8-2013

The Community College Baccalaureate: A Mixed Methods Study of Implementation and Best Practices

Stan E. Essink

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, sessink@cccneb.edu

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE:

A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION AND BEST PRACTICES

By

Stan E. Essink

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Studies

Under the Supervision of Professor Barbara LaCost

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2013

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE:

A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION AND BEST PRACTICES

Stan E. Essink, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: Barbara LaCost

Community colleges have a number of missions ranging from developmental education through academic transfer. They are obligated to provide higher education opportunities in a manner that is affordable, accessible, and adaptable to the changing needs of their constituents. As the mission of community colleges continues to evolve, several states have interpreted this mission to include baccalaureate programming.

This study employed a mixed methods approach to understanding the best practices of implementing and offering bachelor's degrees through community colleges. The objectives of the research were to determine the influences affecting implementation of bachelor's degrees, to examine resulting institutional change, and to discover the essential components of transitioning to baccalaureate programming. The researcher interviewed ten community college personnel at three institutions in three different states that had added bachelor's degrees. Additionally, a questionnaire sought input from college personnel at 56 institutions from across the United States that utilize the services of the Community College Baccalaureate Association.

The community college baccalaureate (CCB) potentially serves four functions: 1) fulfill an unmet niche market, 2) address shortages in key markets, 3) provide

opportunities for place-bound students, and 4) provide access to higher education in restricted markets.

Three main themes emerged from the research. The importance of sufficient research and planning encompassed the bulk of the findings and consisted of several categories. The second theme pertained to the perceptions of the role community college's play in higher education and how that influenced support or opposition to a transitioning mission. Lastly, a number of indirect results accompanied the offering of bachelor's degrees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research and the completion of my doctoral program would not have been possible without the patience, guidance, and expertise of Dr. Barbara LaCost. As a faculty member and advisor in the Educational Administration department at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, she provided me with the personal attention off-campus doctoral students often find hard to obtain. Dr. LaCost assisted me in narrowing my research interests to find a topic that was manageable and one that I was passionate about.   I thank her for her sincere interest in me and for helping me with the completion of my educational goals.

Thank you to Central Community College and the Central Community College Foundation for their support and financial assistance in reaching my goals.

I would also like to thank my wife, Chanda. She shouldered the bulk of the household and parenting responsibilities while I worked feverishly on coursework or research. I would not have made it through this process without her.

My parents instilled in me the importance of hard work, perseverance, and dedication. Thank you for teaching me these lasting qualities that have allowed me to overcome difficulties and aspire to more than I ever imagined. Your guidance has fueled a passion for life-long learning.

Lastly, my boys made sacrifices as well. Avery and Ashton, I hope as you grow older you understand why I couldn't always play, read, or watch television

with you when you wanted me to. May your educational journeys be as fulfilling

as mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Chapter 1

Introduction

Problem Statement

The mission of community colleges is to provide access to affordable educational opportunities while meeting the needs of local constituents. As the costs of higher education continue to rise more quickly than incomes, potential college entrants have sought alternatives to traditional four-year colleges. In addition to expense, individuals are hindered by other factors that prevent attainment of a bachelor's degree, thus decreasing access to social mobility. Place-bound working parents, for instance, may be unable to uproot themselves in order to attain a four-year degree. In other instances, business and industry cannot find qualified individuals to fill much needed positions requiring a bachelor's degree within their region due to a lack of highly skilled workers.

As the needs of those seeking higher education continue to change along with shifting economic and social constraints, multiple states have turned to community colleges as a solution. The mission of the community college has not changed, but how that mission is interpreted continues to evolve. In less than two decades, 19 states have implemented baccalaureate offerings at institutions that previously offered only two-year degrees (http://www.accbd.org/resources/baccalaureate-conferring-locations/?ct=US). The community college baccalaureate (CCB) extends the offerings of community colleges by adding bachelor's degrees. The intent of this transition is to remedy an unmet need within a state's higher education system. The essence of the community college is its ability to be flexible and change with the times and the needs of its stakeholders. With

an array of educational missions already placed upon community colleges, the challenge

of baccalaureate programming implemented by community colleges promises to test

traditional roles of higher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices of implementing and

offering a baccalaureate at community colleges.

Research Objectives

1. To determine influences affecting the offering of the community college

   baccalaureate.

2. To examine institutional change as a result of implementing the baccalaureate.

3. To explore the essential components of community college baccalaureate

   offerings.

Research Questions

1. Who do respondents believe supported or opposed the transition to

   baccalaureate offerings and what influenced them?

2. How was the need to offer the CCB justified?

3. How has offering bachelor's degrees impacted the traditional missions of the

   community college?

4. How do college employees and the public view institutional changes resulting

   from the CCB?

5. What services are crucial to CCB programming?

6. What do respondents believe are important considerations when implementing

    and offering the CCB?

Significance of Research

This researcher solicited a broad swath of perspectives from colleges that have

transitioned to baccalaureate-granting institutions. The research effort provided a deep

exploration of three colleges through the case study method. Prior research has addressed

either a single system, the community college baccalaureate in the state of Florida, or

single aspects of offering the community college baccalaureate. The results of this multi-

state study begin to fill the knowledge gap and explore the phenomenon on another level.

Location

In this study, the researcher employed a mixed methods approach designed to

gather data from many locations offering the community college baccalaureate

throughout the United States. The quantitative instrument was sent to multiple

institutions in the United States that utilize the services of the Community College

Baccalaureate Association (CCBA). Institutions associated with this organization in

2012 and 2013 were located in numerous states and represented a wide variation in

stakeholder needs and demographics. Interviews were conducted at three college

campuses in three different states—one each from the Southwest, Midwest, and

Southeast regions.

Participants

The individuals interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study were selected

based on their professional role and involvement with four-year programs at their

institutions. These included campus presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff members. A minimum of three interviews were conducted at each of the three selected sites.

The quantitative instrument was restricted to individuals who served in an institutional contact capacity with the CCBA. Additional criteria used to define this population were that institutions be located in the United States, offer four-year degrees, and have transitioned from a traditional role of offering only two-year degrees. Issues addressed in the questionnaire and interview questions were derived from the review of literature.

Limitations

Institutions associated with the Community College Baccalaureate Association represent a relatively small number of participants in terms of statistical analysis. This has limiting factors on the degree to which findings may be applied.

Interview participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience of their institution's baccalaureate programming. However, interviewees were selected by the institutions themselves since the principal researcher did not have knowledge of which individuals were appropriate candidates. Findings from the interviews may be biased as only willing individuals ultimately provided assistance to the researcher. Those who were to be interviewed may have been more likely to represent positive aspects of the colleges' efforts involving the community college baccalaureate. The principal researcher did not have knowledge of the selection process used by each institution to determine who would be interviewed.

Delimitations

Although the qualitative portion of the study focuses on institutions with similarities in terms of an evolving mission, every community college is subject to unique factors of geography, demographics, and other influences from state and local sources. Interview participants' views represent a snapshot in time of a particular place and may not be applicable at a future date or to other institutions.

The quantitative instrument was sent only to individuals with a relationship with the Community College Baccalaureate Association. Results may not be representative of colleges offering the four-year degree that do not utilize the services of the organization. Each participant responding to the questionnaire represented one individual's perspective but was used as evidence indicative of institutional views.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

History of Community Colleges

Community colleges came into existence in the United States in the early 20th century. Greater numbers of students were enrolling in high school and completing secondary education than ever before. Between 1924 and 1960, the percentage of students who graduated from high school grew 150% (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). This change in social expectations spurred increasing numbers of students to seek higher education.

Joliet Junior College opened its doors in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois. It was the first of its kind and ushered in a new era of higher education. Early junior colleges were often set up as an extension of high schools as a way to educate local students before sending them to four-year institutions. These institutions were created and maintained locally and typically focused on general education. However, colleges in general evolve their mission and services to respond to changing needs in their communities. "What is traditional today was not traditional 200, or even 50 years ago. There have been dramatic changes in who is educated and how they are educated" (Walker, 2005, p. 10).

An examination of community colleges during the last century demonstrates the change that has occurred and the adaptability of their role in higher education. Much of the change community colleges have experienced has resulted from a need to adapt to a changing social context and events within our nation's history. Gellar (2001) cited Tillery and Deegan (1985) and provided a general overview of the historical shift of

community colleges. Tillary and Deegan presented five generations of community

college development and their corresponding time periods:

1. <u>1900 - 1930</u> – The primary role of community colleges (or junior colleges as

   they were often referred to) was as an *extension of the secondary school*.

