to matriculate to higher levels (Hull & Keim, 2007). With more than 85% of community college presidents possessing a doctorate earning the doctorate is an expectation for senior community college leaders (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007).

In spite of the evidence that the doctorate is needed for upward mobility, university programs have their critics. Some have called for reform stating that university programs are not relevant in their focus on community college trends, issues and skill development (Friedel, 2010). The harshest criticism might be that those completing the university programs for

community college leaders have been called, “ill prepared” to function in leadership roles (Golde & Walker, 2006). It has been noted that because community college missions are complex and unique to individual schools, it is difficult to identify a specific set of knowledge and abilities that translate to all community college leaders (Wallin et al., 2006).

With the concerns of time, quality, and preparing more levels of leadership, the recognition of developing community college specific curriculum in higher education programs began to increase. A recent example of a higher education curriculum that was adapted to meet the unique needs of community college leaders is the establishment of The Center of Community College Leadership at East Tennessee State University. This program’s stated purpose is to provide a multidisciplinary approach to issues and leadership in the postsecondary world, especially with regard to community colleges (East Tennessee State University, 2017). Current community college presidents nominate individuals whom they believe are potential leaders for participation in the program. Classes are online with weekend seminar sessions conducted on a community college campus in the state to allow professionals easier access to face-to-face instruction and joint problem solving around contemporary and relevant issues. In addition to formal doctoral programs at universities, alternative programs have been developed by independent professional associations and institutes with membership lists comprised of community college faculty, staff and administrators (Us et al., 2018).

### **Alternative Leadership Development Opportunities**

Independent organizations and associations with community colleges as part of their focus began to provide multiple training and development options for community college professionals. Early on most of these programs focused primarily on providing training for the upper level executive positions at community colleges (ACE Leadership, 2018; Software, 2018).

As with the university programs, cost, time, and proximity of the training site were limiting factors. In reaction to these and other factors, many states also began to offer leadership development training within state community college systems (Alabama Community College Leadership Academy Home, 2018); Chancellor's Leadership Seminar - Questionnaire | The Florida College System, 2018).

Three association training programs are provided in the review of literature as examples of alternative models for leadership development: (1) The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Future Leaders Institute (FLI), (2) The League for Innovation in the Community College's Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), and, (3) The North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCLP).

The Future Leaders Institute (FLI) developed by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is a three-day seminar designed for mid-level administrators who wish to become better leaders in their current positions or advance to a higher level of leadership (Us et al., 2018). This and other leadership training provided by the AACC center around competencies that AACC presented in 2006 as necessary for community college leaders. The competencies are as follows: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism (AACC, 2018). These competencies are generalized; however, the AACC provides definitions and illustrations for each competency area. While the 3-day format seems a limited amount of time for people from around the country and the world to collaborate in and around leadership competencies, Ullman (2010) suggests that there is significant collaboration and social collaboration.

The Executive Leaders Institute (ELI) is offered through the League for Innovation in the Community College. The leadership development program is a five-day seminar focused on



providing training opportunities for potential presidents (Executive Leadership Institute, The League for Innovation in the Community College, 2018). A setting is provided for these individuals to analyze their abilities, refine their skills, and engage in leadership discussions with a cadre of accomplished community college leaders (Executive Leadership Institute The League for Innovation in the Community College, 2018). This training requires three years of senior level community college experience and is described as intensive experience where participants are expected to immerse themselves in the program for the five days (Executive Leadership Institute The League for Innovation in the Community College, 2018).

The North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP) is a seven-month program that combines face-to-face and computer based learning to introduce participants to community college issues and to provide leadership development (North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP), 2018). The stated purpose of the program is to develop leaders who connect, care, and collaborate within their current and future roles. The program outcomes are to strengthen leadership skills, inform potential leaders, develop networking opportunities, and to develop a diverse pool of qualified leaders (North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP), 2018). In an online alumni testimonial about the program, the co-director states the program is meant to compliment local leadership programs. While the FLI and ELI target mid-level and executive-level management, the NCCCLP is more open to all levels, requiring approval of the applicant's campus president and supervisor. The stated purpose is to develop leaders within their current roles as well as for future opportunities within their organization (North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP), 2018).

Despite the differences in length, location, delivery entity and levels of participation in each of these programs, a similarity is that all leadership development programs have costs. The FLI has a registration cost \$1500 to \$1800 (Us et al., 2018). The League for Innovation in the Community College has recently aligned its ELI with that of AACC (Executive Leadership Institute League for Innovation in the Community College, 2018), suggesting that the cost would be the same \$1500 to \$1800. The NCCCLP appears to be a more affordable option for those in state system with a cost of \$1000 from which two lodging events are paid (North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP, 2018). These investments by individuals and/or the employing college through professional development funds, is a significant investment in leadership development.

### **Investment in Leadership Development**

The cost of investing in leadership development is the responsibility of the community college as well as the individual being developed. If some choose a university program the investment is the individual's time and potentially both the individual's and the college's money. There are situations where state or local funding is available to the individual for enrollment in higher education programs. Graduate programs are an investment of thousands of dollars over time. The costs can range from \$12,000 to \$60,000 depending on the type of institution and program (Mulig, 2015). Leadership development programs offered by associations and organizations have costs that may be prohibitive for many individuals and colleges. While association and state agency programs require less time and less money than graduate school programs, the travel, lodging, and missed time from work add up to significant costs.

Graduate programs through regional accreditation are required to meet comprehensive standards to include defining and meeting learning outcomes (SACSCOC, 2018), little empirical

research is evident in the literature related to assessing association or state agency leadership development programs. There are many variables included in assessment of leadership development and the return value may be difficult to define. Because leadership development is the development of humans and humans collectively the first issue is the endless number of variables such as current job, current mission, time allowed for development to be seen, supervisor support for development and many more (Peters, Baum & Stephens, 2011). Returns or outcomes are different within organizations. The outcomes can be individual changes, relational changes, organizational culture changes, innovation, or in some cases, bottom line economic gains.

### **Grow Your Own Leadership Programs**

Because higher education institutions are slow to implement corporate strategies, succession planning ideas like Grow Your Own (GYO) leadership development programs are somewhat new to academia (Bisbee & Miller, 2006; Clunies, 2004, Piland & Wolf, 2003). Over time, succession planning in higher education has evolved from identifying specific individuals to be trained for specific promotions to developing pools of talent within organizations. Higher education was slow to adopt the corporate model of succession planning; however, as the missions of community colleges became more complex in nature (Weatherspoon, 2010) and with the exodus of many senior administrators and faculty, the need for localized leadership development became critical (Eddy & Boggs, 2010). There is a lack of coordinated leadership development strategies at most institutions (Fusch & Mrig, 2011) but there are schools and state or regional systems that have built GYO programs in an attempt to address their needs (Weatherspoon, 2010).

The focus of GYO programs is to develop all levels of college professionals to become leaders where they are and to prepare them for next steps of leadership in the college (Ebbers et al., 2010). The GYO model is a human resource concept of filling the pipeline with prepared successors. The goal is not focused on the executive levels of leadership though those opportunities are certainly enhanced with exposure to training. According to Weisman and Vaughn (2007) one third of community college presidents were internal candidates when accepting their first college presidency. However, it is clear that GYO programs exist to develop the organization as a whole by developing leadership skills across the organization (Ebbers et al., 2010; Eddy & Boggs, 2010). This is accomplished by bringing immediate and relevant context to leadership ideas due to the ability of the program to focus on current issues unique to school or system where the GYO program is held (Weatherspoon, 2010).

There are a few journal articles comparing the costs of GYO programs to other leadership development opportunities. The colleges would appear to benefit by being able to tailor training and generate cost savings through the economic scale of numerous participants across the organization in lieu of sending individuals or small groups to a leadership development program off campus. By designing group training that is supportive and complimentary of the college mission, GYO programs can become flexible to fill the pipeline with employees that are familiar with current concerns, situations, and needs of the college (Byham et al., 2002). Existing campus resources from both faculty and administration often provide GYO content and programming. Mentors may be identified from existing personnel to provide guidance to program participants as individuals and within groups during projects and other assignments. Additionally, mentors can serve to monitor the success or impact of the training on the individuals and the organization. While it is hard to find cost comparisons between types of

leadership programs, there is perceived value for those developing and implementing GYO programs. According to Weatherspoon, (2010) a study of GYO programs resulted in many organizations with GYO programs reporting that the “tangible and intangible benefits of the programs to the participants and the organization far surpassed the cost of the program”(pp. 35).

The value of GYO programs appears to hinge on the ability to tailor training to organizational missions and needs as well as directly addressing perceived areas of leadership skill deficiencies of the participants (Eddy & Boggs, 2010). However, the ability to measure the quality of a GYO program is difficult due to the uniqueness of each program preventing the application of a common standard of measurement (Watts & Hammons, 2002). After making the decision to conduct GYO programs from a value perspective the decision presented is how to actually train participants.

### **Andragogy and Adult Experiential Learning**

Because adults are the learners in leadership development courses or programs, it is important to understand adult and experiential learning practices. It is also important to note that adult learning takes place not only in higher education but within human resource development as well as any other learning opportunity, event, or experience that an adult encounters.

According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2011), the following are the core set of adult learning principles that make up andragogy or the method and practice of teaching adults:

1. The learner’s need to know.
2. The self-concept of the learner.
3. The prior experience of the learner.
4. The readiness to learn.
5. The orientation to learning.

6. The motivation to learn (pp.62-63).

These principles of adult learning are focused primarily on the individual and emphasize learning and change within the individual rather than emphasizing the educator when focused on education. (Knowles et al., 2011).

The shift to the learner means that intentional design should take place from the beginning and through the entire learning process. It is important to give the learner at least partial responsibility for the planning and design of the learning that they will pursue (Knowles et al., 2011); student engagement in the learning objectives is at the heart of andragogy. It is essential to allow learners to choose the problem area or activity where they will be exposed to the content that is supposed to affect change. Knowles et al., (2011) shared that recognition leads to evaluation; meanings accompany experience when adults know what is happening and what significance it has for their personalities.

### **Experiential Learning**

The influence of the learner's experience is a key component to adult learning. One widely cited publication related to experiential learning is David Kolb's *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Kolb's conceptual model has been used extensively by faculty to transform their graduate level leadership coursework (Hickcox, 2018). According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning is a holistic integrative perspective of learning that combines experience, cognition, and behavior. Learning itself is a continuous process grounded in experience and experiential learning is where thoughts are formed and reformed through experiences (Kolb, 1984).

There are several examples of experiential learning in leadership development research conducted in disciplinary areas outside of education, such as local government (Hughes, 2010),

natural resource management (Gore & Riley, 2009), civic leadership (Clyde, 2010), and nursing leadership programs (Cathcart, Greenspan, & Quin, 2010). Research conducted within secondary education resulted in the recommendation that the professional development of educators should be built around prior learning and professional experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Wei Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). Within higher education research, experiential learning appears to be primarily leveraged within specific courses and within university programs (Dachner & Polin, 2016; Eich, 2008; Hawtrey, 2007). Interestingly, no studies were identified in the literature related to the use of experiential learning techniques in Grow Your Own Leadership programs within a community college. In sum, experiential learning is inherently leadership training (McHenry, 2016) and is part of the definition of leadership development which has become closely identified with developmental experiences (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009).

### **Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle**

Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning is a four-stage cyclical process describing how the transformation of the learner happens through experience (Kolb, 1984). The learning process or cycle stimulates learning and learners gain the skill of "getting knowledge" (Kolb, pp.27).

The cycle of experiential learning begins with concrete experience, which is the learner experiencing content through activity such as group work, lab projects, or field work. As the cycle moves clockwise, the second stage is the reflective observation stage where the learner reflects back on the experience. The third stage is called abstract conceptualization where the learner attempts to conceptualize all of the ideas encountered as part of the experience. This stage is where prior learning and/or experience are also involved as the learner builds concepts of understanding. Finally, in the fourth stage of active experimentation, the learner begins to

formulate a plan for the testing and application of the new knowledge essentially moving on to the next experience with new information and concepts (Kolb, 1984).

### **Kurt Lewin**

Lewin, was the founder of American social psychology and also the first to initiate research of group dynamics and action research. For much of Lewin's career, the area of child psychology was his focus but equally respected by scholars were his contributions to the study of group dynamics and action research were equally respected by scholars (Dickens & Watkins, 1999). In 1946, Lewin was in the midst of developing leadership and group-dynamic training when the T-group was discovered. The T-group, that is now the basis for much work in organizational development, arose during an assessment of leadership training (Adelman, 1993). The instructors of the training were assessing the group work and the group participants began asking to be part of the assessment. These joint sessions led to the realization that by bringing together the experiences of the participants and the concepts of the instructors a unique and strong learning environment was created.

The Lewinian Model of Action Research and Lab training is a cyclical description of experiential learning within organizational development (Kolb, 1984). Lewin's cycle begins with the planning state, the next stage is action, and the final stage contains the results. Feedback after results is applied to both action and planning as the cycle continues (Lewin & Gold, 2009). Lewin's focus was on the process of learning and reflective activities throughout the process. Results were important but were not the determinant for success (Ottosson, 2003). Instead, the constant flow of the three-step action process was the key.

Kolb (1984) appears to have adopted Lewin's focus on process in the experiential learning model to include the practice of reflection stating that reflection is a grasping and



transforming experience. Lewin's inclusion of the participant's experience was adopted by Kolb and termed concrete experience while the instructional concepts were termed analytical detachment. Kolb also termed the space between experience and concepts as a place of tension where learning is facilitated.

### **Jean Piaget**

Jean Piaget was a Swiss psychologist preceded Lewin who also focused on child psychology and cognitive development. During the study of children and their development Piaget realized that there were stages to cognitive development. Piaget proposed that there were four stages of cognitive development with the first three stages developed before the age of eleven (Elkind & Piaget, 1977). The final stage was from eleven years old and up. Though there were levels of development, Piaget suggested that learning at all levels, as well as the concept of intelligence, was driven by experience (Siegler, 1978).

Piaget's Model of Learning and Cognitive Development presents a combination of accommodation and assimilation and suggested that the balanced tension between the two is where learning occurs (Kolb, 1984). Accommodation was viewed as taking the concept to be learned and placing it into the learner's existing world while assimilation was the learner taking their existing world as they knew it and applying it to the concept (Siegler, 1978). Piaget presented that learners develop schema in the space and time between accommodation and assimilation and that concrete cognitive operations happen there. Essentially Piaget was focused on action and that learning and intelligence were the result of the interaction between the person and their environment (Kolb, 1984).

Kolb (1984) added that adult learning is convergent and in the adult's desire to find a solution, the adult adds abstract constructionism to the concrete operational stage. Abstract

constructionism is directly from Piaget's models of cognitive development and is the stage of the process model that follows reflection. At this point and as a result of reflection, the learner brings together concepts and generalizations as solutions are considered. Piaget was attentive to actions but also to the process of learning rather than results of teaching.

### **John Dewey**

The experiential learning movement began with American philosopher John Dewey's educational philosophy. Dewey's research was conducted in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and scholars have extended this research with experiential learning ideas that are being embraced within higher education at an increasing rate (Kolb, 1984). Dewey generated experiential learning concepts from research studies related to coping with change and lifelong learning. Dewey argued that through many different modes of instruction it was always true that the learner needed to be involved in the realities of the learning situation rather than just encountering concepts and considering what could be done with them (Dewey, 1938).

Dewey's experiential learning theory had four components that were cyclical in nature. Dewey's cycle began with impulse or encountering a change in the normal that brought about an impulse. The second stage was learner observation. The third stage of the cycle was knowledge and the final stage was judgment. Dewey was the original contributor to the idea of impulse, suggesting that something has to start the process moving (Hickcox, 2018). The learner must realize that there is a consequence with new learning and this realization is where impulse or motivation occurs. Dewey believed that the interactions between each of the stages of the cycle were where learning occurs and referred to as a transaction between the learner and the given environment (Dewey, 1938).

While Kolb's model follows Dewey's as closely as any other, the idea of impulse in the Kolb model is manifested differently, as well as the tension or period in between cycle stages. Kolb posited the concept of concrete experience whereas Dewey offered the concept of impulse. Kolb's definition of concrete experience was that the individual has a general orientation to be involved and that the cycle begins its motion naturally. Conversely, Dewey presented that motivation to move must happen. Another area of difference between the two models occurs with the interaction between cycle stages. Kolb suggested that interaction was too mechanical and was describing the learner and the content as separate entities interacting rather than focusing on a transaction taking place resulting in change.

Kolb's experiential learning model has been challenged but continues to gain popularity (Ord, 2009). Critics have suggested leaving the learning approach solely to the learner does not fully estimate the impact of the environment on the learner whether it be it a limitation or a benefit (Jarvis, 2003; Taylor & Burgess, 1995).

### **Additional Experiential Learning Theories**

Other learning theories based on the idea of andragogy exist and are supported by researchers as stand alone learning theories. Self-directed learning is a concept where the learner is given responsibility for learning and the learning can occur independent of instruction and without interaction with other learners. Strongly independent and self-disciplined learners are in control of organizing when and how learning will occur. The success of this approach has resulted in some researchers recommending that this type of learning become part of classroom strategies (Bettinger, 2007). Self-directed learning can be said to be closely akin to constructivist learning theory in that it too is learner focused with the learner constructs meaning for themselves (Coupal, 2004).

Transformative learning theory provides a framework similar to experiential learning. Mezirow (1997) suggests the learner changes or transforms from one frame of reference to the next as they understand their experiences in relation to the dynamic of new content. The key activity of transformative learning is through critical reflection where the new meaning comes into existence (Frey & Alman, 2003). The key component to these and other experiential learning theories is the focus on the learner and the value of their experience in their educational pursuits.

### **Underrepresented Groups in Community College Leadership Positions**

There has been a growing concern around the shortages in pool of prepared leaders in higher education and the community college in particular. As discussed many different solutions or opportunities have risen up as a result of these shortages. Alongside these efforts have been very direct attempts to address the need to bring diversity to the aforementioned pipeline. According to Seltzer (2017) and Okahan and Zhou (2017), recent studies show that in spite of women being the majority earners of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees there is a very slow rate of increase of women filling college presidencies. The same limited progress toward presidencies is true for minorities in spite of increasing enrollments across higher education levels (Seltzer, 2017).

### **Women in Leadership**

A recent study of college presidents revealed that 30.1% of all universities and colleges had women as presidents. Community colleges reported to have had 36% of their presidencies filled by women (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk & Taylor, 2017). Seltzer (2017) noted that there has been a slow increase the rate of increase has declined in recent years. This slow progress and

even decline is in spite of the fact that many programs and institutes have been created to assist in developing women for leadership in higher education.

For more than 40 years Higher Education Research Services (HERS) has annually held an institute has focused on advancing female leaders in higher education (Higher Education Research Services, 2018). More than 4,300 women have participated in the leadership program at HERS, which is a residential program that focuses on developing women for senior level leadership (White, 2011). There are also newer attempts to develop leadership among women in higher education. The Leaders Institute is supported by the American Association for Women in Community Colleges and looks to develop women across levels of the community college (American Association for Women in Community Colleges, 2018). With more focus on presidencies as the measure of progress, the American Council on Education (ACE) offers leadership development for women as part of their Moving the Needle: Advancing Women in Higher Education campaign. The goal of ACE with this program is to help women become the chief executive at more than half of the colleges and universities in the United States (American Council on Education, 2018). Further, many colleges and universities either have designed or are designing programs to develop women on their campuses. Some of the programs are closed to a particular campus while others are open for others to join. There are at least 18 international programs, 52 state and regional programs, and 13 institutional programs focused on leadership development specifically for women (Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2011).

### **Minorities in Leadership**

Minorities have progressed to presidential leadership opportunities at the same rate of increase as women over the past 10 years (Seltzer, 2017). However, they still trail women with only 16.8% overall holding presidential positions (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Just as with women

the largest percentage of minorities holding presidencies is found at Community colleges with 20.2% doing so in 2016. Seltzer (2017) observed that African-Americans made almost all of the progress made by minorities. Another illustration of the slow overall progress being made by minorities is to note that 83% of presidencies are held by those declaring themselves to be white (Gagliardi et al., 2017).

A web and article search revealed that leadership development opportunities designed specifically for minorities are difficult to find. There are national organizations such as the Association of Community Colleges, the American Council on Education, and the National Council on Black American Affairs that offer development programs for African-Americans. Minority races other than African-American are mentioned but there appear to be even fewer resources designed specifically for this group. There are mentions by national organizations concerning how to develop the college to be more considerate of diversity (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018; American Council on Education, 2018b).

### **Leadership Turnover and Turmoil**

Other supply and demand pipeline issues can be found in the declining time of presidents on the job. In 2016 the average time on the job for current presidents was 6.5 years. This is down from 2011 when it was 7 years and 2006 when it was 8.5 years (Gagliardi et al., 2017). From 2006 to 2011 the number of new presidents from outside higher education grew from 13% to 20% but that number reversed itself in 2016 back 15% (Gagliardi et al., 2017). It is suggested that in times of high turnover and turmoil that boards are again looking within the walls of their colleges and universities to fill executive level positions (Gagliardi et al., 2017).

As has been discussed earlier, college missions and constituencies are changing rapidly and external partnerships are growing in importance. However, 85% of new presidents are being

selected from within higher education with their immediate prior positions being senior executive level or president at their current school or another institution respectively (Gagliardi et al., 2017). These hiring or promotion tendencies shine a light on the importance of succession planning and filling the pipeline. As people rise within an organization or go to another those remaining appear to be the focus of those looking to fill the empty seats. The concerns began years ago with retirements and while that is still an issue the declining length of time on the job for presidents make the case that more attention than ever should be paid to developing the pipeline of people.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to better understand the perceived change in or development of community college employees that have attended Grow Your Own (GYO) leadership development programs on their campus and the perceived impact on the organization where those employees participated in the GYO program. For the purpose of this study GYO leadership development programs are considered to be programs that are designed, implemented, and managed by the college campus. With a GYO as framework the following will be used to gather data from study participants: (1) describing how leadership abilities developed as a result of participating in a GYO program, (2) describing the impact on work relationships as a result of participating in a GYO program, and, (3) describing how organizational development has been impacted through the application of new knowledge and skills developed as a result of participating in a GYO program.

#### **Research Questions**

The central research question is: How do community college employees that have participated in a GYO leadership development program describe their individual development as well as that of the organization? The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe their individual leadership abilities to have changed after participating in the program?
2. How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact on work relationships as a result participating in the program?



3. How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact of the program on the leadership development of the organization?

### **Qualitative Design**

This qualitative phenomenological study will explore the lived experience and perceptions of individuals participating in a GYO leadership development program and will interpret those lived experiences to provide a description of the GYO phenomenon. The primary purpose of a phenomenological study is to reduce the individual experiences of those encountering a phenomenon to a description of the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The study design will include gathering data through in-depth individual interviews and focus groups. The research is focused on the self-perceptions of those participating in a GYO leadership development program.

### **Tradition Overview**

The phenomenological design enables a deeper understanding to be drawn from multiple lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) also explained that this tradition is useful for educational researchers due to the practical insight into experiences common in the educational environment. Further, this method allows the researcher to create a composite of what is experienced and how it was experienced (Moustakas, 2010).

The constructivist paradigm presents the idea that the human experience within a phenomenon is unique to the individual and is constructed by the individual (Crotty, 2004). This tradition accepts that the unobservable can be understood through the self-perception of individual experiences (Maxwell, 2013). A key assumption of this paradigm is the lived experience described by the individual can only be studied within the phenomenon and

generalizations cannot be made in other settings (Maxwell, 2013). In relation to this study, the self-perceptions and descriptions of participants will not be presumed to be able to be generalized across other GYO leadership development programs or other forms of leadership development. Finally, the constructivist paradigm includes the researcher as part of the setting where the phenomena being studied are encountered (Creswell, 2013). This suggests the subjectivity of the researcher is part of the resulting self-perception and description.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative studies, the researcher is a human instrument that has significant impact on the study (Maxwell, 2013). Readers should be able to understand the biases, expectations, and experiences of the researcher in order to consider the impact they might have on the study (Greenbank, 2003). Strategies for bracketing out the researcher's experiences or suspending biased judgments include the use of field notes taken during data collection (Tufford & Newman, 2010) and follow-up member checking (Harper & Cole, 2012; Koelsch, 2013) which allows interview participants to review their responses for accuracy.

The role of the researcher in the qualitative phenomenological work will benefit and limit the study. As the researcher, I affect the study design (Creswell, 2013) as I select the central phenomenon, the central question, the condition and type of study, the literature reviewed, and the actual scope of analysis of data collected (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

My interest in investigating the phenomenon of GYO leadership development programs is due to the fact that I am an upper level administrator at a community college in Tennessee and I am concerned with developing leadership abilities in those that report to me in order to strengthen the organization. Additionally, I have attended a Grow Your Own leadership development program on my campus and have experienced the phenomenon first hand. The

benefits of my attendance of another program will be primarily my familiarity with GYO leadership development program designs. Though undoubtedly each GYO program is unique in ways, the concepts are similar enough to allow little time to be spent on understanding how the program worked and focus more on ascertaining perceived growth and development. However, I will not attempt to study the program or individuals on my campus as the biases might be too difficult to bracket out and I feel the participants might struggle with interview questions coming from a fellow participant and in some cases a direct supervisor. Instead, the subjects interviewed will have attended a GYO program at a community college in North Carolina. It is important to note that the person who designed the program I attended also designed the program where interview data was collected. This strengthens understanding with regard to program design and processes but I will have to be careful to bracket out any assumptions that could make their way into interview questions and analysis of responses.

Because of this the constructivist tradition assumption that the researcher be part of the setting takes on at best a hybrid form in this study. I have been part of a particular GYO program so the setting is familiar but I have not been part of the particular setting where interview subjects have participated. Further, there is no prior knowledge or relationship with those subjects to be studied. Therefore, the phenomenological approach to this study is the correct means by which understand the lived experiences.

### **Ethics**

Qualitative phenomenological research is by nature more personally sensitive than empirical research and by design should include consent by the participants and confidentiality for them (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study began with a consent and confidentiality form for participants to complete that clearly

states the purpose of the research, an explanation of how data collected will be secured in protected electronic files, contact information of the researcher, a guarantee that the participant may withdraw at any time without question, and a guarantee that none of their responses will be shared with anyone at their institution. The consent and confidentiality form will be completed before any conversations take place between participants and the researcher. Each participant in the study will be given a pseudonym to protect their identity to insure them against professional or personal harm.

### **Setting**

The primary method for gathering data was face-to-face recorded interviews on the campus of GTCC. GTCC administrators have agreed to provide private meeting room space on their campus for interviews to be conducted. When face-to-face interviews were not possible with any participants, Internet software resources such as Skype or Zoom was used. When face-to-face interviews or Internet resources were not be able to be used, phone interviews served as the means to conduct the interviews. Interviews were conducted for approximately 60 minutes. Interviews will began with a review of the consent and confidentiality form followed by the researcher describing the purpose and process of the research thus far. Finally, prior to beginning with research questions the participants were made aware that they will receive transcripts of their interview responses to confirm that the data were captured correctly.

### **Participants**

Participants for this study included employees of GTCC who have been through the PLS at GTCC in the past 20 years. Because there is not an attempt within qualitative phenomenological studies to generalize the findings to other populations, a nonrandom purposeful approach was used to identify individuals to make up the sample. The researcher

asked for a list of names that have participated and recruited people on the list to determine how many might be interested in taking part in the study. The categories of concern were time frame attending the PLS, organizational position, and gender. The goal was to interview 12 PLS participants. Ten former PLS participants participated in this study.

### **Sampling Method**

The sampling method of maximum variation was used strategically to group individuals first by the time frame when attending the PLS. The intent was three or four time frame groups to be formed and consist of individuals at different levels of the organization and to be sure to be gender diverse. The goal was for Group 1 to include four to five individuals who attended the PLS more than 10 years ago, Group 2 to include four to five individuals who attended the PLS between 5 and 10 years ago, and Group 3 to include four to five individuals who attended the PLS in the past 5 years. This purposeful selection provided insight into how both individuals and the organization have developed and any changes in development as GYOs have become more commonplace.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

After the groups were defined, the data collection process began with multiple pilot interviews helped the researcher understand the structure and feasibility of the study and hone both the interviewer's skills and the interview questions themselves (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). To strengthen the pilot interview process, the interviewees were individuals who have attended a GYO program on the researcher's campus that was modeled after the PLS. These individuals had a level of understanding and vernacular similar to the individuals taking part in the study. None of the pilot interviewees were members of the cohort the researcher attended, nor were they my direct or indirect reports within my current organizational assignment.

Following the pilot interviews any adjustments that needed to be made to interview structure or questions were made.

The interviews were semi-structured and a guide will be used to work through research questions. The semi-structure format allowed for dialogue between the participant and the researcher. This combined with the use of open-ended questioning provided rich descriptive data of the lived GYO experience (Creswell, 2014). Participants gave permission for interviews to be recorded and were provided with a description of how the recordings will be stored securely.

The researcher kept a field journal that allows for the recording of nonverbal communication by participants during the interviews. The researcher further used the journal to record notes about his feelings or perceptions of individual participant's responses. Additionally, any research bias not bracketed out prior to interviews or that arose during interviews was recorded in the journal (Creswell, 2014). This journal was handwritten and is secured along with interview transcripts and other data collected during this study.

### **Data Analysis**

Upon completion of the interviews, the transcripts from each were transcribed and returned to the interviewees to confirm the accuracy of the captured responses. Following this confirmation stage, the raw data were coded in order to convert responses into cogent theme groups or categories that emerged from the responses to the research questions. Additionally, any notes from the field journal kept by the researcher were included with each interviewee's data to provide meta data that might better explain the raw data making up the categories.

Constant comparative analysis was used to extract themes and patterns while assisting to bring order and meaning to the data (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). The first review of the data allowed for initial themes to be identified and for what Creswell (2014) refers to as pre-

coding to be completed. This was done by building a table in Microsoft Word to list each participant's response to the same interview question and was followed by a review to identify themes or patterns. A second table was created in Microsoft Excel with columns for identified themes and patterns to list the frequency of similar responses and for sorting to search for additional themes. These codes were applied extensively across the entire data set in a second review to further develop themes and improve codes (Bazely, 2013). Further, the "Find" function was used in Microsoft Word to search for repeated text instances to uncover other themes and for closer inspection of the responses and the themes. This review allowed the researcher to read each text instance to determine if the instance belonged in the theme category. Reviews continued to hone and improve the coding of the data to strengthen the appropriate categories which were labeled using the language of the participants. After analyses of all interview data were complete a master code list for all interview transcripts was developed to present codes with categories. Findings from the research is presented in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to determine the perceived individual and organizational development of community college professionals that have attended a Grow-Your-Own Leadership Development program held on the campus where they were employed. Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) in Greensboro, NC was chosen as the location from which to interview participants because the President's Leadership Seminar (PLS) at GTCC is one of the earliest programs identified within the southeastern United States. The design of this study was phenomenological, and the design allows for the lived experience of those participating to be communicated and for common themes to emerge from the interview data.

Permission to interview PLS participants was obtained from GTCC and then employees and GTCC who had completed the PLS process were contacted through emails requesting them to participate in this study. Ten employees agreed to be interviewed. The interview consisted of twenty open-ended questions to guide the interview discussion and participants were made aware they could add any information at any point. Participants were also told that there could be follow-up or additional questions the researcher might ask to clarify a response or delve deeper into a response. Data collected from the interviews were transcribed into digital documents. The data were coded in multiple stages using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to produce codes of the participant's language. Common themes emerged and were identified from the use of the final codes.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured to give allow participants to include in the discussion any information they determined to be relative. In some cases, the participant's answers addressed questions planned for later in the interview. In those cases, the researcher



chose not to ask the later question to prevent requesting the participant to repeat earlier information. Some participants asked for questions in advance, but these requests were not granted because some of the interviews had already taken place and those early participants were not afforded the same opportunity. Of the 20 prepared questions asked during the interviews, the purpose of the first six was to understand the individual leadership abilities of the participants before and after participating in the PLS at GTCC. A linear approach to questioning was used to try to ascertain if the abilities of those further removed from the training had seen any continued development. The purpose of the next eight questions was to investigate how the work relationships of participants were impacted by the structure and dynamics of the PLS. Again, a linear approach to questioning was employed here to determine if any changes or development continued over time following the program. The purpose of the final six questions was to determine if the participants perceived there to be development of the overall organization because of the PLS.

### **Demographic Information**

All of the participants in this study were currently employed at GTCC and had completed the PLS process, which is a two-year model. All the participants came from other professional backgrounds prior to entering into higher education. The range of years of experience at GTCC for the participants was broad as some have only been employed full-time for 4 years while others are approaching 20 years. Four of the 10 participants were faculty members at the time of the interviews with the remaining six being in various administrative roles across GTCC. Three of the participants had completed the program in the last 2 years, five of the participants completed the program between 5 and 10 years ago, and two of the participants completed the program more than 10 years ago.

## Interview Research Questions

The research and related interview questions are provided here and are followed by the common themes from the grouping.

### **Research Question 1:**

How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe their individual leadership abilities to have changed after participating in the program?

Interview Question 1: How would you describe your leadership experience prior to participating in the PLS at GTCC?

Participant 1 (P1) stated that in previous professional experience he had managed departments and people and had even at one point begun a president's leadership seminar at a previous job. He shared,

What I was doing at the university where I was, was teaching leadership and management. I had already read the Drucker, several books by Drucker and I had read and taught I guess basic management and leadership and was familiar with some of the literature.