   Their intent was to teach lower-division coursework to prepare students to

   transfer to four-year institutions. The curriculum generally focused on liberal

   arts education.

2. <u>1930 -1950</u> – This era is known as the *junior college generation*. Many new

   colleges were established during this time, often by community and business

   leaders. The depression of the 1930's initiated a new calling for community

   colleges. In addition to the liberal arts education already established,

   community colleges added vocational training to help individuals build their

   skills and find employment. Events during this era had a tremendous impact

   on the community college system. In 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment

   Act (later the G.I. Bill) provided returning World War II veterans tuition

   assistance and other monthly benefits. The President's Commission on

   Higher Education (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947)

   offered a report, known as the Truman Commission Report, that was a

   significant document focusing on the national status of higher education; that

   Commission sought to make several changes. The report supported and

   helped establish a network of low-cost, accessible colleges across the nation

   and popularized the term "community college" based on the function of such

institutions. Sources of financial aid were increased as a result of the Truman Commission Report.

3. <u>1950 - 1970</u> - The third generation, is aptly named the *community college generation*. This era was a time of great growth in the community college system; states organized and implemented the community college systems still in operation today. State influences transformed many junior colleges into community colleges; continuing education and developmental education were added to their offerings. Institutions also changed in other ways as they accommodated students who were working or those interested in quickly building their skills.   Community colleges were efficient in adapting to the needs within the local communities they served and could do so with more flexibility and speed than other forms of higher education. The Higher Education Act of 1964 promoted state-wide planning of higher education and promoted rapid expansion of community colleges to accommodate the baby boom generation. Additionally, the growth in the number of community colleges during this period placed a community college within 25 miles of the majority of Americans and democratized higher education.

4. <u>1970 -1985</u> – The *comprehensive community college* characterized this generation. Community colleges had merged with technical colleges and were serving multiple roles of traditional higher education, workforce training, and community service.

5. <u>1985 – present</u> – This generation has not been defined. In the "tradition" of the community college, this generation is characterized by rapid change in structure and offerings stemming from technology and workforce needs, as well as increased demand for higher education. Specialized training, industry and educational partnerships, dual credit, and entrepreneurship are initiatives of today's community colleges. The institutions are faced with greater numbers of students, fewer resources, and an increase in the need for developmental programs. In addition, they have served as pioneers in offering curriculum online and must remain cutting edge as technology reshapes how people are trained in nearly all fields. The globalization of higher education and for-profit institutions have further challenged community colleges.

Although community colleges have not held a prominent position in higher education, they have made significant gains and are currently responsible for educating half of all college students in the United States. They are not hampered by the traditions by which many universities must abide, and they are expected to be flexible and adapt to the needs of those within their service area.

Community College Mission

As the history of community colleges has shown, the expectations of the community college are many. Cohen and Brawer (2008) defined five distinct responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of community colleges:

Academic Transfer – As an initial focus of early community colleges, academic transfer is designed to provide the first two years of general education to students and prepare them to transfer to four-year institutions.

Vocational/Technical Training – These programs are designed to prepare individuals for entry level technical positions and get students into the workforce through a two-year program.

Continuing Education – Education designed to meet the needs of adults who may fall outside of traditional programming.

Developmental Education – Education designed to improve the skills and knowledge of students underprepared for college level work and to get them ready for success in core subjects.

Community Service – Cultural and recreational offerings designed for the enlightenment of community members and promoting good public relations.

These missions become intertwined as the needs and expectations of incoming students change, the expectations of the community become greater, and the challenges of higher education meld. Regardless of which aspects of these missions are addressed, the community college is obligated to provide open access and an affordable education. The quintessential element of community college mission lies in its ability to meet the changing needs of those it serves. The expectations placed upon community colleges put them in challenging positions and at times force them to play contradictory roles.

Evolving Mission - The Community College Baccalaureate

Since the inception of community colleges, societal demands have continued to shape the services expected of this sector of higher education. This progression is as necessary today as at any time in the community college history (Romano & Dellow, 2009). A static community college would not be living up to its mission. Many communities have recognized an unmet need in higher education resulting from high costs, geographic location, selectivity, and other factors affecting college accessibility while the demand for education has increased (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). For nearly fifteen years, community colleges have answered the call for bachelor's degrees as the community college baccalaureate has come into existence (B. Hagan, personal communication, February 27, 2012). There are currently 19 states that offer four-year degrees from what were traditional community colleges. Appendix G provides a map of states hosting institutions that have transitioned to baccalaureate programming. Table 1 displays information concerning the number of institutions that now offer baccalaureate degrees per state and the total number of program options as of October, 2012.

Baccalaureate degrees through the community college avenue come in many forms. Floyd (2005) provided four models and described the characteristics of each.

1. *Articulation Model* – Articulation agreements ensure acceptance of freshman and sophomore credits by senior colleges and universities which are vital to community colleges' transfer mission.

Table 1

States, Institutions, and Degree Offerings

State	Number of Traditional Two-Year Institutions Offering Baccalaureates	Number of Bachelor Degree Options
Colorado	1	2
Florida	23	156
Georgia	1	1
Hawaii	1	3
Indiana	1	7
Nevada	2	13
New Mexico	1	15
New York	2	43
North Dakota	1	1
Oklahoma	2	4
Texas	3	4
Vermont	1	10
Washington	8	10
West Virginia	1	6
Wisconsin	1	1

Note: Minnesota, Louisiana, Utah, and Arkansas are listed as baccalaureate granting states, but their offerings are not reflected here.
Source: http://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Conferring-Institutions-2012-November.pdf

2. *University Center Model* – Centers are located on or near community college campuses. The university typically confers the baccalaureate degree. Facilities may be shared by many colleges and universities through a consortium of institutions.

3. *University Extension Model* – This model has been around since the beginnings of the land grant institutions. It provides education through campus and extension centers as part of its outreach mission.

4. *Community College Baccalaureate* –This model is primarily used to designate community colleges that offer baccalaureate programming and confer the four-year degree without the partnership of a traditional four-year institution. This model is becoming an increasingly popular means of answering the demands of higher education that traditional methods have neglected or been unable to meet.

The community college baccalaureate model has been the source of much controversy and intrigue during its relatively short existence; it is seen by many as a natural progression of the community college mission. Cohen and Brawer (2008) point out how the social context differs from that of 20 or 30 years ago, and the educational needs of society have been reshaped as well. Today's business and educational markets have become international. The internet has changed the clear geographic boundaries that once existed and has revolutionized higher education. In addition, greater numbers of older and part-time students desire access to higher education. With these new demands, particularly in tough economic times, there is a clear need for states to reconsider ways of addressing their educational obligations (Fonte, 2011). As the population in general has become more educated, many entry level jobs now require the baccalaureate. Employers in the United States have struggled to find skilled workers. Many believe increased access to educational opportunities is the answer to this dilemma

(Miller & Slocombe, 2012) and recognize the value of community college offerings. The community college baccalaureate provides a means of ensuring a competitive workforce and provides affordable access to a baccalaureate education.

Walker (2005) provided a description of the advantages and strengths of offering the community college baccalaureate. Most notably, the community college baccalaureate increases access—geographically, financially, and academically. He highlighted the flexibility and responsiveness of community colleges as well as their commitment to economic and workforce needs. The community college baccalaureate provides students with the opportunity to complete their education while maintaining stable family and employment relationships. It offers upward mobility for those with associate degrees. From a state standpoint, the community college baccalaureate can be a cost effective method of meeting educational demands through the use of existing facilities and infrastructure from a system that is accustomed to accomplishing much with less state support than other types of higher education institutions.

Although the community college baccalaureate is viewed by many as a solution with a win-win outcome for all involved, its existence challenges traditional assumptions about the role of "two-year" colleges. Critics are often associated with four-year institutions concerned about the ramifications. As early community college baccalaureate offerings were implemented, authors such as Wattenbarger (2000) strongly opposed the concept. He viewed the community college baccalaureate as "mission creep" into an area where community colleges clearly did not belong. He opined that the community college was already spread too thin to serve its mission; additional objectives

and tasks would surely diminish the traditional efforts of these institutions by siphoning resources and distracting the institution from meeting other obligations. Wattenbarger continued his opinion, "It would be difficult, if not impossible, to convince anyone that the bachelor's offered by a community college is as important as the one offered by a university or a four-year college" (p.4).