Participant 2 (P2) described gaining leadership experience from working in several different types of businesses. He stated, "I've held several leadership roles at prior employment where I was a department manager at a retail business, actually a couple of retail stores. I ran my family's small business for a little while."

Participant 3 (P3) shared that he had many years of leadership experience but was aware of areas where he needed development prior to the PLS. He conveyed,

I came from regular retail. I ran a large sports store in Winston Salem, NC with about 45 full time employees so I felt like I had pretty good people management and leadership skills. But, managing people in remote locations was probably my biggest challenge. And then of course getting out to campuses and talking to the students, department chairs, faculty deans and making sure that we kept those connections. That was something I had to learn right as I began the PLS.

Participant 4 (P4) traced his leadership experience back to his secondary school days and forward through his career. He shared,

In high school we had a prefect system, I don't know if you are familiar with the British prefect model where you would have students elected or even handpicked by the school to perform certain tasks, teacher support kind of functions. So, I was a prefect from the eighth grade which I think is about tenth grade here. I graduated, went to college, at college I was quite involved in student politics and sport... While teaching World History I was elected staff representative for the South African Democratic Teachers Union at our site. It was kind of a union rep and also, I was the coordinator for the developmental plan as South Africa transitioned into a democracy post 1994.

Participant 5 (P5) spoke of leadership self-development while in business and industry prior to coming to GTCC.

My leadership experience prior to the seminar was more related to the role that I had and developed. I had a 20-year industry career and about 5 years adjunct and adult facilitation skills training. I was very familiar with the leadership needed to manage others and to work through cross functional teams.

Participant 6 (P6) communicated that she had had professional roles where she had leadership responsibilities prior to coming to GTCC. She stated,

I have done some leadership with regards to nursing management in the hospital setting. I was a nurse manager. I started out as an assistant nurse manager and then became a nurse manager. I worked there for a few years, went back to school to school to get my master's degree and then I left. I did some home health and I was what was called a patient care manager there for a few years and then I came into education.

Participant 7 (P7) discussed several managerial and leadership roles in the health care industry. He stated,

I feel like I have had a great opportunity to develop my leadership style and to work with some very strong mentors particularly in health care. One of the things that I really wanted to focus on was transitioning my leadership style to be applicable in post-secondary education.

Participant 8 (P8) shared that she was self-employed for many years and that her work provided leadership experience in unique settings. She explained,

I had worked in Arts for probably 25 years, I worked in music. I worked for a label traveling the county and the world sharing and creating music and developing, producing, and writing. So for me, I was a leader in that I worked in townships in Africa and went to Indonesia and worked with arts based groups so my levels of leadership were not traditional but I was in roles of leadership because I responsible for people who worked for me.

Participant 9 (P9) offered that he had many different forms of leadership roles within a few professional assignments. He listed,

I had a wealth of professional experience leading teams, groups, initiatives related to my job and also serving on various boards. Prior to coming to GTCC, I had worked at smaller schools, so I definitely had to learn how to work within a larger organization. It was a good challenge for me to use a lot of leadership skills and experiences, but I definitely have grown into the role over the years.

Participant 10 (P10) explained that she not only had many years of leadership experience but also experience in developing leadership training. She shared, “I had leadership experience as a registered nurse, so I had oversight of different programs and different individuals for 10 or 15 years. I also had some experience in the capacity as a leadership development consultant.”

Interview Question 2: Describe what your leadership skills and abilities were prior to entering the program.

P1: He replied with a description of how he has used skills developed in the PLS.

I understand, feel fairly confident how to build a team and how to lead a team towards objectives and to build consensus. And then how to move the needle on consensus so that you know where you may start with a group of people who don't necessarily all agree on something and you are trying to reach a certain objective, but you are able to persuade them to the best course of action.

P2: He provided examples of his skills.

I've always been a people person so having the ability to listen and to understand issues that arose through my staff and how to effectively communicate resolutions or possibilities for resolution, having the ability to problem solve and critically think through situations to come to an equitable resolution the school, the staff, and the

students as a whole. Those were all things that I had developed through my previous employment.

P3: He shared his retail experience and talked of the differences between leadership in business versus the community college by stating,

I would say on a 1 -10 it was probably a 6. Mostly because in a retail management environment, I had originally came out of school and worked for Sears in Chicago and in Orlando and it's hard driving very fast paced, some relationships but not quite like in the community college sector and different types of customers.

P4: He listed skills as well as a weakness.

I've always been a strong proponent of a horizontal leadership form, so I enjoy collaboration, I think I'm really, really good at that. I'm also very good at execution. sometimes there is just this drive for this perfection and it can sometimes can be problematic, so just learning to know when to let go is sometimes hard for me in terms of holding onto projects.

P5: She offered that her strengths were with concern to detail orientation and compliance as well as working with cross functional teams. Further, she shared that she "enjoys using collaboration and does not like conflict."

P6: She described herself as a "people person" and a team player which is her leadership style. In addition, she listed that she was organized, knew how and when to delegate, and communicated very well.

P7: He posited that one's strengths are also their weaknesses. He continued by saying he "didn't have a problem making a decision" but that he doesn't always consider all the angles. He summarized by saying that he has learned to use cooperative management very well.

P8: She shared strengths that she feel are responsible for her being recognized.

I think I'm strong communicator, written and verbal. I think that has served me well, but I also understand the idea (psychology was my minor) of listening. I like listening and I think that is a gift of mine. I think being cognizant and discerning were real keys for how I was able to be successful and then ultimately how other people saw me and moved me along, advanced me, and promoted me.

P9: He shared both strengths and weaknesses developed prior to participation in the PLS. I would say being an effective listener, being a creative administrator, and being able to identify and tap into the strengths of individuals on the team and to help them develop those strengths. Also, my ability to motivate individuals. Weakness that I felt I needed to learn more about was how to delegate responsibilities and not necessarily be involved in every aspect of a decision, program, or initiative but rather develop individuals toward accomplishing the goal.

P10: She stated that her skills were as follows: "good at listening", "giving feedback", "day to day operations", "networking," and "negotiating."

Interview Question 3: Explain how and why you were selected to participate in the program?

P1: He explained that while usually there is an application process originating from one's interest in attending, he was told the president's office wanted him to attend, therefore, he applied.

P2: He shared that it wasn't something that he would normally look to take part in, but his boss suggested that he attend.

P3: He stated that even though he was a staff member, a faculty dean recommended him for the program after working together to implement more use of technology by the faculty in the classroom.

P4: He shared that he followed the established application process for the program.

P5: She explained,

I believe I was selected primarily because our business and industry team is smaller. It consisted at that time of basically 3 people. Since my colleagues had gone it was kind of one of those my turn type of things as well as the need for our department to not be lost in the college, because we were working so much externally.

P6: Communicated that it was a combination of both her desire to attend and her colleagues urging her to do so by saying,

I knew some people from my department who had already gone. They would say you really should do this it's really good. You will learn a lot about leadership, you'll learn a lot about the community college and how it works, you'll learn a lot about higher education because you know I had been working in the hospital system or home health or case management all of my nursing career.

P7: Was deliberate in wanting to attend and had applied once before but was denied until the second application. He shared,

This was the second time that I had applied. The first time I applied the feedback was that I was kind of new to the organization let's see what the fit is going to be, which I could appreciate, I didn't have a problem with that. The second time, once I completed my application and going through and stating my goals and objectives and what my previous leadership was and my hope to transition what I believed is my leadership style



in acute care/ health care setting, to post-secondary setting explaining that was the impetus for me wanting to participate in this program.

P8: She offered the following explanation for her selection:

Actually, my boss came to me at the time, the dean of the campus (I worked at High Point). She said, Sybil I want you to apply for the PLS. She kind of outlined her position on it and she supported my efforts. Sometimes you toil, and people watch. If you do something from a place of love and with the heart to do it, without having the expectation to be rewarded and/or acknowledged I think other people watching say, Wait a minute! That's what happened to me I think.

P9: He presented that he was a new employee whose role was deemed significant enough to allow him to attend despite his newness.

I was new to the college. I'd only been working at the college less than a year when I was accepted into the program. The campus at that time had particular and unique things that the VP and President wanted me to accomplish at that time, so they felt it was worthwhile to make an investment in me and allow me the opportunity to participate in the program.

P10: She shared that she was in her first few months at the college and because she was going to be reporting to the president and involved in the PLS he thought she should participate.

Interview Question 4: How would you describe your leadership skills and abilities upon completing the program.

P1: He explained that two significant takeaways happened for him.

There were two things that I was able to take away from the seminar. One was expected, and one was unexpected. The one that was expected was that I would have a better picture or the big picture and that I would have a different perspective of the big picture when it comes to the management of a large organization. The unexpected piece which helped me to manage and to lead more effectively was getting to know my classmates and as a matter of fact that became the most important thing. I'm able to pick up the phone and call these people and there was sort of a comradery that was built even though we were there only for a week and then we would occasionally meet. We address each other by first name. We are able to execute whatever we need to get done very quickly.

P2: He spoke about the difficulty in the PLS with working alongside others that view themselves as a leader and he shared,

That is really what I have learned. When you are working with people that think they are right at all times you sometimes just have to let them fail. Then you can go, here's where I think we failed in this. You don't want to say this is where you failed because these are usually a team project that you are working on in these leadership programs. If one person fails, you all fail. The sad reality of these things that I have participated in is that when you are in that team environment where everyone thinks they are the leader, and no one wants to be the follower then you don't always have the expected outcome that you are looking for.

P3: He summarized his gains by saying, "I think the main one I think is what Dr.

Cameron wanted us all to learn. How we are a moving part in an engine. How we affect the community."

P4: He explained how expectations were met for his development by saying,

I think part of the areas I wanted to develop was maybe fiscal awareness, fiscal responsibilities, how to develop strong budgets in really big amounts. That was one of the things I was looking for. So, going into the program, the PLS itself was very strategically designed because it hit the historical part, it hit the financial fiscal responsibility part, it hit the nuts and bolts of the college, but also how do we kind of wrestle and deal with our own internal biases. The program was able to do that for me.

P5: She stated several gains by sharing,

As far as me individually it reinforced my talents I guess you would call it to continue to push and to continue to organize and bring people together and stay on task toward the end mission. Coordination of meetings and documentation of results as we went through that process and our assignment, those were reinforced. And the ability to talk to folks from other areas of the college that I was not familiar with and was able to get to know was definitely a benefit.

P6: She shared that she felt her skills were probably enhanced and that her bent toward servant leadership was affirmed by a particular speaker and the PLS as a whole.

P7: He offered both a general leadership benefit and a specific area that were beneficial by stating,

I think for me the best benefit was how do I take my leadership style, and have it work in post-secondary education. There are a lot of similarities in management of faculty and the management of nurses. The other thing in post-secondary education and I'm going to say very specific to community colleges is the budget process, which is incredibly unique, is very much driven on what I will say is behind the scenes productivity and knowing that you are at the behest of legislative decisions versus something that is

mandated in the constitution of NC for the UNC system. The budget always goes to them so ours becomes incredibly variable, so how do we maximize that and how do you work to anticipate that.

P8: She posited that networking and using data to support requests were the most significant skills she developed by stating,

I understood what networking was, but I didn't understand the significance of working the network. In my roles, I needed to learn how to work the network. I needed to learn who my resources were in order to be more effective in my role of helping students. The skill that I developed was being ok with being transparent and having conversations with people. You need to have some back story or the history of why someone might say no and be prepared for that but come back with data, use the data, collect the data to support the reason you ask. So that's another one of the skills that I really started to hone in on. Collect the information and data you need to be able to tell your story and be more impactful when you are asking. I'm always asking for money for this and money for that and it's not for me but to maintain programs. If you work under grants and or you facilitate and vet for federal and state grants you've got to make sure that things add up. I didn't realize the importance of that until after the PLS.

P9: He shared that he learned delegation, team building, and communication on a different level by stating,

I did learn delegation. In my prior roles, smaller schools, not a large staff, not a large budget, so I was accustomed to having to do a lot and having to do more and of course in higher ed we are accustomed to that. With this school, with the campus being so large you could burn out quickly if you don't learn how to not only use your team but develop

your team and make the expectations of what you need from them very clear. And, to communicate why this important to the organization and why they were selected and needed to fill those particular duties. That's something that I really learned. Another thing I learned is how to communicate a vision not only for the campus but within the community that can get people excited and get them involved.

P10: She generalized by saying,

I certainly developed a greater network of colleagues across the college because I was still relatively new and so after spending 3 full days with people that I really didn't know that well I developed relationships. Another outcome was a better understanding of the history and mission of the community college.

Interview Question 5: How would you describe your leadership skills and abilities today?

P1: He explained that relationships have sustained.

The friendships were developed during the seminar and then after developed. Then they have been maintained after that. What it did was help to increase my informal authority with that group of people. It slowly bled into other people over the last 3 years.

P2: He described how in leadership roles he has filled across the state since the PLS experience that he has been less passive and more ready to lead.

The thing that has changed for me is that there is a time and a place to sit back and observe and there is also a time and a place when you need to be more vigilant in your ideals to get things done. I think my time in gave me more confidence.

P3: He offered two skill areas of growth.

I would say a couple of things, one being that I am very much more into getting opinions, reaching out to effected parties, communicating change takes repeating something probably 4 or 5 hundred times. Second thing on how I probably improved is probably doing better preparation for decision making on my own. Making sure I had all the facts and having that data to support a decision. So that's just two examples of kind of how using data and making sure that I'm very inclusive.

P4: He struggled to answer this question fully but was able to communicate that he felt that the mission of the college is reinforced for him and that he can make more sense of it now.

P5: She succinctly stated,

I think they have remained the same. I think the aspect of being able to reach out and understand how different aspects of the college work and how the state system works are stronger. So that helps in my day to day work

P6: She shared through a discussion about difficult situations with students that she continues to be servant minded and work through difficult times and commitment to remaining the same.

P7: Due to just having completed the program the skills and abilities change would be the same as mentioned earlier which was with concern to leadership style fit and learning budget processes better.

P8: She explained how she has changed by saying,

I've seen the magnitude or the significance of this information and the idea of aligning with people within the organization who can assist you in doing your job better and/or well. It holds so true because I have to communicate with almost every main programming department on this campus in order to do what it is I do. The idea today is

that I want to make sure I maintain relationships, solid relationships and understand that collaborative works are truly impactful in seeing the successes and sometimes the failure of some of our programs. As a good leader, I acknowledge that all of the components and the variables that make up the organization are important, and we have to help them be able to work as effectively and efficiently as they can.

P9: He spoke of the ongoing nature of his development by sharing,

I would say I'm still developing and cultivating and that is a skill. I think that is something that as the climate changes, as the students change, as the needs of the institution change, whether those are needs or issues you are facing, whether its declining enrollments, whether it's working with special populations, whether it's trying to support programs that have a low enrollment issue or budgetary concerns, you have to learn how to navigate and lead through all of those issues. You have to convey that there is a vision and a purpose for what you do. So, I still use and cultivate that particular skill today.

P10: She describes how she is using knowledge gained by saying,

I don't use things daily but I kind of have it catalogued. I am also responsible for the onboarding process for new employees, so through that process and the orientation I do share a piece of that...about the history and mission of the community college to give new employees a perspective of GTCC and community colleges in general. I think I've just really continued to build on that information that I got during the PLS and have added to it and found that it was valuable and thought that it would be good to share with new employees coming on board.

Interview Question 6: What characteristics or elements of the program structure influenced any change in your leadership abilities?

P1: He had attended a similar leadership development program at another higher education institution but felt one particular approach the PLS took was better. He shares,

While it was educational, I found that having people from outside the institution come in and speak was much more helpful, because it gave me a bigger picture not about just this institution but institutions like it. The benefit to that was of course that I don't think that there is any single institution that does everything perfectly. So, what you can do is sort of get little bits and pieces of best practices from multiple institutions from multiple perspectives and then what you can do is build a leadership plan from that.

P2: He felt like there was limited benefit for him personally as he states,

In all honesty, for full transparency, in these things I feel if you are going to be a leader you are going to be a leader and that going through these things are only going to motivate you to move forward in that journey. I don't think they give you the skills to become a better leader or become a president of a community college, a college or anything else. I think they just give you the motivation to move forward.

P3: He presented several items from the program structure that benefited him as he explained,

I think you have to have a history and understand the politics in history sometimes before you understand why things are funded or budgeted a certain way. That was extraordinary. Dr. Scott Ralls, I believe, spoke about the finances within the community college system. That was fantastic. Really good to understand the financing comparison. The kinds of pressures on the legislature at the political level, sometimes I think newer



employees or newer managers might not understand the funding model and maybe understand the politics maybe behind the funding and both of those speakers did a great, great job Matt on laying that out and explaining kind of why and how we came about and how we support industry in NC.

P4: He replied earlier stating that the PLS addressed areas that he needed such as fiscal issues and college mission but here he further shared,

We would go in there sometimes thinking that I'm good, I'm a good leader and I don't think there is much I'm going to get out of the program but I'm going to participate in it anyway and just bring my leadership across, based on this history and catalog of leadership experience that I have. But that wasn't the case, it was fascinating how much you could learn. That is why I believe the design of the PLS was very well thought out and very strategic in that it hit all the right notes. In some areas you felt you were ok, but you definitely leave the PLS learning a heck of a lot.

P5: She spoke of the difference between the business world and the community college with concern to where you fit with other levels of government. She further shared,

So, getting that information was very helpful. To understand what the hierarchy structure or approval processes are and why they are in place and what all the ramifications are around that, that was helpful. Then we did some skill building and we had some book reading things to do but that wasn't as memorable to me as was the aspect of networking. A big component of the program is you are working with other folks from the college functional areas and just getting to know them and their roles and their strengths and pains and how we interact in the name of the customer and the name of the student.

P6: She shared that having the speakers early on and then moving to the projects teams was a good and necessary format as she stated,

Throughout the whole time we had people throughout the whole community college system here in NC to come speak to us about different things in leadership...to speak to us about where they are and how they got there. Having an opportunity to collaborate and to get to know people from other departments in the college was very good because sometimes we that whatever issues we have are only in nursing (that's the department I'm in) but it goes campus wide sometimes so it give you a different perspective. I think the two years is exactly what is needed.

P7: He explained that having different speakers from inside and outside the college helped him develop new perspectives and strategies, as he provides,

I think that it helps shape what I believe is my leadership style into being more effective. Sandy Shugart came up, we had pre reading of his book. I think he is a very dynamic presenter in talking about how you have to become effective in looking at your lotus of control, of course he was speaking of the presidency. Hearing from Don Cameron who is a wealth of knowledge and juxtaposing his style vs Randy Parker's style and what's effective, how its effective, and when its effective, I think that was very beneficial. One of the most dynamic speakers for me was listening to Dr. Martin who is the president of NC A&T. I guess he presented the information that as a community college president of sitting in that role you have to always be aware of the groups that you are responding to. How do you divide your time between those entities to be effective in each arena? Effectiveness can be about who you put in charge or those things or who you consult

about those things. It helped me to blend my leadership style in terms of collaboration with multiple departments.

P8: She spoke solely of the time on in the second year and the project team as she shared, So, in the project I learned that you are going to be working with people who are in leadership positions or who are part of the fray who may not think like you think. They may not believe like you believe. Does that mean that you can't have a successful outcome? No. It means that you have to possibly modify your perspective or approach in order to ultimately say ok this is ultimately where we want to get, how can we get there seamlessly or unencumbered? I became very introspective but at the same time acknowledging that there is something that you can learn from everyone, whether it is good, bad, or otherwise on the surface but something that you can learn from everyone.

P9: He shared that the purposefulness of both the location and the speakers was impressive as he explained,

We got off campus, we were away from the campus which allowed us to be clearer headed and not enticed to work. So, I think being away in an environment where we were with a cluster of people who were also recognized for their leadership potential and benefit to the institution was good. The caliber of the speakers in the program are just exceptional. It is not a hodge-podge of individuals, it's not just let's find someone to fill a spot and speak for 3 hours, you can tell that the design of the program is very purposeful with the intent of conveying and tapping into your mind and also helping you realize your potential.

P10: She attended the PLS more than 10 years ago and she shares,

At that time, most of it was really just lecture where we had subject matter experts deliver information about whatever topic they were tasked with facilitating, so it was more lecture. There was some Q &A. There were quizzes to test your knowledge about the history and mission to give us an idea of what we knew about community colleges in terms of governance and GTCC in general. There was a kind of pre-quiz before we actually got into the information itself. That put things in perspective in terms of gosh I don't know much about GTCC and the governance at this point, so it was certainly beneficial.

Having been involved with the design of the PLS since participating she stated that changes were made to integrate things like increasing the number of days of the seminar from 3 to 5 and adding the group projects and second year.

### **Common Themes**

There were several major themes that emerged from the interview responses concerning research question 1: How do members of the GTCC PLS perceive and describe their individual leadership abilities to have changed after participating in the program? Each of the 10 participants shared that they had leadership and management experience in professional positions prior to beginning employment at GTCC. All 10 of the participants described a change in their perspective of the college because of the information conveyed during the PLS. Presentations about the history of the community college, community partnerships, and budget processes are just some of the content areas that the participants referenced as being responsible for this change. Nine of the participants communicated their experience in such a way that it was evident to the researcher how motivating their PLS experiences were. Discussions about content

learned and time spent in project groups were filled with statements about how engaged they were and how they wanted to do more. Seven of the participants referenced the relationships that were formed during the PLS process as they responded to questions about skills that were developed. They posited this has resulted in them being more comfortable and efficient in their daily responsibilities at GTCC and five of them referenced that the relationships continue to grow and expand since the PLS ended. Five of the participants referenced their increased awareness or ability to communicate with others. The examples given were multi-directional with some concerning communicating with colleagues, others with subordinates, and further with members of the community. A final major theme discovered was at different points and within different responses, 5 participants spoke of the professional confidence gained by participating in the PLS.

Several minor themes also emerged from the interviews of the participants. Three participants made statements that individual skills were not developed in the PLS. One stated that it is not designed that way, 1 that their skills had not really changed, and lastly that the skill building activities were not memorable. Three of the participants referenced their improvement in decision-making. Each of them provided illustrations that included the importance of gathering data and using it effectively for decision-making. Three of the participants shared that they learned it is necessary to adapt their leadership style as times and situation change. Some of this appears to be because each of them came from prior leadership experiences in different industries. Two participants reported that they learned it can be difficult to work with a group of people who all perceive themselves as leaders. Both spoke of their initial reaction of stepping back which is their natural response. However, both continued with a description of themselves eventually figuring out how they could work within the group to be effective.

## **Research Question 2:**

How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact on work relationships as a result participating in the program?

Interview Question 7: Describe what your work relationships were like prior to entering into the program?

P1: He shared that because he was new to the college that he was in the beginning stages of building relationships and explained,

I knew the people in my department, but I guess one of the things that I learned about leadership is that when you are the new manager or new captain or new leader – I got some advice a long time ago from someone – when you take over and existing staff or faculty, you have to steer the ship slowly. You can steer in the direction you want but you don't do a hard right or left turn. What you do is keep going the path, listen to everyone, build consensus and slowly turn the ship. I was still in that process. I hadn't begun to turn the wheel. I was still gathering information and building consensus.

When asked in follow up about relationships across campus, he stated "There were very few across campus."

P2: He explained that his relationships with people outside of his area were no more than to "talk in passing."

P3: He offered a story from his past when a college president gave him some advice. He stated, "Always walk through buildings not around them. What he meant by that is certainly get to know your faculty. Stop in and talk to the students. I think I knew that, but I really wasn't doing a lot of that prior to the PLS." He continued that because he had been in retail and his job

at the college was to manage retail functions, among other things, that his “focus was on profitability...” and that he had not been “creating those relationships with the faculty” that were necessary.

P4: He detailed that he had some relationships with the people in his area as he emphatically explained,

Quite frankly non-existent. In fact, I don't think I knew anyone. Maybe one or two people because we had departmental connections. I knew the instructor that was over the nursing assistant program in the health sciences program and is now the interim director for health sciences.

He further added, “My relationships before the PLS were limited to my area and again we come back to the silos that we talk about.”

P5: She described her relationships as “very weak” due to the nature of the work in or area, which is focused off campus primarily and due to the location of their offices which were away from main campus. She shared,

So, prior to the seminar I really didn't have any kind of relationship or knowledge of what faculty was doing, what other folks were. There were representatives from accounting, from global supply chain, I was actually looking at my roster and we had people from everywhere so, I was there thinking oh my gosh you guys are actually doing really cool stuff with the school and here is how I can help you or how you can help us, just how we can all work together better.

P6: She explained that she “didn't know a whole lot of people across campus with the exception of admission and advising because we have to be a part of that every year. All faculty were involved in that in some way.”

P7: He described himself as a “pretty gregarious person” who takes the time to ask “What do you do?” or “How can we help each other?” His relationships were not just inside his area.

P8: She offered that the nature of her relationships was,

Very “silo’esk.” We worked in silos. I feel as if we stayed within the confines and comfort of our area. I know that I did. I would interact with people but not to the magnitude that I eventually started interacting with them.

She went further in stating,

I feel some areas feel they are elite. That was how I felt, this was my perspective. I’m not saying this was how it was but, in my mind, I felt as if there were areas of the college that felt if you didn’t work in “this” area then you aren’t part of the “in” crowd

P9: He was new to the college and his impression was,

Being that I was new to the college, I think people were still getting to know me. I think that is a fair statement, understanding my vision for the campus and what I brought to the campus and the college. I was still in the honeymoon phase. I think they were excited about what they knew about me, excited about my background, excited about my energy and passion.

P10: She offered that in spite of her newness,

I had relationships with a few people, the people that I interacted with on a daily basis that were in and around my office. I had certainly begun to develop business relationships with them. As far as across the campus or campuses and getting to know people and putting faces with names, I had not gotten there yet.



Interview Question 8: Describe the relationships formed within the program between you and the other participants?

P1: He stated that relations did form and that they led to other relationships. He also shared that he had come to GTCC from a for profit college and that he formed a bond with another person from a for profit school in the PLS. He described the relationship,

...we became close friends and she and I spent several times talking about our experiences at the for profit and moving to non-profits and what the differences were, and sort of reflecting on the negatives and benefits of each. That was helpful. I didn't feel like I was all alone.

P2: He initially stated that no new relationships were formed but he did offer, I still have a relationship with one person and that's because he's similar to me. He's happy where he is, he doesn't aspire to move onward or upward and the rest of them did their own thing and we were never close to begin with.

P3: He responded with a quick and emphatic "Absolutely!" He moved directly to a description of the project working team and how well they worked together. What was produced by the group and their ability to work together served as his description of the relationships developed.

P4: He provided a picture of what he saw happening with regard to relationships developing.

As we moved, hour by hour, day by day, as we started interacting in the PLS you would start seeing bonds forming, relationships building. Much of it around leadership philosophy. We find that we are either like-minded or in terms of feedback we would

give there would be a connection with some of the feedback or some of the participation, the level of participation.

He continued to share his perception of the growth of the group,

I would start seeing that there are some common threads. We are like-minded, we have similar philosophies, maybe we differ on a few issues but the discussion kind of draws us together. So, day by day you start seeing these relationships forming and I must say that after day 5 we really became in my mind a close-knit cohort where we could go back to and rely on each other's strengths. Much of it is kind of like alliance building so you find that you have all these additional alliances that were formed now and that you could now benefit from the alliances that are formed.

P5: She stated that it started in the first week during the seminar and continued through the project time. She further described the actual relationships,

Some of the faculty members I stay in touch with them and see them at various functions. It's always a pleasure, kind of a catch up, more of a friendship in terms of networking. A support system, you know, how's it going? what's happening with your classes? and just having some debrief kind of conversations.

P6: She shared how the relationships were formed in the first week.

They would literally put our name at a seat in which they wanted us to sit so you would sit with that person and that way during breaks you could talk to that person. Also, when we worked in groups, we worked in different groups and so in that way you got to know each other when we had lunch. We had lunch together because they provided us lunch. So, there was always opportunities to get to know and to talk to each other throughout the whole time we were together. I feel like the relationships were formed then.

She added information about the type of relationships and the benefit,

So now when I have a question about another department, I have a contact person that I actually know, their face, that “yeah she works in this department, she was with us in PLS. Let me call her and ask a question or he works in that department, so that is very helpful.

P7: He offered a description of how groups were formed and relationships were developed.

The groups were purposeful in mixing different leadership styles and we were each given problems to solve. This was much more of a table top exercise than anything. From that point, I think we began to learn about each other and how we gel and how we need to receive information and how we need to present information, and we began to pick up on other people’s strengths.

P8: He revealed the impact of the relationships formed.

Because of the nature of my role, I am in communication with many of my colleagues on a weekly basis and some on a daily basis. I don’t know if I would have been as confident or comfortable with asking if it hadn’t started with that week that we are together. I am sitting here looking at the group picture and I have relationships with probably 90% of my class, even those that have gone elsewhere.

P9: He enthusiastically described the relationships formed.

Great relationships...such a unique experience. We still talk today and there is still almost a cohort feel of support to us going through the program at the same time. There is a big sense of pride in what we went through and really a lot of pride in the projects that we committed to in year two.

P10: She put forth not only the benefit of the relationships formed but the value of the timing for her as a newer employee,

For me, I think the greatest benefit was being able to develop those relationships and having a go to person when I needed assistance in adult basic education or if I needed some assistance in HR or another area of the college. So, I had forged these relationships and to some degree I had an in to those different parts of the organization that I probably would have developed but it would have taken me a longer period of time. I don't know necessarily if I would have developed them with this group of individuals.

Interview Question 9: Did your relationships change while attending the program? If so, in what ways?

P1: He explained that once faces and names are able to be matched and learned that it helped with "turning the wheel" or managing his area. He also shared that the PLS allowed for "fast tracking" of relationships. He continued by stating that "One of the problems that I would identify at GTCC is that it is siloed." He described the problem that multiple campuses and departments being spread across them causes. Hence his use of the term "fast tracking" which the PLS provided.

P2: He had stated earlier that only one real relationship was formed during the PLS. Here he continues by saying "In the program itself it wasn't a very fulfilling group to be a part of."

P3: He shared that it "certainly brought us all closer together." He also offered that he developed relationships with some people that were on completely different projects during the second year because he was able to provide input to their project.

P4: He discussed the change in relationships being about familiarity and what it brings.

After the PLS for example one of the guys was in the purchasing department and we would email back and forth prior based on the work we had but after the PLS that back and forth was on a whole different level. Even though we may have been sharing the same verbiage but to know I am emailing Pat for example and Pat and I are having this exchange about work or a software product I'm submitting to purchasing, it became a whole different kind of interaction, one that's based on strong formidable bonds I think that and alliances that were formed during the PLS.

P5: She gave the PLS credit for providing her encouragement saying,

Beyond that what that PLS allowed me to do, not so much allowed me, encouraged me to do was to be sure that I was connecting with some of those folks that are important to my role but also some of the folks that have information, so I could one bounce a call. My clients might call and say hey do you know anything about such and such a class. Well, I know more about the college set up and know more about the contact folks, so I can one bounce them to the right person.

P6: She replied earlier as well, describing the development of relationships.

Also, when we worked in groups, we worked in different groups and so in that way you got to know each other when we had lunch. We had lunch together because they provided us lunch. So, there was always opportunities to get to know and to talk to each other throughout the whole time we were together. I feel like the relationships were formed then. So now when I have a question about another department, I have a contact person that I actually know (their face) that "yeah, she works in this department, she was with us in PLS. Let me call her and ask a question or he works in that department, so that very helpful.

P7: He spoke of the relationships with the group changing versus individual relationships. The groups were purposeful in mixing different leadership styles and we were each given problems to solve. This was much more of a table top exercise than anything. From that point, I think we began to learn about each other and how we gel and how we need to receive information and how we need to present information, and we began to pick up on other people's strengths.

P8: She answered previously when speaking of relationships.

Because of the nature of my role, I am in communication with many of my colleagues on a weekly basis and some on a daily basis. I don't know if I would have been as confident or comfortable with asking if it hadn't started with that week that we are together. I am sitting here looking at the group picture and I have relationships with probably 90% of my class, even those that have gone elsewhere.

P9: He posited that the PLS produced a more intimate and inclusive experience for many. Our ability to work with each other across the college increased on a more intimate level, a close level on a project for the benefit of the college. It was good to work on a team of people who were on different campuses and serving in different roles but were on the same team. It helped me at that time, as a new person to the college, to get to know different individuals and spend time on the other campuses...and it just made us feel, as far as myself and the Greensboro campus more a part of the greater objectives and goals of the institution.

P10: She answered prior to this question by saying,

For me, I think the greatest benefit was being able to develop those relationships and having a go to person when I needed assistance in adult basic education or if I needed

some assistance in HR or another area of the college. So, I had forged these relationships and to some degree I had an in to those different parts of the organization that I probably would have developed but it would have taken me a longer period of time. I don't know necessarily if I would have developed them with this group of individuals.

Interview Question 10: Have your relationships changed since the program ended? If so, in what ways?

P1: He did not suggest any relationships had changed since the program ended but did speak to how he is able to continue to use those formed.

He explained that once faces and names are able to be matched and learned that it helped with "turning the wheel" or managing his area. He also shared that the PLS allowed for "fast tracking" of relationships. He continued by stating that "One of the problems that I would identify at GTCC is that it is siloed." He described the problem that multiple campuses and departments being spread across them causes. Hence his use of the term "fast tracking" which the PLS provided.