Echoing Wattenbarger's sentiments were those of Eaton (2005). She had been president of two community colleges and president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. She suggested the community college baccalaureate simply was not needed. She advocated for increased access through articulation models focusing on transfer agreements as well as other models that utilize the extension or branch campus approach. She stressed that shared facilities, joint programs, and educational agreements were all valuable ways to provide access to the baccalaureate. She stated that meanwhile"[n]one of those alternatives involve the start-up costs, the increased costs to students, the betrayal of mission, the blurring of identity, the creation of a second-class baccalaureate, or the diminution of access that can result when community colleges offer baccalaureate degrees" (p. 26).

Mills (2003) presented views of both critics and supporters of the community college baccalaureate. Her research focused primarily on St. Petersburg College in Florida, but also addressed other community colleges across the nation. Many of the same tenets expressed by Walker, Eaton, and Wattenbarger were prevalent in her writings. Support or opposition to the CCB varied widely throughout sectors of higher education and was influenced by state and local needs and long held perceptions.

The community college baccalaureate has generated much attention and controversy. Research on the topic turns up both support and opposition, but generally researchers address the potential benefits that can be realized through its offering.

Evelyn (2003) highlighted the trends in the Florida, Texas, and California's higher education systems, but particularly addressed the movement towards the baccalaureate program in Miami. Strong support for the community college baccalaureate came from local industries and legislators as Florida's percentage of the population with bachelor's degrees was near the bottom. Members of the business communities expressed great concern about the ability to find qualified candidates to fill important employment positions such as teachers and nurses in the coming years. Evelyn pointed out that much controversy and opposition accompanied the transition to four-year offerings. She provided stories of place-bound students or those without the financial means to attend one of the many universities in the area as evidence of the community college baccalaureate's capability to rectify higher education's unmet needs.

Gonzalez's (2011) research, also from the state of Florida, recently reviewed the changes that have occurred during the first decade of the 21st century. She presented a number of regulations by which colleges considering the transition must abide and insisted that no competition exists between community colleges offering the baccalaureate and four-year colleges and universities. She pointed out that students interested in the bachelor's degree at the community college tend to be non-traditional students who are often place-bound or part-time students. These students typically stay in the area upon graduation and contribute to local economies. Interestingly, her results

produced some staggering statistics about the earnings of graduates who have completed

the community college baccalaureate. "Students who received a bachelor's degree from

Florida community colleges in 2008-09 earned $47,080 the first year after graduation.

That's substantially higher than the $36,553 that public four-year university graduates

earned that year" (p. 12). This phenomenon may be due to the nature of degrees offered

by community colleges in Florida; they often fill niche needs that have been unmet under

former models of higher education. Another possibility for the differences found by

Gonzales may be that non-traditional students already hold full-time jobs and may be at

mid-career, thus earning more than a first-year graduate.

Chen (2008) examined institutional change in an evolving society and emphasized

change as an ever-present necessity for community colleges. They provide higher

education to specific geographic areas to meet local needs, but must also cater to national

trends and demographic changes. Chen posited that offering greater numbers of

baccalaureate degrees through the community college avenue is one of seven prominent

trends currently affecting community colleges. This practice helps provide opportunity

for those seeking higher education and ensures that community colleges are meeting their

goals. A second trend is the presence of increased partnerships between community

colleges and four-year institutions. Both trends have the ability to serve a similar

population in harmony, but have created rifts in some settings.

McKinney and Morris (2010) offered an in-depth look at the evolution of

organizational change that occurred out of the community college baccalaureate in their

case study of two institutions. Their research addressed executive leadership in the midst

of extending services to include the four-year degree and examined specific changes that occurred in policy and practice as a result of the community college baccalaureate.

McKinney and Morris provided a literature review of the community college baccalaureate, an exploration of the degree in Florida, and, using qualitative methods, views on organizational change. They conducted six interviews at two Florida community colleges designated "Conversion College" and "Transition College" in the research. In addition to policy and practice, the researchers stressed the importance of justifying the need, acquiring access, the importance of leadership, and the challenges of change.

There are multiple legitimate arguments both for and against support of the community college baccalaureate. Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker (2005) edited a volume of one of the first comprehensive looks at the CCB. Their work, comprised of the works of many nationally recognized leaders within the community college sector, provided the reader with a deep understanding of the many attributes influencing the community college baccalaureate.

Walker (2005) sets the stage for understanding the community college baccalaureate by highlighting its history and rationale and by introducing the Community College Baccalaureate Association. He explained the different models of the community college baccalaureate and issues of each. Furthermore, Skolnik (2005) provided a glimpse of Canada's successful community college baccalaureate programs that have been in existence longer than those in the United States and he examined policy issues pertaining to the baccalaureate.

Lorenzo (2005) wrote about the University Center model; a designation which encompasses a number of approaches such as the Co-Location model, the Virtual model, and the Enterprise model. All serve to offer baccalaureate degrees through the cooperation of community colleges and universities. In one example, the Co-Location model, both partner institutions offer programming at the same location, often the community college campus. The Virtual model offers upper level courses in an online format while the community college remains involved with upper division students. Under the Enterprise model, several institutions form a consortium to operate an educational center. This collaborative structure can provide many opportunities that may not have existed when institutions were independent units; the model allows institutions to share many of the costs of curriculum, financing, and staffing. Partnering senior institutions typically grant the degrees. This partnership may provide many of the same benefits associated with community colleges: ease of access, closeness to home, and shorter commutes.

Townsend's (2005) information can assist educational leaders in understanding the implications and responsibilities for those institutions that extend their offerings with baccalaureate programming. She cited both potentially positive and negative effects that can arise with the expansion of the community college mission. She provided advice on policies that institutions must consider as they embark into new territory. She emphasized that the community college baccalaureate increases access in multiple ways. Not only can community colleges confer bachelor's degrees on their own, but four-year

institutions tend to become more willing to collaborate for no other reason than to fend off the community college baccalaureate.

Other researchers present events and change accompanying the addition of bachelor's degrees at particular community colleges. St. Petersburg College in Florida (Furlong, 2005), Westark College in Arkansas (McKee, 2005), and Great Basin College in Nevada (Remington & Remington, 2005) are institutions highlighted.

The edited volume by Floyd, Skolnik and Walker (2005) is a definitive source on the community college baccalaureate and provides an excellent overview as of the publication date. However, the climate of higher education has changed since it was written, and the evolution of the community college baccalaureate continues.

Dissertations pertaining to the CCB. A number of dissertations have explored one or more aspects of the community college baccalaureate. Search engines generate extensive research from Florida; certainly Florida's embrace of the transition from two year programming to four-year programming in community college settings has generated this body of research that is focused on this one large system.

Petry (2006) determined the institutional transformations that occurred in Florida's early adopters of the community college baccalaureate. The researcher relied on perspectives of key college leaders. Her findings suggested that need, accountability, and mission were paramount as community colleges extended their missions. She noted that the primary reasons for creating community college baccalaureate programs were (a) access and (b) meeting the needs of a changing workforce.

Two dissertations focused on the cost implications of implementing the community college baccalaureate within Florida's college system. Bottoroff (2011) researched capital costs of the community college baccalaureate in Florida. Bemmel (2008) examined the cost effectiveness of two baccalaureate programs at Florida community colleges. Bottoroff found the level of funding provided to institutions offering the community college baccalaureate lagged behind levels that are sustainable. Many of the initial costs of transitioning to baccalaureate programming were absorbed internally. However, Botteroff emphasized the inconsistencies of measuring the costs associated with baccalaureate programming and the lack of a predictive model to forecast fiscal needs.

Bemmel (2008) compared the cost effectiveness of the community college baccalaureate with similar university programs using Levin's 1983 ingredient model as well a taxpayer cost-effectiveness model. The researcher also considered the effectiveness of different types of programs using student outcome measures. The university settings and the community college baccalaureate were found to be equally effective in terms of student outcomes. However, cost effectiveness varied depending on the model used to evaluate the two settings. The ingredient model showed university programs to be more cost effective versus the community college baccalaureate during the implementation years. This advantage was lost in the long term as the community college was able to provide equally effective four-year offerings at a lower cost.

The taxpayer cost-effectiveness model revealed the community college baccalaureate to be a more efficient method than the university baccalaureate. The

taxpayer model considered state funds and student tuition. Since the community colleges

were funded at a lower level and provided equally effective outcomes, this model favors

the community college baccalaureate. Other factors also contributed to the community

college baccalaureate as an attractive opportunity. These factor included "location,

traffic patterns, proximity to the learner's home and workplace, marketability, and

customer relations" (Bemmel, 2008, p. 126).