P2: He speaks only of one sustained relationship for his time in the PLS.

I still have a relationship with one person and that's because he's similar to me. He's happy where he is, he doesn't aspire to move onward or upward and the rest of them did their own thing and we were never close to begin with.

P3: He shared a new strategy that suggests relationships with others have continued to develop.

I wasn't going to our aircraft maintenance group and asking if I could sit in a class. I wasn't going to Astronomy. I think the PLS...when you meet the other faculty, I think it

just opens up a lot of windows. It creates a comfort level where I can walk in the building and I'm not just the guy asking for book adoptions by email.

P4: He has just completed the program; therefore, his previous replies are sufficient.

P5: Her previous response is included here.

Beyond that what that PLS allowed me to do, not so much allowed me, encouraged me to do was to be sure that I was connecting with some of those folks that are important to my role but also some of the folks that have information, so I could one bounce a call. My clients might call and say hey do you know anything about such and such a class. Well, I know more about the college set up and know more about the contact folks so I can one bounce them to the right person.

P6: She states that she feels there has "been more growth with some of them" and continues by adding,

But, at least if I know a student is having a problem with financial aid, I know a person face rather than just a name to have them go over to talk to. Then I can say to them, "this person is really good and patient and they are really willing to work with you" and you just know it first-hand. So, I think there is some growth but there is room for more growth because we really don't have an opportunity to get together with folks across campus until we have our convocation at the beginning of fall and spring semester.

P7: He confidently stated that relationships have "definitely sustained." and illustrates the type of relationship dynamic that exists for him.

There is a lot to be said for putting a group of people in a crucible and mixing them all around and then seeing what comes out. There is a fair amount of alchemy that takes place in doing that. I think you have to be very supportive of that. So, it leads you to



continue your search for knowledge after you leave. Occasionally we may shoot an article to each other and say, Hey I never thought about this or Hey this is kind of cool and a different kind of an approach and there are probably about 4 or 5 in my immediate group that banter back and forth.

P8: She provided an example of how the relationships continue and develop. She states that “All of these people have helped me be able to align our students with the services and with more knowledge.” She continues with the example saying “I work with finance and one of the people was the Director of Finance and since then everyone in her department are actually my go to” She explains further,

It’s more than one person I have to communicate with but it started because I was comfortable with their boss and their boss was comfortable with me and we communicated.”

Lastly, she proclaims that,

And so, my thing is that being in with people who knew me differently and knew me from one week and then a project environment has catapulted me to have access to additional people and additional resources.

P9: He shares that relationships have sustained, grown, and reproduced others.

It has been something that has continued to grow, and I think it’s extremely valuable in the work that we do. I think knowing who you are working with and being more than just colleagues. I think crossing over into the friend element with your colleagues is important to do. To develop a relationship of mutual respect where you want to see each other succeed. The program has definitely helped me again in just getting to know individuals that you work with and them really understanding me as a person and getting a little deeper than that.

P10: She offers that the growth is ongoing where possible by stating, The have become deeper and richer. I think it's because it's the first individuals that I really formed tight relationships with early on and we have the PLS in common. Often times, it will come up during conversations, you know, Do you remember when this happened? A good portion of those people are no longer with the college but the ones that are here, I have maintained those relationships with the and it due in majority to the PLS.

Interview Question 11: Please describe the quality of social interactions within your groups?

P1: He explained his deliberateness in planning his schedule in such a manner as to be able to go across campus to interact with people.

The way I usually build my teaching schedule is that I have a single day in the week that I don't do any teaching. So, I have the entire day to do whatever I need to do and on that day I would always, and I still do this. I walk to the other buildings and for a while the only reason I was walking out of the building is to go lobby.

He drew a comparison to the military and the tendency for the leaders to use first names until the mission required them to use their ranks and be more formal.

It's sort of like in the military. You have several generals who went to West Point together and of course they are going to call each other by first name even though one outranks the other, until it's absolutely necessary that the refer to each other by their titles.

He applies it to his situation at GTCC by saying,

That's what I have been trying to do with the people that I interact with, build the relationship first with the idea that eventually if they need something from me or if I can help them in some way, or if I need something from them or if they can help me in some way that it will be done because of the existing relationship.

P2: He spoke of the people in his immediate area as "family". He states that with other departments "it is always going to be a give and take" relationships. But in his area of work and supervision he shared,

We are dysfunctional at times, but we care about each other. We check in on each other. We work together. We spend more time together here than we do with our families. So, we have in my opinion a quality relationship within our work family.

He does not provide that the PLS experience helped him with this, instead he stated that he felt he had that mentality "long before I went through" the PLS and other trainings. He also added in a later response that he felt trust was built with the president and vice president through interactions outside of the PLS not as part of the PLS.

P3: He shared that people outside of the PLS were needed to help complete the group project and that those relationships were important not only for the project but in general business sense.

You know we often say in business, "Relationships garner money you know or bring money" and it's true. You have to have those relationships. You are going to do business with one person or another, but you do have to have a relationship with the vendors. They share a lot of information that is very helpful to running a good business.

P4: Offered that his time in the project group was always "focused and high quality. He further shared a specific experience to explain the interaction within his project group.

Also, on a lighter note, I felt very supported, because I have a mild disability and sometimes I'm very self-conscious and self-aware of my movements. So, I remember we met as a group to discuss some ideas one afternoon and then we decided to have coffee after the meeting, and we had coffee and cake. I came in a little late but there was this genuine hospitality from some of my colleagues. Maybe just handing over a cup of coffee or help with getting some cake or something like that. There was this genuine kind of camaraderie that developed you know, and I appreciated that.

P5: She briefly spoke of limited social interaction with any working groups.

There is a little bit of social quality to the relationships in terms of knowing people's names and kids and where they are in the stages of their family life, but honestly I don't have a lot of interactions with anybody from the college outside of here.

P6: She discussed how difficult it was for her to attend the group meetings due to her teaching schedule. When she was able to attend she describe the relationships as "great." There was nothing offered with regard to the social quality, only comments about the relationships existing as the project was completed.

P7: He stated that he felt it was a combination of the seminar time and the project group that is responsible for the growth of the social quality.

I go back to spending the week together with people that you are going to be in a work group with. You begin to develop those social ties as well as work ties. For me personally, it's important that every group have a combination of that.

He added that "friendships definitely developed" and that they have "no problem picking up the phone and chit chatting with her about how's her son, how are things going, what's happening, I need you for this, help direct me about how to best do this."

He concluded by saying, “but I think that is always there. You’re also talking a culture when you ask me that question. That’s not necessarily, currently embraced by our culture.” He attributes this to the fact that there are significant changes in leadership happening currently at GTCC.

P8: She suggests that the quality of the interactions in the group were due to the fact that “everyone was really conscientious and cognizant of stepping up and not wanting to be the weakest link.” In addition, she stated, “we had a really strong set of people in our group who had varying skill sets and I think that’s what made it work.” She reflected by saying, “We became closer and better toward the end as we got closer with the project” and offered as evidence of quality that any one of them could respond at any time to a question about their projects and the others were ok with that happening.

P9: He stated as a matter of fact,

It was work. We didn’t have a lot of personal time. The schedule was full from the time you got there to when you left so there was no time to engage and you had to take advantage of lunch time to have any real conversation.

P10: She shared that there were opportunities that presented themselves for the group to be more social but that she did not take part.

From my individual perspective, I chose not to be part of that and it’s probably due to that’s the way I operate in a business environment and always have. I just don’t want the waters to get muddied, so I have a professional line and a personal line, and I just don’t want the opportunity to present itself where those become blurred. So, there was a segment of group and of course it was voluntary, but a call would go out telling the group

where they were going to meet and what time, and any of the other particulars. I just kind of stayed away from that.

Interview Question 12: How would you describe the level of trust that exists between you and your superiors?

P1: He stated that he felt like there is no trust in either direction and elaborated by sharing,

I feel like they don't trust me and I don't particularly trust them. I can be more specific if you'd like. How I have always operated is that I'm going to tell you the truth and you cannot like the truth and I expect you to tell me the truth and I cannot like the truth. At least you have told me the truth and I know where we are operating from and then we can fix something. But if ever I catch you with an untruth, something that you know is absolutely not true, then that erodes the trust very quickly.

He continued by stating,

At the institution that I came from, I was allowed to speak truth to power and no one ever held it against me and here I feel like sometimes when I speak truth to power they do hold it against me. I have watched them with other employees and it erodes communication in a way that people are less likely to talk if they think it's going to be held against them.

He concluded his response by positing,

I don't think it's just me. The faculty that I work with every day have trust issues with the administration. This has negatively affected morale, its negatively affected. That is something that is not addressed in the seminar.

P2: He stated that he felt there was a “high level of trust” and offered the longevity of himself and others as evidence.

I think if there wasn't a high level of trust that I wouldn't still be here after 9 years. As we are all human, we all make mistakes. Luckily for us, those mistakes if proving not too detrimental or not too costly are fixable 99% of the time.

He continues with the longevity evidence by saying,

I am going into our 3<sup>rd</sup> college president, we are currently on our 3<sup>rd</sup> registrar, our 3<sup>rd</sup> director of academic advising, on our 2<sup>nd</sup> our 3<sup>rd</sup> vice president of instruction...but I'm still here. My boss is still here. That longevity that we show in our position, when viewed by other areas, there has to be a predetermined level of trust that if we are still here then we must be good at what we do.

P3: He explained that his level of trust has increased due to what he learned in the PLS. It definitely helped me to understand. One of the projects in the PLS is you are given a catastrophe that has just happened on campus and 3 people have to elect a person to decide to respond to a news reporter. That was just something that really opened my eyes to what the upper leadership deals with.

He continued with the explanation,

And, how they have to form relationships and trust with their vice presidents and the board. They report to the board, so the board is asking questions. And then the community because we work with Honda Jet and Snyder Tire and those folks expect a lot from us and our graduates. I think that really opened up the entire group's eyes to what the leadership of any give college, private, public, for profit has to contend with on a daily basis.

P4: He described his struggle with trusting supervisors.

Trust is always a tricky issue. I think we all realize that we have to perform whatever we do responsibly and ethically, to the best of integrity. But, still I am very weary and somehow, I'm not totally comfortable in a sense that you can trust let's say your supervisors. I don't feel that I can do that. Not before the PLS and even today. I very frankly say that I battle with those trust issues.

P5: She described a culture where trust is difficult and spoke of leadership styles and communication being reasons for the difficulty.

The outgoing president is a very different manager, leader, president than Dr. Cameron and we've had some bumps and moves and kinds of things as we go. I think right now the atmosphere is one of we are looking forward to change, we think.

With regard to leadership style she shared,

I think the outgoing president brought in more of a different mentality and a different personality to the situation. He is noted for being more of a micro manager and he wants to have his thumb print on a lot of things so that has caused a lot of folks to kind of slow down. We are in wait mode before we get an approval to move forward on some things.

And with regard to communication being an issue she stated,

I don't know that there is trust in the fact that we are all aligned on our vision and strategy. When we aren't aligned on the vision and strategy it's because it has not been communicated or its sprung on the general population. Folks kind of jump and say wow I just wasted my time on doing this activity, or this task or program because you've just now switched gears and the route has now changed. I think there has to be good communication and there has to be evidence of walk the talk and I think we are at a stage



right now where those two things aren't necessarily happening, so I don't think the trust level right now is very high.

P6: She firmly and succinctly shared her level of trust.

I don't think the leadership seminar had anything to do with my trust. I think relationships and leadership itself has to do with my trust in a leader. Some of their styles, what they do, and what they say...am I trusting? No, I'm not, just because some of the experiences that I have gone through.

P7: He spoke candidly about his view of trust of his superiors saying, "This is not a trusting environment. That is not part of our culture. The leadership style that exists even when I came in was one of high scrutiny and micro management." He continued by describing his experience as a budget manager and faculty member as one with little autonomy. He shared "It's like that around all decisions." He shared that he feels it is "almost as if we are begging" when attempting to do things.

P8: She began by stating, "I could not do my job and be of any impact if my supervisors or my subordinates did not trust." She further stated,

I'm going to say upper administration, if they didn't trust me they would not continue to bring and place more very important projects in my lap and imbed them within my program.

P9: He referenced the PLS and the time spent there as a help in developing trust.

Time spent when you are huddled up working on a special issue, using your time and talent to solve a problem, whether it's a crisis or something that you are doing for the benefit of the institution, all that is time well spent. You get to know each other, you get to break out of the confines of your everyday duties and titles and going to meetings and

taking notes. It gives you a chance to get to know who you are working with and what they are about. I would say that it has been really good and has developed. There is a good trust relationship here, not only with the individuals that were in my class but also my superiors.

He addressed trust currently by offering workload and projects as evidence,

... if I'm just using them assigning me to a bunch of projects as an indicator (laughing),...they are always assigning me to special stuff, special initiatives, groups, task forces. I think by that alone there must be some trust in there somewhere because they are always asking me to do something special. Oh, there is a cost to that trust too, not that I don't like it but it definitely keeps me busy.

P10: She described her perception of trust saying,

Yes, I think the cohorts help develop trust at a faster pace and a faster level. I would say because my superior was the president and he initiated the PLS and I participated in it, that I have a greater admiration in terms of what he was trying to do with the whole process. So, I think trust there too grew at a faster pace just because of his role within the seminar and then our business relationship going both ways as well.

Interview Question 13: How would you describe the level of trust that exists between you and your subordinates?

P1: He spoke of trust that exists but is being developed by saying, "I think they mostly trust me. We're still building trust. I have been told by them that they really don't want me to go anywhere and I think that they fear that I may." He offered a story for insight into his management and leadership style that concluded with him saying,

I really had to push with the administration. I said let me get this straight, this is his wife and she is being scheduled for surgery and he has to be with her for 24 hours afterwards and you guys came late to the table with this mandatory training? Surely, he can be excused from this and their response was that he needs to make up the time later. So that was...I guess they had the opportunity...because I think part of what leadership is, is treating people well, which does not mean that you always have to agree with them and we can disagree with what needs to be done but you still treat the people well. I think sometimes that's lost, let's put it this way, sometimes management trumps leadership.

P2: He speculated that the trust is "pretty high" between he and his subordinates. He quickly followed with "As with anything there are always areas of improvement and I know what those areas are for myself because I know what my weaknesses are." He concluded by offering that with trust there can be "fluctuation as well depending upon the situation."

P3: He explained that he shares as much information with his staff as possible and that he is clear with what the expectations of the leadership is for their area. He offered "I think they do trust me on a day in and day out basis."

P4: He provided a response of mixed results with trust in his area.

I think two ways. I think with some of the instructors we work closely together, and we develop kind of strong bonds. With those instructors, they've often come to me for advice. You know how do you think I should do this and sometimes even personal advice by the way, you know my wife just lost her job, what do you think of how to deal with this or that. But I find that other instructors that we are not so close. I cannot say they trust me, and I can say the same.

P5: She is not a manager of others; therefore, no response is applicable.

P6: She is not a manager of others but offered that the students she works with she stated “they typically tell me that they trust me.”

P7: He carefully stated, “I think, of course thinking what we do and knowing what is perceived that we do is two different things.” He continued insightfully by stating, I think that each of them feels some autonomy, but the other salient point is their trust level coming in. If they have never been allowed to work independently until they need my advice, or I come back to say, next time we approach this let’s think about these options, they are always hesitant.

P8: She described a two-way trust that she feels exists between she and her subordinates. My subordinates know that I am going to advocate and support them and their efforts to do their job and do it well. And I communicate with them if there is something that is lacking then I speak to that. But, I also ask them to be transparent with me. Trust works both ways. I think they have shown me that they trust me because they continue to come to me and seek me out for the things that they do.

P9: He responded confidently by saying, I would say the trust is good. I would say that they trust me. They know where I stand, what I think, what I need from them, and what I am willing to do for them.

He spoke confidently as he stated,

I think that in the 9 plus years that I have been here that it has only increased by the things that we have experienced and by what we have achieved as a campus, as a team and I think we have been able to do that because we do trust each other.

P10: She responded by simply saying she did “share with direct reports some of what occurred” during the PLS but that the trusting relationships she has built are not due to the PLS.

Interview Question 14: What about the program structure influenced your relationships within the organization?

P1: He referenced earlier that thought “unexpected” the ability to spend time with and get to know a “diverse and wide range of people” from all over the college “became the most important thing” in the program. He described the relationship building dynamic as “fast-tracked.” Finally, his description of the developed relationships included that they became “personal” and that a “camaraderie” was formed.

P2: He spoke positively about the speakers in saying, “they were really motivational in their speeches” and that they “give you the motivation to move forward.” He did not think that they taught him how to be a better leader. The project time for him was not a positive for him with concern to relationships. He stated, “They didn’t know me that well so I just kind of sat back and observed where I could best benefit the group.”

P3: He referenced the relationships built because of the time spent together both during and after the PLS. In sharing that the groups have even met socially since the PLS he stated, “definitely a trust and relationship as continued.”

P4: He shared that the focus of the PLS was on things to do with “upper management” and that he “felt that after this experience I felt a little more in touch or more in contact with upper management.” He shared that he felt there was a certain visibility that the PLS provided.

I also felt that there was some kind of connection built with upper management. And I can see the difference even today. If I walk past and see our president somewhere, we can actually share a personal moment, if it's not work related at least we share a personal moment.

P5: She used the term "sticky" to speak to the positive significance of the networking provided by the PLS. She explained further by saying,

A big component of the program is you are working with other folks from the college functional areas and just getting to know them and their roles their strengths, and pains, and how we interact in the name of the customer and the name of the student.

She also added that she felt like the speakers that visited the PLS were "very informative and passionate" and that what was significant for her was that they were people "who had evidence and data" that showed that had accomplished things. She stated, "there was evidence that said yes they weren't just talking out of their left hand."

P6: She first mentioned that learning the history of the NC Community College System and to "know financial things, are we governed by the state or not." She moved to the relationship building availability of the program and stated,

If you look out how it (the PLS) was organized I think the intent was that we get to know each other outside of our departments as well as learn about the whole institution in which we are working and how we as a team can impact the institution in which we work, as a group opposed to just in my department.

P7: He offered in an earlier response,

There is a lot to be said for putting a group of people in a crucible and mixing them all around and then seeing what comes out. There is a fair amount of alchemy that takes place in doing that.

When asked as a follow up whether he felt the culture rather than relationships was influenced by the PLS, he stated,

I would say that the amount of influence was that those of us who were participating in the program had more dialogue about defining what the culture is and how we work within it.

P8: She used a change in supervision story to illustrate how impactful the time spent together was for her.

I think the PLS actually does help to form those more solid relationships and those of trust. Ironically enough, my original supervisor and I were classmates. She became the director of the program and I remember when I got the appointment from the college president to become the coordinator for Titan Link. It was interesting because they asked me if I minded working for her. I said are you kidding, no, I can work for anyone and I can work with anyone. I said as long as they allow be to do the job I've been charged to do I'm fine. And I said that I understand that I'm going to have to report to someone. She and I had established a relationship and so she knew me. It was funny, and we even spoke about it. She said there are things that I've learned from you and I said I was thinking the same thing that I had learned some things from her. We would not have been able to say that, had we not been in leadership (PLS) together.

P9: He spoke earlier of the significance of the time spent together in saying,

That time spent when you are huddled up working on a special issue, using your time and talent to solve a problem, whether it's a crisis or something that you are doing for the benefit of the institution, all that is time well spent. You get to know each other, you get to break out of the confines of your everyday duties and titles and going to meetings and taking notes. It gives you a chance to get to know who you are working with and what they are about.

P10: She explained the time together to build relationships in a manner that suggests it only begins in the PLS.

It is like six degrees of separation. I think that comes into play with this. Once you have formed or forged those relationships with 15-20 other people, and as I said, I felt more comfortable in reaching out to those individuals if I needed something within the organization. So, if I reached out to them but they were unable to provide the information or support that I needed they were readily available to help me resolve whatever challenge I had. Just by that connection that we had it helped enhance relationships with other people that were connected to those individuals that I had not even met. It was just the nature of the whole process, I guess the better you know someone you feel a little bit more obligated to help them in any way that you can. So I certainly saw that taking place and found that to be a great residual of having participated in the PLS.

### **Common Themes**

There were several major themes that emerged from the interview responses concerning research question 2: How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President's



Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact on work relationships as a result participating in the program? Nine of the 10 participants described their work relationships prior to the seminar as either new, poor, weak, or limited to their work area at the college. Another major theme from 9 of the participants was that the relationships formed during their time in the PLS were, at a minimum, good relationships. Two of the 9 used the word great and 2 others used the terms alliance and camaraderie to describe the relationships built. Six of the participants reported since their time in the PLS their relationships have sustained, grown, or even reproduced other relationships.

More major themes arose when participants spoke about the benefits of the relationships that had been formed. Six participants shared that their job performance had improved due to the relationships they have built. An additional theme presented itself as 6 participants also spoke to the relationships providing them with a network of contacts to be more efficient in their roles, understanding the roles of others, and helping students. A theme developed as 8 participants spoke about the best part of the PLS for them being the opportunity to spend time together. Six participants mentioned the professional diversity of the group and how their perspectives of the roles of others changed because of the exposure. Trust between the participants and their superiors is a theme that emerged as 6 reported to have good to high levels of trust with 3 of the 6 giving the PLS credit for increasing those levels. Seven of the participants reported having good to high levels of trust between themselves and their subordinates but none of them suggested the PLS impacted those levels.

Several minor themes also emerged from the interviews with the participants. Three of the participants described the relationships they had formed as more than work relationships and more like friendships. Three participants also stated they felt GTCC suffered from departments,

divisions, or offices working in silos and not taking time to communicate. In addition, 3 of the participants communicated that they felt like the relationships formed might never have happened if not for the PLS opportunity. Two interview responses included statements about how quickly relationships were able to be formed in the PLS compared to the normal relationship building process at GTCC. A common theme for 4 of the participants was the mention of social interactions that took place outside of required time in the PLS.

**Research Question 3:**

How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President’s Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact of the program on the leadership development of the organization?

Interview Question 15: Please discuss how you use knowledge or skills you developed during the program to impact the organizational goals or mission?

P1: He explained that it was enlightening for him to understand that all colleges deal with the same “macro level” problems, but he moved to an illustration about how he is better positioned to perform the mission of the college after learning the experiences of others. He shared,

The administrative building, so, they are dealing with students every single day. Where we deal with students and their successes, that they are learning something. These people are dealing with students. The most memorable thing for the faculty is when the student has a great success, the most memorable thing for those people is when a student is able to pay their bill or is arguing over the bill or you know what I mean? They don’t really

remember the students who come in and drop off a check. What they remember is the student where there is a conflict. So, it is a different perspective of the same group of people. Because the faculty, what we do, we don't worry about money – we have departmental budget, I have to worry about that and I've been doing that for year. So, it's less of a concern, most of the concern is hey this student won a medal or hey this student passed their class. It is very personal and always, mostly positive. Not saying that all of it is but the most memorable things are. But for them most of it is negative. I've never had that perspective before on it.

He continued,

The perspective and also there seems to be that it used to be when I would talk to people in Financial Aid or people in the cashier's office there seemed to be a disconnect, like are we talking about the same people? The people I'm dealing with are pretty good, but their perspective was: Are we talking about the same people because the people I'm speaking with are not real good, they are belligerent. It helps me support them better. It also helps me with students who come and say "I'm going to be late on this bill", because we do hear that. I now have much more empathy for those people working for the same goal which is to get the student through and to get the students to pay their bills because ultimately the student paying their bills helps to pay everybody's salary. I didn't have that perspective before I started the seminar. At the for profit we really didn't ever discuss the student or how they paid for going to school.

P2: He stated, "I don't feel like the program helped me in that area." He then posited "So once I got into FA and higher education I realized that without FA no school mission and no schools vision is ever going to be reached." He closed by saying,

I've got GTCCs vision and mission statement on a little laminated card hanging right here on my wall. And everything that is in that mission statement is what these 3 offices do, day in and day out, 52 weeks a year. So, I don't think the program established that as much as just being in the job that I have.

P3: He began by speaking of having understanding that things need to be tied to the mission of the college and he said,

I always say that the projects have to have an anchor. What are they there for? The ultimate goal is to see them get across the stage, How does this project affect them walking across the stage?

He explained that the project his team worked on during the PLS he developed his communication skills, organizational skills, and marketing skills. He continued by sharing that the project helped connect him to the mission because,

Our VP said you are going to be giving this to the convocation, well that's a lot of pressure, that's a lot of faculty. So, I wanted to make sure I had something good to give the faculty. I knew their level of expectation. To even get 15 minutes during convocation was amazing.

P4: He shared that his area of work "became very focused" and less general. He felt that he was able to tighten up things in areas such as "curriculum planning."

P5: She explained that during her time in the PLS the college was in the middle of making changes to its stated mission. In fact, she shared that her PLS project group was involved in some of the research, "our team was working on what should we be posting or declaring or representing as far as values go." Through this process and her previous

professional experience, she perceived an issue with strategic planning not being connected to the stated mission. She offered,

We have vision, we have a mission, we have the values...the strategic plan should follow through with execution and development of specific goals and objectives which should trickle down through the organization, but that trickle-down aspect has been very inconsistent at least in our area and from what I can tell across the college.

She suggests what is necessary to improve and that the PLS is not addressing it when she comments,

So, organizationally my concern with the organization is that we can talk a story about goals and those kinds of things but it's not working, It's not operational, it's not. It's a checkbox a lot of it is a checkbox. The seminar incorporated more of the concept of change management, embracing change, and change leadership, because before you can lead change you've got to embrace it, it has got to be part of what you believe needs to happen. So, for something significant like that it's pulling folks together to say this is the why, this is the rationale behind it. Do you believe this is something we need to do? Is this something that fits our organization? And if it does, then you get to talking about the how and talking about what it's going to take to cause that shift happen because now the leaders need to work with the general population and others to work on that concept of, how did I get my folks to embrace this change, not just going out and making it happen without those folks in the boat rowing very fast and in sync.

P6: She explained that she learned from the PLS the “underlying reason why” they did certain things. She listed, “the history and mission of the community college,” the “recognizing

of our place in the community college system,” and “the politics of it” as areas that helped her understand the mission more clearly.

P7: He provided the approach used by the PLS to interact with the mission during the training as he shared,

We all talked about what the mission statement was and what the vision statement was.

What was our interpretation of that and what was the intent of wording it that way.

He went further to explain the importance of strategic planning,

But now it’s more about the strategic goals. You know you just say our mission is to educate people. Ok, so now it’s what are those strategic goals to back that up and that is where you get into the nitty gritty.

He concluded with an assessment of what the PLS is doing and what he felt it should do by stating,

The program gives you the mission statement but those are very lofty, they are very oversite if you will, but if I want something to work I have to go to the faculty and say what do you need to work on? If I said to you, we want to deliver the best education to every student every day, what do you need to make that happen.?

P8: She answered with a philosophical discussion of the college mission and how it aligns with her as a person. There was no comment about the PLS or things done in the PLS as she provided,

Our vision is to create successful futures. The only way we can do that is by listening to what the future holds and what’s down the pike. Then to prepare and set up a framing to provide the programming and to be accountable to why it does and why it doesn’t. For

me the work that I do and the role that I'm in at this institution is in line with intrinsically who I am.

P9: He spoke of how the PLS brought a different level of awareness for the mission of the community college as he recalled,

There is a pragmatic reason, practical reason why we focus on certain initiatives, certain programs, career pathways, majors, technical careers; we do all of these things (we focus on these majors, short courses, programs, and diploma programs, helping a student get their high school diploma or GED, or even our power program which works with students in compensatory education who are on the spectrum and have intellectual delays) the reason we work with all of these individuals. It helps our society, it helps our community and going through the program really helped me understand that. Of course, I knew that coming in. At that time, I had been in the community college sector for 13 or 14 years. So you know the population we serve, but we were able to do a deep dive into the data and to the best practices of the work that we do, the emerging trends and special populations and why it was important for us to specialize and focus on some first generation students, students of color, returners, tapping into high school students more, in addition to the nontraditional community college student average age 25, 27 or older.

P10: She provided a short list of things she learned about that helped connect her to GTCC but also motivated her to consider the strategic plan,

I believe that because I had a greater understanding of the history, mission, and philosophy of the community college, I went away with a greater appreciation of the institution...just the community college as a whole. I felt more compelled to learn more

about some questions that I still had so for me it was kind reexamining our strategic plan, but this time I'm looking at it through multi-faceted viewpoints.

She included in her response a description of an activity in the PLS that helped connect her to the mission and to others,

One thing that I can say I took away was one thing our president had us do the first day. It was to write our philosophy statement about ourselves. What was this experience going to do or what did we think our roles were as individuals for the college itself. You were to write your own philosophy statement as it connected you to the college. I hadn't given that much consideration before. Then we were to share that with other members and to receive feedback from our peers and colleagues there to make that statement even stronger. I think it connected us right away with, yes, we have a mission and a philosophy for the institution but what is it that you bring to this institution that is going to enhance it even greater.

Interview Question 16: Describe how your level of organizational commitment has changed after the learning skills and practices in the program?

P1: He discussed how there was immediate impact and a delayed impact with regard to his commitment to the community college. First, he stated simply, "I would say there was a change initially yes. It helped me more with the relationships." He continued to describe the change in his career perspective.

. It would more speak to my experience of it – and it didn't happen immediately was that it opened doors that I did not think it was going to open as far as my perspective of my career.



He further explained,

I now have a different perspective. It took about two years after the seminar, so it only recently happened where somebody said to me, and this is my direct superior “You know I can see you being a dean or vice president or possibly even a president.” I had not even considered any of that but then going back to the original purpose of the seminar which is to groom the next group of leadership because the vice presidents and presidents are all going to be retiring.

He completed the description of his change by stating,

The seminar said that they were trying to create this kind of thing and it did create it for a few people. But it didn’t create it for me, it took the personal interaction to create that for me. So, when I finished up with the seminar I thought this has been useful for me in the relationships that I have built. It has not been useful for me in the sense that I think I’m going to be any more than I am already. But the follow up of somebody that was not even part of that piece saying, “You really need to consider doing this.” When I went to the seminar I was a bit cynical. I didn’t think it was going to change my trajectory at all. I don’t believe that any more. It did, I just didn’t realize it.

P2: He stated directly, “My organizational commitment is an individual one and one that springs from my area. Not the seminars.”

P3: He replied by saying, “Oh gosh, my commitment I would say has always been pretty strong, but it grew.” He described the change in his perspective by stating, “I didn’t understand quite how much Dr. Cameron had to do with businesses and how tight GTCC was with say a construction group or with the chamber of commerce.” He explained his “eyes were opened” when he added,

I think learning and understanding that there are other parts to leadership within the community but seeing his interaction with the business community and how those businesses had high expectations.

He gave examples of how he is now very engaged with community partners and he closed his answer stating, “Those relationships have been very important in our world.”

P4: He places a value on the increase as he shares,

I was listening to one lady; a famous poker champ and she has lots of pep talk moments. She always talks about percentages. She says when you are giving out something see if you can give it in terms of a percentage. I would say 70% or 80%. Understanding the intricacies or each part of the college, how the college operates, where the college intends to go in the future. All of that came together and increased for me around 70 or 80%.

P5: She discusses both her level of commitment and her fit by explaining,

I’m committed to the organization. I’m not one to jump jobs and that type of thing. Right now, where I am personally, I’m looking for an opportunity to do more of what I think I’m better at. My job has evolved without a lot of influence on my part. Stuff happens. What that has allowed me to do, I like GTCC, I’ve been a neighbor of GTCC for my 20 years here in Greensboro. I’m committed to the students and I’m committed to the folks that I work with to do the best that I can with what I can do and to try to influence where I can.

P6: She speaks of her struggle with her commitment and future,

No, I think I’m right where I said I was. I loved education when I started here, and you know I love nursing because I am a nurse of 30 something years and I love leadership. When I first started my degree almost 6 years ago I wanted to be a vice president of

instruction or a vice president of student learning and success. That was the main reason why I did it in the first place. Now, because of some things that have happened in our department, across the college campus, some of the processes that are in place on handling student issues and faculty issues, it has kind of dampened, I guess that is a good word, my desire to be in that type of leadership.

P7: He described his commitment as a personal trait but also he suggests the PLS has helped him be more effective.

I probably bleed GTCC but I'm that kind of person. I'm a tail end baby boomer so I give a lot of allegiance to wherever I am and try to learn even more. I think the opportunity go through the PLS was absolutely fantastic, the reading, the opportunity hear from other leaders who are well established in post-secondary education was great. In terms of applying the things that I learned and how to morph my leadership style in this arena, I think has really been one of the best things of having attended the PLS.

His commitment to succession planning has developed as well as he shares,

My grandfather, one of the interesting things he always said, was when you are in a leadership role your number one job is to train your replacement. So, you do that in terms of hiring right every time, you have to be that mentor, you have to provide opportunity for growth for the people who are reporting to you. It was a wonderful lesson, I didn't know what the hell it meant when he said that, but the more I've matured (laughing) those words of wisdom come to have impact.

P8: She states that the PLS alone is not responsible for her level of commitment.

I don't know if I can say it alone or solely. It's a whole myriad of things that I have participated in that have helped contribute to my connection to this institution.

She did however suggest the PLS started it all for her by stating,

This organization to me requires people to understand that we are a community college and we have to serve the community and its constituents, but we also have to be open to receive and learn and grow in the process. I feel the PLS, since it was the first major event probably was the catalyst of impetus to really understand that for myself.