Policies affecting the community college baccalaureate in Florida were the focus

of dissertations by Pershin (2006) and Manias (2007). Pershin explored organizational

change and reframing of the community college mission. Manias examined whether the

outcomes of community college baccalaureate programs aligned with the legislation that

initially created them.

Florida has clearly embraced the community college transition as an alternative to

traditional means of attaining a four-year degree. Such widespread support in a

population dense state has spawned substantial research pertaining to Florida's higher

education transition.

As several researchers were focusing their efforts on the Florida system, others

studied particular elements important to the community college baccalaureate.   Ross

(2006), for instance, examined the phenomenon from the perspective of faculty.   This

study sought to discover what faculty perspectives were concerning changes and the

professional development they deemed important when offering the community college

baccalaureate. Ross found many aspects such as workload, conferences, workshops,

professional contact, and resource increases were important to faculty and needed to be

continually available to sustain successful four-year programming. Additional time for faculty to prepare and execute third and fourth year courses was also a concern and one that institutions should be prepared to address.

Kielty (2010) examined factors that influence faculty intentions to support the community college baccalaureate. She concentrated on the cohesiveness of faculty as upper and lower tier programs were offered from the same institution. This research addressed the theory of planned behavior as a framework for implementing the community college baccalaureate in a manner that faculty members are likely to support. The results revealed implications for practice that included (a) maintaining the community college mission and (b) providing professional development for faculty; the results emphasized an inclusive culture that utilizes the expertise and opinions of faculty in the planning and transition process.

Grothe (2009) examined the perceptions of graduates and employers regarding the applied baccalaureate conferred by many community colleges. Emerging themes demonstrated that (a) graduates of the four-year degree were prepared appropriately for employment and (b) the community colleges' offerings strengthened the economic development of their communities. Graduates also expressed approval of the program and its outcomes. Grothe developed a strategy from which others can plan and evaluate applied community college baccalaureate degrees.

Hofland (2011) completed a case study examining a decade of offering the community college baccalaureate at Great Basin College in Nevada. This research primarily focused on changes that had occurred as a result of adding the baccalaureate to

their programming as well as the impact on the traditional missions of the community

college. Her research revealed seven changes that resulted from the extension of the

traditional mission. They include:

> (a) hiring more faculty with doctorates, (b) rewriting the general education
> requirements, (c) expanding the library holdings, (d) standardizing policy
> requirements, (e) defining faculty workload and adding of deans (f)
> increasing student services, and (g) the changing of the culture and how the
> college is perceived by the community (p. 175)

Many of these impacts were a planned part of the process; others emerged as a

result of the process. Nevertheless, participants overwhelmingly expressed positive

feelings about the additional offerings and about the resulting changes that strengthened

the services, expertise, and curriculum available to all students, including those in the

college's traditional two-year programs.

Implementation and Best Practices of the CCB

The researcher wanted to identify and understand important considerations and

services necessary to add baccalaureate degrees to colleges with traditional two-year

missions. The results of this study are expected to build a framework for community

colleges interested in implementing or maintaining strong community college

baccalaureate programming. Others have explored this topic and provided educational

leaders guidelines for such an endeavor (Floyd, 2005; Floyd & Walker 2009; McKinney

& Morris, 2010; Petry, 2006). All of these studies focus on the Florida system or have a

heavy component of it within the research.

Floyd and Walker (2009) present general guidelines for implementing and sustaining successful community college baccalaureate programs which are consistent with the findings of the other researchers mentioned above. Key factors are:

1. Mission – Is the addition of baccalaureate programming consistent with the community college mission? What are the ramifications of the change?

2. Political Support – What support is there from senior administration and key local and state-wide figures? Is legislative authority required and how will this be accomplished?

3. Political Opposition – Which parties are opposed to the transition and how valid are their arguments? How can these be overcome?

4. Curriculum – What will be offered and how does if fit with state higher education planning?

5. Resources – What resources are needed? What are the costs to start and maintain programs? Where will the funds come from?

6. Internal Infrastructure – What impact will four-year programs have on support services, physical plant, library holdings, etc.?

7. Accreditation – What are the requirements of this new degree? What institutional changes are needed to meet requirements?

Change is inevitable, particularly in the community college system. It originates from the needs of those whom colleges serve and the political, social, and economic climate in which colleges exist. The community college has been evolving since its

inception. Known for their flexible, user-friendly, and entrepreneurial approach to higher education, community colleges will continue to meet challenges put before them.

Community College Baccalaureate Association

The Community College Baccalaureate Association was founded by Dr. Kenneth P. Walker in 1999 in Florida as a non-profit organization. Its purpose is "to promote better access to the baccalaureate degree on community college campuses and to serve as a resource for information on various models for accomplishing this purpose" (Community College Baccalaureate Association website at http://www.accbd.org/about/philosophy-purpose-mission/).

The CCBA website presents the following missions of the organization:

- encouraging research, fostering dialogue, and sharing research data, publications, best practices, state legislation and policies;

- encouraging development of baccalaureate degrees conferred by community colleges;

- encouraging development of university centers on community college campuses;

- encouraging joint degree programs with universities on community college campuses;

- to be a catalyst for democratizing access to the baccalaureate degree.

In addition to these missions, the organization hosts an annual conference and newsletter dedicated to access to higher education for all. Dr. Beth Hagan serves as the executive director of the organization.

Chapter 3

Methods

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices of implementing and offering a baccalaureate degree at community colleges.

Research Objectives

1. To determine influences affecting the offering of the community college baccalaureate.

2. To examine institutional change as a result of implementing baccalaureate offerings.

3. To explore the essential components of community college baccalaureate offerings.

Mixed Methods Design

This researcher employed a complementarity mixed-methods approach intended to capture both numeric and narrative data. Qualitative data acquired through semi-structured interviews generated the major findings of the research with quantitative data serving as a comparative tool to validate findings. This design increases the opportunity for interpretation of the results, to decipher meaningfulness, and to provide validity of constructs and inquiry by capitalizing on inherent strengths of each method and counteracting inherent biases in methods and other sources (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). In other words, mixed-methods design serves as a triangulation technique to increase validity of the research through the mutual corroboration and

combination of different methods (Bryman, 2006).   Figure 1 provides graphic

information concerning the study's structure and its complementarity approach.
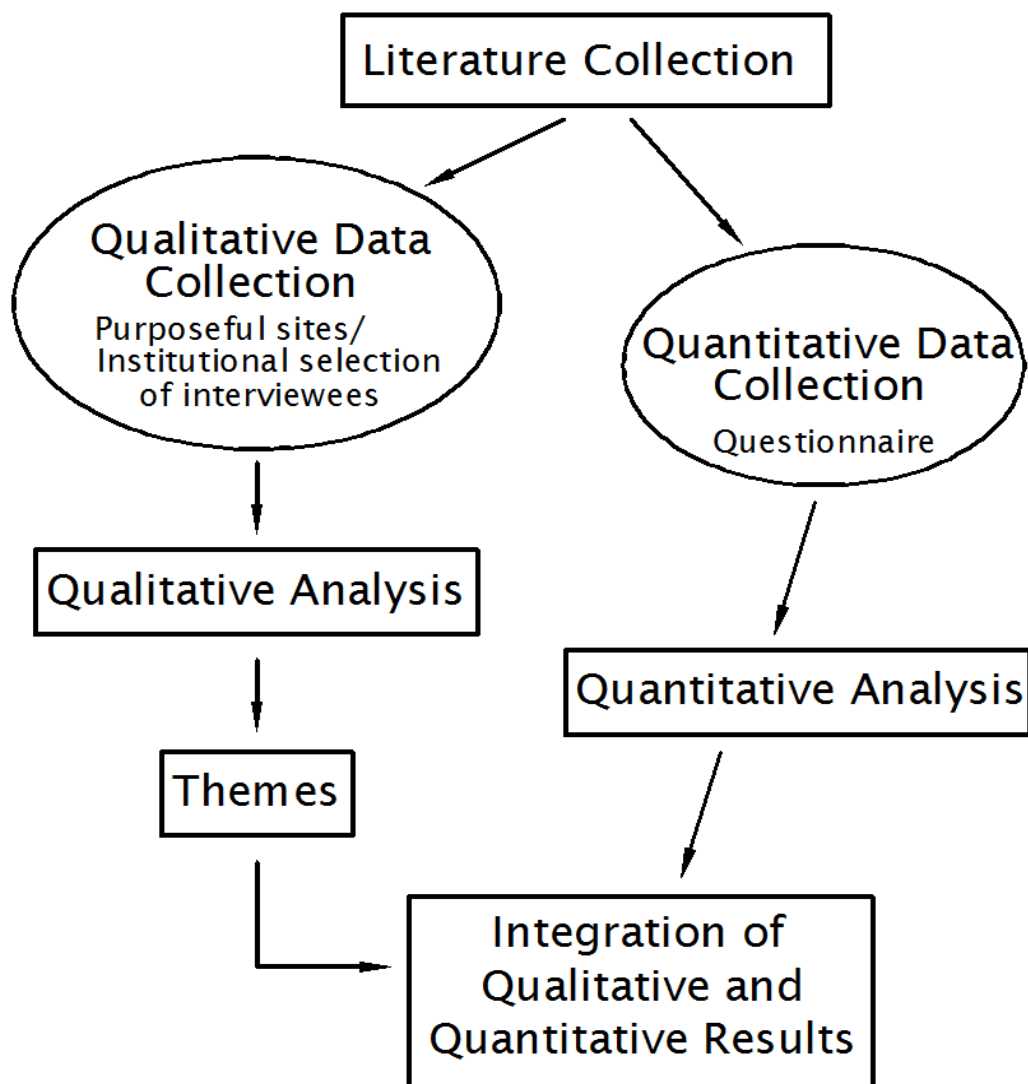
Figure 1. Mixed methods—complementarity.