P9: He shared that over his nine years at GTCC the focus of his job has changed every three years. He has had three different bosses and different expectations. He spoke of them as opportunities for growth and understanding what it means to be a “community college educator.” He stated,

What that means, is that we are multi-faceted, we have to be nimble, we have to be flexible, and we have to basically do what in demand and what is needed by the institution.

He concludes by providing his perspective of the change and the resulting development.

That has been really good and has been a very unique experience as opposed to having a title and be doing that one thing or that set of things for the entire 9 years. I have been able to do things that were needed for the campus and also for the institution. I think it has paid off greatly not only for me personally but for the campus as a whole. So, I would say my level of commitment is very high!

P10: She stated, “I think it has increased but I don’t know if it’s me or a combination of having participated in the PLS and my own initiative.” She explained that as she learned more about GTCC “and all of the components that we really have in place for the community” it made her want to “work towards getting the word out to the community.” She concluded by saying,

“So I began to think about how we can make greater connections in the community that maybe we had not thought about reaching out to.”

Interview Question 17: How would you describe the ability of the organization to be flexible as a result of things learned in the program?

P1: He shared that he didn't feel that the organization is as flexible as it could be.

I guess myself and many others are hoping that the change in leadership is going to end up with, from the top down, we are hoping there is some great flexibility and I have seen that flexibility at other colleges because of the seminar.

He seemed to suggest that flexibility is possible but just not present as he concluded,

Some of the speakers came in and talked about innovative things that they are doing with faculty that we were not even able to consider. As a matter of fact, I guess that was something that was really interesting to me was that what was presented at the seminar was not always true at the college.

P2: He stated that he “was not one of those people” that was helped by the seminar regarding change to perspective and resulting efficiency. However, he did consider the group as a whole in saying,

I think for some of the people that go through the program it opens their eyes to certain things that they will need in order to more effectively not only serve the college but the students and the community. I know that we had some people in our business and industry office that went through the program with me and I think it helped them.

P3: He spent time celebrating the program by saying, “It's wonderful, it's great” and “these opportunities are long term investments in the employee to me.” He considered the

impact of the program and a possible nod to flexibility on the college and community when we posited,

It's so hard to put monetary dollar amount on this but I have a feeling when you bring 30 people in an organization through it, gosh I finished 12 years ago so that's 360 people have gone through it since me. Certainly, some of them aren't here but guess what a lot of them are still in Guilford County. A lot of them are working for large corporations in Guilford County and they remember Dr. Cameron's leadership seminar.

P4: He replied initially saying,

I don't know if it's a GTCC thing, but I don't think it's very flexible because of its structure. Also, because of its commitment to the community college system. So, I think there is very little flexibility there.

He moved on to explain his heightened awareness.

When we left the seminar one of the takeaways I had was that oh my goodness, this is an ecosystem of its own. It's a whole system of connections and networks.

Despite that he also provided his perception of his reality at GTCC by saying,

That's a little contentiousness because sometimes it's the impression I get that you have to just operate within a certain framework and anything outside of that framework is just not acceptable.

P5: She spoke in a frustrating manner to say, "our college sometimes feels too big" and "there are a lot of people who want to be signing off on stuff." She suggested that there is little flexibility due to structure by adding, "There is a rank thing and an authority thing and there are some barriers to moving forward without getting the right names on the paper."

P6: She responded positively in saying, “yes I do think there is some flexibility” and that there are “opportunities for us to be innovative around here.” She shared that the PLS included a discussion regarding rewarding innovation.

If you come up with something that can help the whole college and you write it up for implementation and I didn’t realize we could do that throughout the college, that yes we could do that and if it was something that brought in revenue that you could even benefit from that individually or in different kinds of groups.

P7: He acknowledged the PLS and that it provides, “tools for your toolkit” and “great exposure.” The PLS he suggested “gives you better ways to interpret processes.” This led him to provide that he felt the organization is ready for change and that “a lot of people from this program who have gone on to do great things.” He concluded by offering that individuals and the organization have benefited when he said,

That is one of the things that is great about it. There is some intensity to it but you really walk away with what it is they are exposing you to, there is great opportunity there. It does allow people to have a common language, that may not answer the flexibility piece, but to be able to parlay in a way that it’s understood what we are talking about and why we are even talking about it in those terms.

P8: She stated that “GTCC has to be ready and be prepared.” She continued,

In order for us to continue to receive and maintain the types of funding and support that we get outside of the college, federally and from the state, we’re going to have to make changes and modifications.

She questioned the impact of the PLS by saying,

I'm not sure if the PLS and its participants impact the flexibility or not. I really don't know about the immediacy of it (laughing). It really depends on who is chosen and decisions that are made. If they are choosing based on pending changes in the community then yes, it's possible.

Her conclusion is that multiple things must be present to be flexible or ready for change.

So, to me it depends. The network of relationships and how impactful they are to the institution is dependent on the mission, the objectives they have set forth, and who is at the table.

P9: He suggested that flexibility is certainly there but accountability is also a part of change.

That's one of the hardest questions you have asked (laughing). It's as flexible as needed for the task at hand because yes there is flexibility but there is a certain accountability that is expected with an organization this size and the things we are trying to address. So, yes flexible to the extent that it still fits the four or five things that the college really depends on me for and pays me for. So, yes, I have had immense ability to be flexible but it all funnels down to the 4 things that I mentioned are truly at the core of my title: student engagement, conduct, facilities management and growth, and internal and external relations. Everything funnels down to that so yes as long as I'm flexibly addressing those things I'm great (laughing).

P10: She commented on the opportunity the PLS provides for people to work differently together.

If there is such a thing as giving individuals permission to be innovative and creative and use out of the box thinking, to be able to be able to dig down into that, the PLS gives



folks the permission to look at things a little differently, look at them from a different perspective. If you have a good idea, think it through, test it out, and share it with others. I certainly think that the project teams gave folks an opportunity to work in cross-functional work teams and to put together some creative suggestions for how to handle some of the challenges that we face on a day to day basis. I think some of that initiative probably spilled over into other areas for lots of different folks. I think in a lot of ways it took off the kind of stifling environment that some said that they were working in.

She concluded by positing the benefit of the new way of doing things can essential spread through the organization.

I think they go back with some renewed energy and synergy to their respective areas and thought about things a little differently as a result of the PLS.

Interview Question 18: Would you provide an example of something from the program that you have used or employed in leading others since the program?

P1: He stated that he was already very prepared for his role and he did not really learn anything new to employ.

Because of what I teach, I think I had already employed a lot of what they were teaching so I didn't really any new strategy at the seminar. But, it did expose me to a lot of the other things. I'm probably not the best person to answer that because of what I teach. I have already been exposed to it all. As a matter of fact, there were a couple of times I thought well I can speak on this from an interesting perspective.

P2: He shared that by observing "how others were trying to lead" to be a more effective leader "by not doing it the way they did it." He offered that you "can't always be 100 miles per

hour. You have to take other people's ideas into account in order to have a better understanding of how the process works." He also discussed the effects of being overly authoritarian in working groups by saying,

If all you are doing is giving directives, then you are not going to have the trust that we talked about and you're not going to have respect. You are not going to be viewed as a leader, you are going to be viewed as a dictator and people won't stay and won't follow.

P3: He referenced customer service videos that he created and has his reports watch which includes information that was shared in the PLS.

One of them talks a little bit about the history of the community college system and how much we are tied in to helping with industry in Guilford County because I wanted my staff to understand that the person who walks into the store to buy an alumni t-shirt, he could be the past Guilford County sheriff, he could be the head of a large tire company in Greensboro. So, making sure that my staff understood this isn't maybe like a university setting where its primarily students coming out of their dorms.

P4: He spoke of the motivation and commitment that he carried forward from his time and relationships in the PLS.

I think just commitment and efficiency would be the two. Everybody in the program was really so focused and everybody really had this drive, really a passion to succeed, to get things done and to get things done well. So, it's that level of commitment and efficiency and organizational pride in some ways. That still sits with me today as I do different things. It's almost as though this cohort, or this group, or this program kind of developed into your conscious. So, everything you do is kind of interrogated by these things.

He also added, “. I think the seminar really creates a really solid foundation that you can grow from and bond from.”

P5: She shared that for her it was passion.

There were some presidential speakers and system office folks who were very informative and very passionate. That was one of the things I would remember. I think the influence for me was the folks that came and talked with passion and had evidence and data that said what they were talking about, something that they made happen. Here is how they made it happen, and there was evidence that said yes, they weren't just talking out of their left hand. They had credibility and passion in terms of their leadership and their expectations and could speak to that.

P6: She stated that Dr. Cameron's presentation during the PLS was her favorite thing because he asked, “Do you have the courage to lead?” She shared more from Dr. Cameron,

He says that people care about 3 things from their leaders. Do they care about me? Can you help me? and Can I Trust You? So, that has gone with me and I so agree with that.

Finally, she shared that Dr. Cameron asked about the professional ambition of the group regarding positions to which they desired to ascend are reach.

So, he was saying, have the courage to do it, have the courage to make a difference, have the courage to lead others, to gain success in college but also to be the best that they can be in whatever area they work, in their communities, and families, and the world.

P7: He presented two strategies that he has implemented as a result of things learned during the PLS. First, he learned from one of the speakers to plan to split his time equally among those he oversees and/or partners with.

So, one-third of my time with students, one-third with the community, and one-third of my time interacting with my instructors and full-time faculty. How can I best mentor them to be the most effective and what are some of the things that we need to tweak in order to be successful in what we are doing?

Second, he shared that “a better understanding of the budgetary process but I don’t know all that I need to know yet.” He discussed a certain frustration with the difference in college budgeting and his previous budget management experiences.

The way we do things here used to cause me a great deal of angst because it was like, well don’t worry if you go over because you are really producing. You’ve got more students than we projected you to have and we’ll find the money somewhere. That’s not an answer that’s acceptable to me because if I really am managing my budget, I give you a proposed budget based upon what I think we are going to be doing and I have to come to you to say, “Hey what is it that we need to do to enhance this budget line so that we can be effective with our instructional supplies or our duplicating.” So, that exposure to budget was very important in helping begin and to continue my path to understanding how we budget a year.

P8: She explained that she learned how similar professionals can be.

For me, it was that understanding that everyone wants the same thing. We want people to be successful, we want to successful, we want the works that we do to speak for us without us having to stand on the mountain and say that we are doing them.

She spoke of a confidence she gained by understanding more that all have a role.

What I learned is it is ok to speak your truth, be authentic, and be ok with being supportive of those who aspire to be president. Because every president needs a supporting staff and being a supporting staff does not mean that you are not a leader.

P9: He stated, “success is intentional.” This was a quote from one of the presenters during his time in the PLS. He has remembered it and used it moving forward. He shared, So, if you are going to be successful there is some aspect of fate and luck and opportunities and favor but there is nothing like being intentional either in your actions or the things that you are involved in to make sure that you are successful.

P10: She shared two strategies that she uses because of her PLS experience. First, she includes the history, mission, and philosophy component with new hires at their orientation, which she oversees. Second, she explains,

I noticed how much energy was in cross-functional teams, what a great benefit that was. I certainly became an advocate of having more cross functional committees, even to the point of giving that feedback to others in the administration if we saw a committee that didn’t look as diverse as it should be. You know birds of a feather flock together (laughing). I think you get a different perspective if you have more diversity within committees and work teams across the college, so I certainly advocated for that.

Interview Question 19: Explain how the knowledge and/or skills developed in the program benefit you in your current role?

P1: He shared that the relationships formed “allowed me to start turning the ship” as he spoke of being able to guide his department. He stated, the “increased efficiency” also allows him to be a better leader.

P2: He briefly stated, “Basically observing other people’s leadership skills and being able to employ those that will work best in your situation.”

P3: He earlier shared that the changed perspective from the PLS allowed him to understand that he has “multiple customers” to serve and that his area is a moving “part to an engine” that serves many different clients. He also stated that the time with the project group made him “better at preparing to make decisions.”

P4: He stated that he is “just below mid-management” and that he feels there is no “trickle-down” to him because he doesn’t feel that his supervisors “understand really the role of the seminar.” Therefore, he shares that he doesn’t get to apply any skills but does acknowledge,

I have a general sense that this is what the greater organizational aim is and this is my responsibilities. So ethically this what I have to adhere to, so doing the right thing.

He concludes with his disappointment saying,

For the college it’s just sad for me that we lose that, and we are not able to harness that capacity of skill. The disconnect is that you go back to your job and you are just stuck there.

P5: She spoke of being prepared to perform her work more effectively by saying,

With the customized training project work that I have been doing for the last two or three years, that has expanded to interfaces outside the college and into the college system, especially in terms of the customized training activity. There are regional folks to work with, there is a regional director to respond to up to the vice president of commerce and of economic development.

P6: She shared through a discussion about difficult situations with students that she continues to be servant minded and work through difficult times and commitment to remaining the same.

P7: He provided an example of how he has grown in his role by saying,

I think in terms of the program and being able to take my leadership style to be one of basically that extrovert who sells the college and sells our education that occurs hourly in our classrooms. That is huge to me. I have significantly increased the amount of outreach that I do to community partners. I would literally sit at my desk and wait for them to call me. now, I actively pick up the phone and call them.

He acknowledges the PLS for exposing him to the expectation and strategy saying, “. I would have never understood what someone in my role and above needed to do without having that exposure to the leadership examples that I had in the program.”

P8: She explained that in her role she is “not only the internal but the external resource for students at the college” and she has to have many conversations between faculty and students. She offered her increased confidence to be bold in those conversations as something the PLS experience gave her.

So, the experience in my current role allowed me to not be afraid as I said earlier to ask and to pursue and go down roads that people would say, “Are you sure we should do that?” Why Not? So, it’s about the connections. Me making connections in that small group gave me the boldness to make connections in larger groups. That’s the best way I can say it.

P9: He illustrated through his work of trying to make is off-site campus location more robust.

My efforts in increasing the visibility of the campus and serving on external boards for the benefit of the college campus. That is something that I think has been critical to our relationships and relationship building and individuals seeing us as a campus apart from Jamestown(campus).

He credited the PLS for making him take “time to think about what that means and how I would go about doing that.” He went further to state that he serves on numerous community boards and that it has everything to do with his job. He explained,

I hear about grants, I am able to articulate a message about what our college does, I hear about opportunities, I share information and all that I think and know helps the campus and the college.

P10: She explained earlier how she using the information in her role of leading new employee orientation.

Interview Question 20: Also, explain how the knowledge and/or skills developed in the program have prepared you for future opportunities?

P1: He shared that his perspective “broadened” because some of speakers in the PLS were from outside North Carolina. He spoke of realizing that he could look outside of North Carolina and that the “opportunities are endless.”

P2: He stated that he was applying to graduate school and said that the program had “motivated” him. He posited, “If I do at some point want to move up I know I have to have a Master’s degree at least/bare minimum to even do that.” He commented on the PLS saying, “I don’t think it has given me any more insight into anything that I had prior to the program.”



P3: He shared that as he learned more about the college mission he realized that in his early days “as a new employee here I probably crossed up some people and did some things for two or three years that probably were not in the best interest of my career but they were so patient with me.” He spoke regarding the leadership over him.

They had a vision, they knew what we could do. I think they felt like I and my assistant manager had a great heart and were really working but they wanted to make sure that we understood the whole mission.

When asked in follow-up if he felt like he could lead other areas of the college, he replied, “Yes, I think I could actually. I wouldn’t have answered that yes or positively five years ago but I think I could now definitely.”

P4: He replied by saying,

Yeah, I think so. The program in general touches so many things. It gives you a broader understandings of not just GTCC but how many college institutions operate. So, it kind of prepares you in many different ways for assuming some kind of challenging new role that allows you to use some of those skills and knowledge that you have acquired.

P5: She explained that there is “not a process for development grooming, succession planning.” She did say that it could be here immediate supervision that is preventing that but that she does not feel like there are future opportunities for her at GTCC.

P6: She was confident that the PLS prepared her and others for future opportunities.

I think we are prepared to move forward into whatever area of leadership that we feel like we should be doing or want to do. We have resources out there that can help us.

She listed many of the presentations and resources provided by the PLS as evidence.

We looked at a lot of different aspects: the cultural aspect, the inclusion aspect, we looked at the financial of course, we looked at abstract things like courage to lead, the history and mission of the community college system. So, we looked at a whole lot of things that I think are important to a successful leadership team so to speak. They also gave us educational opportunities, resources, and materials to help us in our leadership, lots of books and stuff that we went away with they actually gave us to read and to prepare ourselves.

P7: He shared that his next move up at GTCC would be do the position of dean, but he is not sure he would apply. I probably might get to that level, I don't know that I would get much above that level. I think it gives you a wonderful foundation to work towards. That as well as being supportive of people who are in those positions. Sometimes you need somebody that reports to you to remind you of the tools that you need in order to handle a problem.

P8: She explained how she has progressed already by sharing,

It opened me up and availed me to other opportunities. It takes one person to see you as someone that they deem a leader for other people to say, "Wait a minute, I want you to be on this committee, I want you to serve on this, I want you to be involved in this."

She concluded by illustrating that she had been asked to take on a new position.

I had no idea that I would be the coordinator because I didn't plan on it. I was comfortable in a role that I had at the college, but the vice president saw me as the person that could run it because I knew it so well. It's has been a lot, a lot.

P9: He confidently presented that he is competent in his current position and for future opportunities. He gives credit to the PLS by saying, "you can't duplicate that kind of time with individuals again across campus and from different levels of the institution" and that "it

definitely gave me that level of confidence in my skill set that you can plop me down pretty much anywhere and I am work ready.” Finally, he spoke to the excitement and motivation the program provided regarding opportunity.

That level of exposure and seeing other individuals, high level, very successful higher education administrators from across the country doing different things in different cities with students that are totally different from ours...you just really become excited about opportunities at the institution but opportunities at other places. You want to share your talents and gifts wherever you are needed.

P10: She shared that the being able to hear the experts and being privy to the concerns as the PLS happened helped her become better at designing the program.

Exposure to some of the facilitators that we had during the course of those 3 days certainly gave me an idea of the level of expertise that certain individuals had in a particular area. Also, having a kind of inside view of what participants said was lacking perhaps during that week, gave me the ability to listen to some of those concerns and needs and be able to develop programs or invite facilitators or speakers to the college campus that would somehow get at closing some of those gaps that were identified during the course of the seminar.

## **Common Themes**

There were several major themes that emerged from the interview responses concerning research question 3: How do members of the Guilford Technical Community College President’s

Leadership Seminar perceive and describe the impact of the program on the leadership development of the organization? Eight of the 10 participants reported that their commitment to the institution was strong. Seven of the 10 participants stated they were prepared for different opportunities either at GTCC or in other institutions of higher education. Six shared at least one thing from the PLS that they employ in leading others. Six of the 10 participants commented in a positive manner concerning the flexibility of GTCC due to either their time in the PLS or with consideration to how many have gone through the PLS over time. For comparison 3 of the participants commented negatively about the ability of GTCC to be flexible. All made reference to the leadership style of upper administration being stifling. Each also suggested they had the ability to be flexible as an individual but felt the organization was limiting. A final major theme discovered was 5 of the 10 participants explained they have increased their involvement with community partners as a direct result of what they heard and learned during the PLS.

There were a several minor themes that became apparent in the interview responses. Four of the 10 participants spoke of becoming more aware of how their current role aligned with the mission of the college. Three participants shared their improved understanding of the college mission which allowed them to connect what they do more meaningfully to the mission. Four participants explained their increased understanding of strategic planning and that their approach to strategic planning had changed due to knowledge gained in the PLS. Three of the 10 participants described changes and improvements to their decision-making processes as a result of the seminar and group project time of the PLS. Finally, two of the participants included in their responses that they felt the PLS encouraged innovation and that the project teams allowed the participants to practice innovation and problem solving in a new way.

### **Additional Themes**

Before and after each interview, participants were given the opportunity to make any comments or share information they considered relevant. Three participants mentioned that they would like to see a follow up for PLS cohorts. Two participants talked of the need for the PLS to be available to adjunct faculty. Two participants spoke of how religious or spiritual convictions impact their leadership.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for further research. There is a summary of the study and a summary and conclusions based on the data from Chapter 4. Also, recommendations for practice present suggestions to be considered by higher education institutions that are using internal means to conduct leadership development. Lastly, there are recommendations for further research that researchers may want to explore.

#### **Summary**

Internal leadership development or grow your own (GYO) leadership development is a strategy that some community colleges and state systems have chosen over time to address shortages in their leadership pipelines (Ebbers et al., 2010, Weatherspoon, 2010). The goal of GYO programs is to develop the leadership capacity of the organization, rather than simply the individual (Ebbers et al., 2010; Eddy & Boggs, 2010). The development of the individual is seen as leader development while the development of multiple individuals within the organization is seen as leadership development (Day et al., 2014). Leadership development as an idea must include leader's being developed as individuals but the desired outcome is not focused on individuals and succession. It is focused on developing all levels of college professionals to become leaders where they are and to prepare them for next steps of leadership in the college (Ebbers et al., 2010). According to Eddy & Boggs (2010), the value of GYO programs is found when the organization can tailor training around the mission and needs of the college. Further, they state the value of a GYO program hinges on the ability to address leadership skill deficiencies in the participants (Eddy & Boggs, 2010).

This study focused on the perceived level of leadership development in individuals who participated in the President's Leadership Seminar at Guilford Technical Community College in North Carolina. The research questions were designed to discover any change in the participant's individual skills and abilities, work relationships, and the organization. The phenomenological approach was used in data collection and in reviewing for common themes. The phenomenological approach is designed to assist in capturing the lived experience of those being studied (Creswell, 2013).

Ten employees of GTCC were interviewed by telephone. Permission was granted through the GTCC Institutional Review Board. Participants were sent a recruitment email and those responding with interest were contacted by the researcher to schedule a 60-90 minute interview. Each participant consented to an audio recording of the interview. The interviews were semi-structured to allow each participant the opportunity and freedom to speak openly about their experiences and perceptions. Those agreeing to be interviewed represented five faculty and five staff from across GTCC several GTCC campuses. Two of the participants attended the PLS more than 10 years ago. Four of the participants attended the PLS between five and 10 years ago. And, four of the participants attended the PLS within the past 5 years.

The recorded interviews were transcribed, reviewed by participants, and the data were coded in multiple stages to develop common themes. The common themes were categorized as a major theme if it emerged from most of the participant's responses and a minor theme if it was found in at least two of the participant's responses. Participants were aware they were given time to speak freely and make any additional comments or ask questions at any point during the interview. In some cases, comments were made during a response and these were considered and presented as additional themes.

From the data collected through interviews multiple stages of coding were completed to identify themes within the responses. The responses to interview questions attached to each research question were combined to determine where similarities were. These similarities in the first stage of comparison focused on terms that participants used in their response. Another stage of comparison was on degrees of perception regarding positive or negative responses. These comparisons allowed for response data to be placed into broader categories or common themes. These common themes were labeled major themes if five or more of the then participants responded similarly. Common themes that found in at least two but not more than four responses were labeled as minor themes.

Research Question 1 was written to determine the self-perception of change in the leadership skills and abilities of the participants in the PLS at GTCC. A major theme for all ten participants was the change in their perspective about the college and what others do. One participant stated, “But really I’ve seen the magnitude or the significance of this information and the idea of aligning with people within the organization who can assist you in doing your job better and/or well.” Another major theme when asked about perceived skill development was seven participants referencing networking relationships. One participant’s response captured what the others were saying by stating, “...a big component of the program is you are working with other folks from the college functional areas and just getting to know them and their roles and their strengths and pain, and how we interact in the name of the customer and the name of the student.” A major theme also emerged with five participants spoke of the change or increase in their ability to communicate. A minor theme that presented itself when three participants spoke of their improved decision-making abilities. Two of the participants spoke of the structure of the program from relationships to project groups being responsible for developing their



decision-making skills and one of the participants shared that their decision-making ability as well as the ability to build a case for requests was enhanced by presentations regarding the use of data as a leader.

Research Question 2 was written to determine self-perception of the impact of the PLS at GTCC on work relationships. The first major theme the interviews revealed was that nine of the ten participants described their work relationships prior to attending the PLS as new, poor, weak, or limited to their assigned area of the college. Nine of the participants described the relationships formed as a result of the PLS to be at a minimum good with a few using the descriptors of alliances and camaraderie. Six participants spoke of relationships that have sustained, deepened, and reproduced other relationships. A minor theme of friendship is included here as three participants specifically used the term to describe the nature of relationships developed. One participant's response can be used to summarize the six others when stating, "It has been something that has continued to grow and I think is extremely valuable in the work that we do." Six of the participants also stated that they have good to high levels of trust between themselves and their superiors with three saying the PLS increased those levels. Seven reported to have good to high levels of trust between themselves and their subordinates but none assigned credit to the PLS for those perceived levels. A minor theme of interest emerged during positive discussions about the PLS relationships as three participants used the term silos to describe communication struggles across campus. Two participants spoke of how quickly relationships can be and were formed in the PLS. Three participants posited that the relationships formed in the PLS were likely to never have happened without the PLS.

Research Question 3 was written to determine the perceived impact of the PLS at GTCC on the leadership development of the organization. Major themes emerged as eight participants

reported that their commitment to GTCC was strong and seven participants stated that they felt confident more prepared for different professional opportunities at GTCC or other places within higher education. One participant stated, “It (PLS) definitely gave me that level of confidence in my skill set that you can plop me down pretty much anywhere and I am work ready” and another stated, “I wouldn’t have answered that yes or positively 5 years ago but I think I could now definitely, I could definitely manage in another area and lead.” A major theme emerged as six participants credited the PLS for GTCC being more flexible and innovative but in contrast a minor theme resulted as three participants spoke negatively about flexibility as a result of the administration being too stifling to their efforts. A final major theme resulted from interviews as five participants spoke about how the PLS either revealed to them or impressed on them the importance of increasing involvement with the community outside the college and all shared examples of how they have and are doing so. Minor themes included four of the participants crediting the PLS process for development by sharing they have a better understanding of how their current roles align with the college mission, three credited the PLS as they spoke of understanding the mission of the entire college more clearly, and four explained the PLS giving them better knowledge and skills related to strategic planning in their areas. Finally, a minor theme was found as two of the participants spoke of the encouragement to be innovative that the PLS presented and that the project teams allowed for that to be practiced as groups worked together to solve problems in a new and unique way.

During the interview and after participants were encouraged to share any information they felt comfortable offering to the research. Three participants mentioned the desire and suggested value of having follow-up meeting opportunities for the PLS cohorts over time. Two

participants shared that they felt it would be of great benefit for adjunct faculty to be able to participate in the PLS which is currently reserved for full time employees.

### **Conclusions**

There were no differences found in responses with consideration to the time period in which the participants attended the PLS. They were notably similar when considering how little or much time had passed since the completion of the program. This indicates consistency in the program over time. The findings from the interviews show common themes that are supported by the literature. Several common themes such as new relationships and new perceptions included within them the participants increased ability in their current roles as well as their increased confidence that they are prepared for future opportunities. This is supported in the research where superior succession planning is described as having that exact impact on participants (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). These same themes are supported by GYO research as well which suggests that these programs develop skills across the organization (Ebbers et al., 2010; Eddy & Boggs, 2010) and are able to be relevant and efficient by using projects that revolve around current campus issues (Weatherspoon, 2010). These themes suggest that the impact of the PLS on participants is immediate and that the relationships developed as well as the change in perspective assist them in becoming better in their current role and for future opportunities. This appears to apply no matter the type of employee and should lead to the consideration of extending this type of opportunity to employees sooner in order to garner the benefits suggested by the participants.

While none of the participants spoke of any leadership development theories, the common theme emerging regarding the value and quality of time spent together learning and solving problems is clearly supported in earlier research concerning Leader Member Exchange

Theory (Banks et al., 2013), and Team Member Exchange Theory (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Liao, Liu, & Loi, 2010). These theories present the dynamic of developed relationships both vertically and horizontally across the organization. The responses are also supported by literature surrounding Transformational Leadership Theory that has as part of its structure taking the participant past individually focused development and toward organizational goals and vision (Edwards, Knight, Broome, & Flynn, 2010). Further the common themes of individual skill development and organizational development are supported by leadership development theory research assigns credit for development to time spent together in programs like the PLS (Day, 2000; Hitt & Ireland, 2002). After reviewing, it appears the time spent together and the opportunity to have exchanges is impactful to the level that participants speak of it as a key component. Finding a way to use this strategy across the organization and not limited to an annual cohort would seem advantageous. Further, allowing cohorts to continue would appear to be a benefit to the college using such a program.

Common themes of high trust levels and high commitment levels are supported in the literature as well. The development of human capital and social capital is evident in the responses about the PLS. Human capital development is seen in the development of individual skills and abilities which is done in somewhat traditional seminar form. However, research of the development of social capital has shown that providing a place and a project or action point for human capital to interact is where social capital development happens (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Further, the common theme of relationships being closer than just colleagues and with the description of them deepening and reproducing the impact of relational embeddedness is evident and is supported by the literature where it suggests an increase in interpersonal trust, trustworthiness, overlapping identities, feelings of closeness, and interpersonal solidarity

(Moran, 2005). While high trust themes developed there were themes concerning limited trust and organizational silos. Increasing the frequency and earlier access to such a dynamic as the PLS would appear to be an opportunity to address the more negative perceptions described reported.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The findings of this study have allowed the researcher to identify common themes concerning perceptions of development of participants in a GYO leadership development program at GTCC. Several major themes emerged through the study that display positive changes and impacts on participants of the program. It would be advantageous for colleges to leverage information from these common themes to either initially develop a GYO program or strengthen an existing program similar in design. Colleges would also benefit by extending the development opportunities to employees earlier in their employment in as increased understanding and efficiency within current roles was a common theme as well as a suggestion made by a few of the participants. Additionally, because so many of the common themes revolved around the development and value of relationships, it would behoove colleges to create follow-up opportunities for cohort members to use the relationships they suggest continue to grow for new project work to assist the college with current issues. The strength of the PLS appears to be the time set aside away from daily work and the diversity of individuals from across campus. It might be advantageous for the college to find opportunities with the organizations to do this in micro fashion. It could possibly be done within different divisions to increase communication and innovative problem solving.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Common themes from this research offer a positive picture with regard to the horizontal development of leadership but there is nothing to suggest that those that are prepared are moving into higher level positions on any significant scale. Further research would assist in determining the impact of GYO programs versus other variables on career promotions. The impact on those who report to GYO participants is not considered in this research but further study of those reports would result in a more holistic picture of the overall development of GYO participants. Because each participant in this study stated that they had previous management and leadership experience prior to their work at GTCC further study should be done with concern to the professional starting point for GYO participants. This type of succession planning is seen to be of maximum benefit when deployed into all levels of the organization. Therefore, a study of the development of entry level employees with no previous would be beneficial. A longitudinal study of this group of participants or a similar group would be beneficial to ascertain the sustained impact of such a program or lack thereof. Research question two was written to determine the self-perception of the impact of the PLS at GTCC on work relationships. The first major theme the interviews revealed was that nine of the ten participants described their work relationships prior to attending the PLS as new, poor, weak, or limited to their assigned area of the college.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

“Thank you for your willingness to participate this research study. As you read in the recruitment email and flyer, the purpose of this study is to investigate your perception of the President’s Leadership Seminar (PLS) there at Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) on your leadership ability and on the organization. Before we begin recording I would like to ask you 3 biographical questions. 1. What do you do at the GTCC? 2. How long have you been at the GTCC? 3. When did you participate in the PLS?”

I am now going to activate my recording device and ask for your consent to participate in this interview. You do not have to participate and if you wish to quit at any time you may. We are now recording. This is Matt DeLozier and I’m speaking with (Participant 8) from Guilford Tech Community College and (Participant 8) we are getting ready to do an interview and I just needed to make sure that you are consenting to an audio recording of that interview in order to create a transcript.

Thank you again for participating and for consenting to the recording. There are 20 formally prepared questions for this interview but there could be more necessary for clarification or to capture unexpected information that is relevant to the study.”

1. How would you describe your leadership experience prior to participating in the PLI at GTCC?
2. Describe what your leadership skills and abilities were prior to entering the program?
3. Explain how and why you were selected to participate in the program?
4. How would you describe your leadership skills and abilities upon completing the program?

5. How would you describe your leadership skills and abilities today?
6. What characteristics or elements of the program structure influenced any change in your leadership abilities?
7. Describe what your work relationships were like prior to entering into the program?
8. Describe the relationships formed within the program between you and other participants?
9. Did your relationships change while attending the program? If so, in what ways?
10. Have your relationships changed since the program ended? If so, in what ways?
11. Please describe the quality of social interactions within your working groups?
12. How would you describe the level of trust that exists between you and your superiors?
13. How would you describe the level of trust that exists between you and your subordinates?
14. What about the program structure influenced your relationships within the organization?
15. Please discuss how you use knowledge or skills you developed during the program to impact the organizational goals or mission?
16. Describe how your level of organizational commitment has changed after the learning skills and practices in the program?
17. How would you describe the ability of the organization to be flexible as a result of things learned in the program?
18. Would you provide an example of something from the program that you have used or employed in leading others since the program?
19. Explain how the knowledge and/or skills developed in the program benefit you in your current role?

20. Also, explain how the knowledge and/or skills developed in the program have prepared you for future opportunities?

“Thank you again for participating. I am grateful for your help. I will email you a copy of the transcript within a few days. If there is anything in the transcript that you wish to omit or feel you should expound upon, please let me know and I will make those changes before using any data for the study.”

VITA

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