This research utilized in-depth interviews in conjunction with a more broadly

distributed questionnaire. As presented by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), together these

methods "yield results from which one can make better (more accurate) inferences" (p. 35). Clark & Creswell (2008) suggested that the use of diverse types of data provide a greater understanding of the problem. Each approach is described in the subsequent sections; qualitative research and its components are first described, and the quantitative approach follows.

The mixed-methods approach provided the researcher with the opportunity to develop a richer understanding of the research findings and a higher level of confidence in their accuracy. Data obtained through qualitative methods allowed the researcher to understand the specifics of the CCB. This mixed methods design allows one to develop common themes through interviews and to enhance and clarify those findings with data collected through a questionnaire.

Qualitative Portion of Research

In this section, the qualitative methods used for this case study are described and the rationale for using the case study tradition is presented. The section will then detail the (a) sampling method, (b) data collection strategies, (c) data analysis methods (d) verification procedures, and (e) ethical considerations.

Rationale for case study. In an effort to discover and comprehend the issues inherent in the community college baccalaureate, the researcher relied on a multisite case to capture the specifics of an issue while offering a cross-case analysis (Merriam, 2009). Expert researchers view case studies from a variety of perspectives. Merriam described them as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). Yin (2008) stated that a case study "is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary

phenomenon within its real-life context" (p.18). Stake (2006) clarified the role of the case study by characterizing it as the unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation.

Although each of these definitions approaches the case study from variant schools of thought, the goal remains unchanged. The researcher selected the case study as the method most likely to reveal the complexities of this research topic and its relationship to the system in which it is nested. When attempting to understand the myriad of influences of the community college baccalaureate, isolating a single variable presents an arduous task. The complexity of this phenomenon dictates the case study method as well-suited to both capturing prominent themes and discovering its nuances through the eyes of those immersed in this transitional process.

Stake (2005) classified the multisite case study as a collective design used "to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (p.445). This research used a multisite case study designed to collect and analyze data from several cases. In this study, the researcher sought to understand the best practices of implementing and offering four-year degrees at institutions that previously had only a two-year mission.

Justification of study. The community college system shoulders multiple responsibilities, many of which are not addressed through any other sector of higher education. These include vocational and technical training, academic transfer, community service, continuing education, and developmental education (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Its mission it to provide open access to higher education for all who seek it. This function of the community college has made it both a target for some and a lifeline for others.

Although the community college baccalaureate hasn't been a part of the community college system for an extended period, its prominence continues to grow and it provides opportunities in higher education that have never existed before. Community colleges have been delegated an extensive list of responsibilities and tend to find ways of providing opportunities that would otherwise be nonexistent. Extending the mission to community college baccalaureate offerings has many supporters and opponents. "A community college's success is based on its ability and willingness to undergo significant organization change, because its very mission is to provide comprehensive programs and services that meet the diverse and changing needs of the community it serves" (Van Wagoner, 2004 cited in McKinney and Morris, 2010, p. 190). Given the array of missions, varying demographics, and stark differences in the needs of communities and state priorities, this research topic can best be understood through a mixed-methods study approach gathering multiple perspectives.

Sampling method. This study sought purposeful sampling of information-rich individuals deemed "knowledgeable and informed about the phenomenon of interest" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p.133). The researcher sought faculty, administrators, and staff at community colleges with a deep involvement in the community college baccalaureate and the insight that comes from navigating the challenges associated with it. In all, ten participants were selected for qualitative inquiry. Table 2 shows their current roles within their institutions and years of involvement in higher education settings.

Table 2

Position and Years of Service

Position	Number of Participants	Average Years in Higher Education
Faculty	2	13.0
Administrator	6	24.7
Staff	2	26.3
Total	10	22.7

A maximal variation sampling model was utilized in this study to build complexity into the research (Creswell, 2002). Maximum variation sampling seeks to maximize the diversity of collected data relevant to the research question. Its utilization helps the researcher understand how a phenomenon is perceived among different people in different settings. Interviews were conducted in three states at institutions that varied in terms of size, location, populations served, and length of time offering four-year degrees. A brief description of each of the of the community college interview sites is presented in the following paragraph.

Site #1 – Mid-size semi-rural multi-campus college located in the Midwest. This institution serves a large geographic region and has many campuses and centers offering its curriculum. This institution has the most homogeneous student population of the interview sites and the shortest history of baccalaureate offerings. The institution serves approximately 25,000 students per year.

Site #2 – Large, urban, multi-campus college located in the Southeast. This institution began in the 1960's as a junior college designed to transfer students to

university settings. It later became a comprehensive community college serving a wide

variety of students. It boasts several campuses and learning centers and is located in a

population-dense region with wide variations in student population. This institution

serves more than 50,000 students per year.

     Site #3 –Small, rural college with more than one location in the Southwest.

This institution has existed under many names and served a variety of missions during its

lengthy existence. It has continued to evolve to meet the educational needs of its state

and serves a population with a high percentage of minority students. This institution

serves less than 10,000 students per year.

     Data collection. Since the goal of this research was to acquire an understanding

of the transitional process associated with a changing mission through the experiences

and perspectives of college personnel, the interview method provides a beneficial

technique for soliciting the desired level of detail. It provided a way for the researcher to

discover the intricacies of a phenomenon "when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or

how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam, 2009, p. 88). Interviews

followed a semi-structured protocol (shown in Appendix A). The questions were

designed to guide the participants through specific research questions while allowing

them flexibility to express their personal experiences and thoughts, thus capturing the

essence of their beliefs and perspectives of the community college baccalaureate.

Probing questions were intended to gather additional information, to clarify concepts, or

redirect the conversation. The Informed Consent Form (shown in Appendix B) was

developed from a standard template. Interview questions were developed by the

principal researcher to provide insight into the research questions. The questions addressed influences affecting the CCB, institutional change of an expanded mission, and essential components of transitioning to four-year programming. Interview format and content were designed to guide the process and solicit information and experiences pertinent to the study. Interviews were conducted during the 2012-2013 academic year with ten community college personnel at three different sites. Participants were provided with the consent form prior to the interviews. Interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format at each interviewee's place of business and lasted approximately one hour. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Clarification from participants was sought to ensure accuracy of comments when deemed necessary. A transcription of the interview was provided to each interviewee for review.

Data analysis. Merriam (2009) stated that data analysis of qualitative studies is "primarily an inductive and comparative process" (p. 175). The analysis attempts to make sense of data through sorting out relevant topics, combining common themes, and interpreting the statements of knowledgeable individuals. For this multisite study, information was gathered and coded from 10 individuals at three sites to "build abstractions across cases" (p. 204). The contextual setting of research sites and the perceptions of participants may yield vast differences. The researcher strove to draw out common themes of the research topic that could be generally applicable to institutions implementing the baccalaureate and yet were meaningful to individual cases (Yin, 2008).

Transcriptions were coded by hand to reveal meaning and interpretation of the data. Categorical aggregation (Creswell, 2012) was used to reveal codes and categories

through an open coding process. This process generated more than 20 categories derived

from the responses and relationships of the data; these categories were the basis for the

common themes of the research that emerged. These themes were compared with

national findings of the aforementioned questionnaire. The specifics of the questionnaire

are described in the upcoming quantitative portion of this chapter.

       Verification procedures. The essence of any research is producing valid and

reliable knowledge. Terms referring to these concepts in qualitative research sometimes

differ from their quantitative counterparts. Validity is often referred to as *credibility* due

to the methods and purpose of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Findings must be

recognizable and accurate to be generalized beyond the study. Creswell (2012)

recommended at least two verification strategies be employed to be certain the credibility

of the study meets stringent standards. This study uses the following three verification

procedures:

1. *Maximum Variation* (Merriam, 2009) – This was achieved through purposeful sampling of sites that vary in size, location, length of time offering the CCB, and populations served. In addition, the selection process was designed to ensure participants possessed a deep understanding of the topic and could provide a wide range of professional experiences with the community college baccalaureate.
2. *Member Checking* (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2002) – Transcriptions were shared with participants; their feedback was intended to ensure that their words were accurate and could be used to develop themes. As participants were asked to review the transcription in the weeks following the interview, each was provided the opportunity to share additional information deemed important to the research.
3. *Rich/thick Description* (Creswell, 2002) – The context and findings provided rich, thick description, using quotes and narrative, to help the reader have a "shared experience" and become immersed in the stories that bring out the heart of the topic... (p. 96).

The three verification procedures described serve as a triangulation technique that provided a level of confidence in the findings typical of qualitative analysis. Reliability in qualitative research plays a different role than other forms of research as data is subject to interpretation by the researcher. Additionally, findings are based on the research participants' perceptions that continue to be reshaped over time. Considering the dynamic nature of community colleges and the ever-shifting challenges of higher education, assumptions about consistency and stability over a given time period can be drawn, but are constantly evolving.

Ethical considerations. Credibility discussed in the verification section is interrelated to the practices of the researcher. Without ethical practices, there is no credibility. "This situational nature of ethical dilemmas depends not upon a set of general pre-established guidelines but upon the investigator's own sensitivity and values" (Merriam, 2009, p. 230).

The researcher clearly identified the parameters and purpose of the research to interview participants. Participants signed informed consent forms and were furnished verbatim transcripts of the interview. Researcher bias is important when considering ethical practices associated with scholarly research. Researcher bias is addressed at the end of Chapter III.

Quantitative Portion of Research

This portion of the research utilized a questionnaire (Appendix C) designed to provide a wide overview of CCB implementation and best practices data. The study population for the questionnaire consisted of individual contacts from institutions that

utilized the services of the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA). Use

of the organizational resources available through the CCBA is prevalent among

institutions that have transitioned to four-year offerings. Each institution has one or more

designated contact persons who serve as a liaison between the Community College

Baccalaureate Association and the institution. These individuals may have varying roles

within their institutions, but tend to play an integral part of the CCB and are thus

knowledgeable of the topic.

Dr. Beth Hagan, Executive Director of Community College Baccalaureate

Association, agreed to assist in contacting members of the organization and with

distribution of the research tool. She had at her disposal the email addresses of all

organizational contacts and was willing to contribute her efforts to this study as it

coincided with the missions of the CCBA.

Questionnaire participation was restricted to institutions in the United States that

offered CCB programming and utilized the resources of the CCBA in 2012 and 2013.

Questionnaire respondents included individuals from organizational members of the

CCBA as well as from non-members who utilize the resources of the organization. A

total of 107 individuals met the criteria defined by this study and were included in the

distribution of the questionnaire. This relatively low number—along with the ease of

contacting them—presented the opportunity to include all members of this select

population. Every member of the bounded population was presented with the

opportunity to participate, and each already had an established means of receiving the

research instrument through regular channels of communication with Dr. Hagan via the

internet. Although the sample used for the questionnaire included all participants of the population, coverage and sampling errors typical of survey research presented the possibility of skewed results as those who chose to respond represented only a percentage of those solicited.

Variables and measures. All items on the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics available within the questionnaire software. Statistics for each multiple choice item include the minimum and maximum values, mean, variance, frequency, and standard deviation. Appendix F provides the results of the questionnaire. Open ended questions were coded by the principal researcher as qualitative data. This data is merged with the themes drawn from the qualitative data, however individual responses to open-ended questions are provided within the text.

Many parties have an interest in the community college baccalaureate. Both critics and supporters represent strong sentiments and can influence the process of implementing the CCB. These influences are addressed by research Objective #1. The Questionnaire Abstract (Figure 4) presented in the following section displays the questions pertaining to this research objective. Questions were developed by the principal researcher based from findings of prior researchers (Floyd, 2005; Floyd & Walker, 2009; McKinney & Morris, 2010; Petry, 2006). Due to the low number of respondents from the survey population, data analysis was limited to descriptive statistics. Findings were used to identify nationwide commonalities among institutions offering the community college baccalaureate that were more deeply explored through the qualitative portion of the research.

In Objective #2, the questions in the survey were focused on institutional change that occurs as a result of the CCB. These changes may include mission, culture, growth, longevity, and the process of transition itself.   These have been identified by prior researchers as "change factors" that may result from the community college baccalaureate.

Objective #3 was designed to determine essential institutional elements of offering the CCB. These may include faculty, financial resources, facilities, library resources, and support services.

Quantitative instrument. The quantitative instrument was developed by the principal researcher using Qualtrics survey software hosted at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. The instrument consisted of a total 15 questions. Eleven questions addressed key objectives of the research; two questions were designed to gather basic demographic information only. The final two questions were open-ended and captured qualitative data. These data were compared to findings obtained through the interview sessions. Table 3 displays the questions that target specific research objectives.

Reliability and validity. The questionnaire created for this study is from a field with limited research. The bulk of research addressing the CCB was focused on the Florida higher education system. No instrument was available to compare with this study's research tool; many of the questions were based on the research of others. Dr. Deborah Floyd of Florida Atlantic University is clearly recognized as one of the experts on the Community College Baccalaureate. She has published many articles on the CCB

Table 3

Questionnaire Abstract: Research Objectives

Research Objectives	Questionnaire Item Number
1. To determine influences affecting the offering of the community college baccalaureate.	3-7, 9
2. To examine institutional change as a result of implementing baccalaureate programming.	1, 2, 11, 12
3. To explore the essential components of community college baccalaureate offerings.	10,14,15

Note: Questions #8 and #13 was used to gather demographic information only. Questions #14 and #15 were open-ended questions.

and has influenced the body of research pertaining to it. Floyd, Skolnik, and Walker, (2005), Floyd and Walker (2009), and a case study by McKinney and Morris (2010) examined the organizational change that accompanies the CCB; their results formed the basis for much of this research and the answers sought.

Utilizing the expertise of prominent individuals noted for their knowledge of the CCB and of community colleges in general, content validity was used to ensure the questions measure the intended objectives. The questionnaire was provided to Dr. Beth Hagan (Executive Director of the Community College Baccalaureate Association), and Dr. Barbara LaCost (UNL faculty).   Their feedback provided expert opinion on the questionnaire's validity.

The study was designed to use Chronbach's Alpha to measure the internal consistency of questionnaire responses to test reliability. However, the response rate to run an item-test correlation was insufficient. The questionnaire was designed to have a number of questions address each research objective. The Questionnaire Abstract (Figure

questionnaire consisted of a slightly easier-to-navigate format and a revised end-of-survey response that was personalized to college personnel.

The ideal candidates for a pilot study would have been actual contact members of the Community College Baccalaureate Association with experience in implementing and supporting the four-year degree at their institutions. However, with plans to include all members of this limited population in this study, it was important to find an alternative method to test the design and usability of the research instrument.

Procedure. The questionnaire was distributed to individuals at institutions associated with the Community College Baccalaureate Association. In total, 107 individuals received an invitation to complete the questionnaire. Dr. Beth Hagan— Executive Director of the CCBA— distributed the instrument to the aforementioned individuals, who serve as designated contact persons for their institution.

A pre-notice email was sent three working days prior to the cover letter. The pre-notice provided introductory information about the purpose of the survey and why the recipient had been chosen. It stressed the importance of the research and ensured each recipient was expecting a research instrument of high importance. The name recognition of Dr. Hagan and the affiliation with the Community College Baccalaureate Association were expected to promote a high response rate. Individuals who received this message were familiar with Dr. Hagan and the organization. The initial email also served as a chance to discover if emails had been returned as undeliverable and provided an opportunity to correct information prior to the actual questionnaire.

The cover letter (Appendix D) was sent in the same manner as the pre-notice. Dr. Hagan initiated the email which contained the link to the questionnaire as well as her contact information and that of the principal and secondary investigators. Emails were timed to arrive in mailboxes prior to regular office hours. The questionnaire was administered in December of 2012.

After the cover letter with the questionnaire link was distributed, Dr. Hagan sent a follow-up email (Appendix E) to thank those who responded and prompt others who had yet to take the survey. It arrived in mailboxes eight days after the cover letter. The e-mail stressed the importance of the topic and the need to wrap up the research by a specific date—ten days after the cover letter with the initial link arrived.

As noted, many steps were taken to ensure a high response rate. Emails arrived from Dr. Hagan and referenced the Community College Baccalaureate Association. The pre-notice email and follow-up notice were designed to both prepare and prompt recipients to complete the instrument. The timing was such that it followed the guidelines set forth by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) to facilitate a high response via internet assessment tool. The emails stressed the importance of the research and targeted a population who had demonstrated a professional interest in the topic through prior contact with the CCBA. The cover letter thoroughly described the rights of participants, how to acquire additional information, and all standard requirements associated with informed consent. Of the 107 individuals asked to respond to the questionnaire, 32 (29.9%) accessed the instrument with 29 of those completing some of

the questions (27.1%). The number of responding participants who completed all parts of the questionnaire was 24, or 22.4% of the selected population.

Researcher Bias

The principal researcher of this study recognizes researcher bias must be addressed in the design of this study. As a former K-12 teacher and current community college faculty member, I am a strong advocate of the community college mission. I come from a state in which many would argue there is an unmet need the community college baccalaureate could address, but that conversation has not occurred.

My bias in the selection of the topic is due to my relationship with the community college setting and my experience with many four-year institutions within this state.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices of implementing and offering a baccalaureate degree at community colleges.

Context of the Research

The researcher sought data of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with college personnel knowledgeable about their institutions' transitional process to baccalaureate offerings. Ten interviews were conducted at three institutions in three states. All institutions originally had a two-year mission but had since transitioned to conferring baccalaureate degrees. Sites varied by location, size, populations served, and length of time offering bachelor's degrees. Those interviewed included administrators, faculty, and support staff with knowledge of the transition process. The average length of employment in higher education from all interview participants was 22.7 years.

Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire offered to individuals who served as the institution's contact person with the Community College Baccalaureate Association. The questionnaire was provided to 107 institutional personnel in 19 states who utilized the services of the Community College Baccalaureate Association. The questionnaire (Appendix C) consisted of 15 questions. Two questions gathered demographic information. The remaining questions provided a measure of comparability with findings from the interview participants. The acquisition of both qualitative and quantitative data helped determine whether findings were isolated to interview

participants and their locations or represented a more common theme.   Two questions

acquired qualitative data from questionnaire respondents.

Restatement of Research Objectives

The researcher wanted to understand the transitional process and essential

considerations involved in implementing baccalaureate offerings. The objectives of the

study are:

1. To determine influences affecting the offering of the community college

    baccalaureate.

2. To examine institutional change as a result of implementing the baccalaureate.

3. To explore the essential components of community college baccalaureate

    offerings.

Research Questions

During the courses of this study, the researcher explored the following questions:

1. Who do respondents believe supported or opposed the transition to

    baccalaureate offerings and what influenced them?

2. How was the need to offer the CCB justified?

3. How has offering bachelor's degrees impacted the traditional missions of the

    community college?

4. How do college employees and the public view institutional changes resulting

    from the CCB?

5. What services are crucial to CCB programming?

6. What do respondents believe are important considerations when implementing

and offering the CCB?

Chapter Outline

In this chapter, the researcher first addresses each of the research questions of the

study. Participants' words and experiences provide descriptive understanding and

insight. The researcher then presents results from the questionnaire to provide a broader

interpretation of the research and determine whether findings are unique to sites of the

case study or represent widespread occurrences. Third, themes emerging from the

qualitative data identified commonalities of institutions with changing missions.

Table 4

Interview Sites and Samples

Sites	Size/# of Students	Number of Interviews	Position
Site 1	Medium/25,000	3	Administrator Administrator Administrator
Site 2	Large/50,000+	4	Campus President Administrator Faculty Faculty
Site 3	Small/10,000	3	Staff Staff Administrator
Total		10	

The researcher solicited information from 56 institutions throughout the United

States. Similar themes emerged regardless of location, characteristics, and demographics

of the institution. The general missions of community colleges are similar across the country. However, a community college is as unique as its locations and the needs of stakeholders within its service area. This chapter addresses the research questions and explores the ubiquitous facets of transitioning to baccalaureate offerings and the nuances of particular sites.

Quantitative Results

Each research question is addressed using data from the interviewees. The researcher then presents quantitative data from the questionnaire. The response rate to the questionnaire was 29.9% (N = 32). Eight of those were unusable due to incomplete data. Twenty-four participants completed all parts of the instrument representing 22.4% of the total population provided with the opportunity to participate.

Research Question #1: Who do respondents believe supported or opposed the transition to baccalaureate offerings and what influenced them? Strong support and opposition to transitioning to the baccalaureate were present at the three interview sites. Influences from a state level and specific characteristics of geography and demographics played a significant role in the process. The ten college employees interviewed cited access as the primary reason for offering baccalaureate degrees. Access can be multi-faceted and were defined by the interviewees as the following:

1) The availability of four-year degrees in a region that was previously underserved.

2) Additional baccalaureate opportunities when fiscal limitations or physical space limited the ability of four-year colleges and universities to accommodate student demand.

3) The labor market has a far greater need than traditional baccalaureate granting institutions could meet.

4) The desire to provide opportunities for place-bound students or to offer a degree in a field that other four-year colleges couldn't or didn't care to address.

5) Access can also mean a more affordable option that allows a greater number of students the ability to pursue a higher degree.

A number of groups held an interest in support or opposition to implementing bachelor's degrees. Interview participants identified six categories whose members were influential in the transitional process:

1. College Leadership

2. Communities and Students

3. Educational Partners

4. State

5. Accrediting Agencies

6. Faculty

These categories are presented through the thoughts of interview participants. Quantitative data is then presented to augment findings.

College leadership. Although access was the primary determinant cited by all, interview participants at all the three institutional sites indicated their college president was a driving force behind their decision to seek baccalaureate degrees. As one administrator stated:

> I think our primary impetus was our president at the time. He wanted the bachelor's degrees. He wanted us to become a four-institution and that was his vision. That's where it started and he lobbied the legislature and we went from there.

Another administrator echoed these sentiments as she spoke of the leadership at her institution and the support and dedication it took to implement baccalaureate degrees.

> I would have to say it was our president's vision – his leadership. It would never have happened without him being at the helm of our institution and his vision of what he wanted to see happen. He had to take this to our Board of Trustees and work with them to get them behind the whole thing. One would never think of all the elements that you have to be watching out for, but he had that vision. He convinced the board to move forward and then had to work on state approval and get our accrediting agency to come out and do a site visit.

College leadership, specifically the college president, was cited by 60% of interview participants as one of the reasons their institutions pursued baccalaureate programming. A staff member at one of the interview sites noted that, along with the college president, there was the desire by a regent of the institution to offer four-year degrees.

> We had a regent who thought it would be nice if we could offer four-year degrees. It was based on his dream because we were coming up on a milestone anniversary for the college. After that it was just like a snowball effect. I would definitely say that our board was very supportive and really wanted to see that access provided.

Communities and students. Community needs form the foundation of community college missions and are based on access and local economies. The service

areas of the sites visited consisted of communities that supported additional baccalaureate

opportunities overall. Nine of ten interview participants perceived support from the

community as a factor that weighted their decisions to move toward baccalaureate

programming. Community support encompasses a variety of stakeholders including

businesses, schools, the general population, and students.   The interviewees revealed

community members saw the potential from a number of perspectives. In addition to

local access and opportunity, such a transition increased the availability of skilled

workers from local sources. It represented an investment in one's own community and

the social, economic, and political realities that accompany a well-educated population.

Other interview participants noted how the rural nature of their areas and the lack of

bachelor's degree availability in their regions had prevented many from seeking higher

education or forced others to move away to attain it. Access equates opportunity to

greater levels of economic and social vibrancy. Although the characteristics and

demographics of research sites represent clear differences, the perceptions of interview

participants tended to merge seamlessly as evidenced in their quotes.

- I think the community wanted it most of all. They have a very strong cultural tradition here and they just don't leave. They've been here for generations and they're just not going anywhere. They don't even want to go to other institutions that are 100 miles away. So what happens is they don't end up getting the bachelor's degree. – *staff*

- There was an industry need and the universities couldn't fill it. Teachers are one example. There is a critical need and everybody together isn't filling that need. – *administrator*

- Communities were very excited. We went out and surveyed them. The employers said this would be terrific for our communities. They'd really like for them to have employees and workers with more skills. The school districts were very excited and they still are. They're chomping at the bit. The really want us to start producing teachers in our own communities,

teachers that will stay in our communities because they were raised here. It's expensive to live here and a lot of teachers from other places don't stay very long. So there's a great turnover in these rural communities and they would like us to address that. Additionally, the hospitals need nurses. The new norm in the future will be the bachelor's degree for nurses and we know that's coming. We want to start getting our nurses qualified. – *staff*

- There were employment gaps. There were industry gaps. So it really was an access issue. The universities started constricting their enrollments. So I'd say in a nutshell, it was access. Communities really wanted this. – *administrator*

- One of our primary student populations is working adults. In the shortest amount of time possible they want to use the hours they've already accumulated and get to the bachelor's degree. – *administrator*

- It was a big deal to our students. They loved it and felt proud attending a four-year school. – *faculty*

- Students like the fact that these courses don't have to be offered like a class at the university where you might have upwards of 150 or 200 students. We can offer a more intimate audience of 20 or 24. If they raise their hand I can interact with them. For example, in my classes I have 20 students. I see every one of them. I know every one of them. – *faculty*

- It's an opportunity for students in our area to get a very cost effective bachelor's degree. They may otherwise have never had that opportunity. – *administrator*

- Transferring to a university is a big move for students. If they go here, the community college is a small setting, small institution. Now students are realizing they can stay at this same college where they already know faculty, they know the campuses, and can continue to take junior and senior level courses. So many of them are very pleased for that and they can save a ton of money too. - *faculty*

In general, community members at many levels supported institutions' desires to add baccalaureate programming. The community college baccalaureate was viewed as an affordable opportunity to have a more knowledgeable workforce and as a driver of the local economy. There were some community members, however, that did not support the move to offer bachelor's degree or at least had reservations about the institution's ability

to do so. The interviewees stated that some community members expressed concern that

community colleges were already stretched beyond their limits through inadequate

funding and a host of responsibilities that other institutions do not address. They

"worried that it would pull us away from our community college mission and divert

resources, faculty, and so on as the college moved forward with bachelor's degrees,"

stated an administrator. As indicated by interview participants, community colleges

suffer from a perception problem that is perpetuated through open enrollment policies

and low cost offerings. A faculty member noted how perception can affect the views of

those who judge the two-year institutions.

> There are those in the community who are not familiar with the community
> college or what the community college does. Maybe they're just people who
> attended a university and don't have any experience with what we do. There's a
> perception about community colleges that we water down things and that we're
> somehow easier, which is really unfortunate. Even my own students sometimes
> hold that perception which is really confusing to me. For example, in one of my
> intro classes I have students who take this course and expect it to be easy. They
> don't understand why they are failing. And I tell them they still have to study.
> It's a college course. And they'll say, "But this is just community college." Just
> community college? Is that what you want your employer to say when they see
> your diploma that is was just community college? I tell them this is college, and
> we're accredited by the same people that accredit the universities. So your idea
> that this is just community college is your own mistake in perception. Then they
> kind of get it. They eventually do get it after going through the course. They
> realize they are actually getting a college education here. I think that comes from
> accessibility. People feel that if something's accessible that is must be easy. It's
> affordable and accessible. It must not be very good, right? That is sad.

Educational partners. Educational partners are defined as other

educational institutions that may have an interest in or concern with a community

college expanding its mission. Perceptions of the community college and its role

are at the heart of support or criticism of transitioning to four-year degrees.

Interview participants identified those associated with traditional four-year colleges

and universities as the primary source of criticism, although in some instances it

was minimal. Arguments made by other institutions against the community

college baccalaureate often hinged on the perceived abilities of the "junior"

institution to offer quality programming. Some universities also felt they were

already meeting the higher educational needs of the state and that a transition to

bachelor's degrees by local community colleges was unnecessary. There was

concern that community colleges would be offering the same programs universities

do and they would be competing for students. As one administrator expressed,

"There was some criticism from other schools who wondered about our capacity

and if we would be any type of threat." Institutions potentially affected by addition

of the CCB weren't necessarily in favor of the transition, but often agreed not to

stand in the way.

- We were seeking a letter of support for a new BS and had crossed all the t's and dotted all the i's with this particular university. Then they got a new dean. So their leadership changed, and their new dean tried to do a power play with their president to say "no, they can't have it." This was after about a year of meetings had gone on. So we compromised and removed some of the special tracks associated with our program and got through it. – *administrator*

- There were criticisms of this college at all levels of higher ed in the state primarily. There was the thought that this college couldn't offer quality four-year degrees. I was working for one of those universities then. I heard it all the time. – *staff*

- The universities pushed back and really tried to put us into the narrow slot of only being able to have bachelors of applied science. – *administrator*

- The critics were the university systems, obviously. I was talking with a faculty applicant's reference who was her Ph.D. advisor and he was very upset that this student was going to come and teach at our college. She could do much better and she was wasting her potential. – *faculty*

- All of our bachelor's faculty are Ph.D. qualified with terrific backgrounds as well as experiential, writing books, doing conferences and presentations. So does that eliminate the snootiness? No, not necessarily. But we've already had schools approach us. One of our university partners was here last week and they want to talk about our students going to them for master's degrees. - *administrator*

Although criticism from other institutions was identified as the primary source, some interview participants indicated a fairly smooth process in this regard. Two of the institutions regarded their rural locations and relatively small size as factors that helped the process move ahead. An administrator at one of those institutions commented, "We're a very small player, so they didn't really care." Another administrator had a similar comment.

There are a couple of reasons why they showed little reaction. One is we're so isolated. The students that go to those universities are going to keep going there. Well over 80% of our students are within district. The second is that in some areas there is such a need that everybody together can't fill it. We're not competing with any university to speak of.

Some respondents, although concerned about the implications, foresaw benefits for the college and their graduate programs.

- Our university partners were interested in it. For example, they were having trouble getting people in their MBA program. So we convinced them that we would be their feeder program for their MBA with a BS in business administration. And it's true because it's like a 2+2+2. It's working well. – *administrator*

- We would like to see our university partners grow their graduate programs now that they have this increased pool of students locally who may be interested in the graduate programs. I haven't seen that happen, which I think is a missed opportunity on their part. Maybe they don't realize that, but I don't know what their capacity to do that is at this point. - *faculty*

   State. States have a fiscal and social responsibility to oversee the plan for higher education and the opportunities afforded their citizens. Strapped for resources, four-year

colleges and universities have not been able to expand with additional facilities, faculty, or support services to accommodate those with a desire for higher education. High demand fields of work remain so due to a limited ability to meet state needs. "California is an example of a state who can't serve thousands and thousands of students on waiting lists," noted one administrator. States have to look at themselves as a whole and how they can most effectively serve their needs while maintaining a fiscally responsible approach that avoids duplication of effort.

States' roles in the transition from a two-year mission to bachelor's degrees provide stark differences. In Florida, for instance, the state legislature decreed that community college could offer bachelor's degrees and become state colleges if they desired. This was a sweeping change that stemmed from a shortage of qualified workers in key areas and dismal state statistics. Florida had been doing a respectable job of educating people to the associate's level, but ranked 47th in terms of baccalaureate attainment. The push to implement additional baccalaureate offerings clearly came from the state in Florida.

Institutions elsewhere have had to convince their state governing boards of the need to offer bachelor's degrees and the benefits such a move can bring to local economies and the state in general. The justification for adding bachelor's degrees has to address state goals and do so in a way that speaks to the economists in one's state.

Accrediting agencies. Interviews were conducted at institutions which fell under the authority of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). These accrediting agencies weren't perceived as

supporting or opposing the transition to four-year degrees, but they did play a significant

role in the ability of institutions to develop and implement baccalaureates. The

accrediting agencies have the potential to be seen as roadblocks to the process, but

primarily serve as a platform for ensuring quality programs and adequate sources of

funding and support.

All ten interview participants addressed the accrediting agency component. Some

simply mentioned it as a hoop the institution had to jump. Others spoke in detail of the

requirements and challenges imposed upon institutions looking to break into the

baccalaureate-granting arena. Below are some of the more poignant remarks.

- We prepared all the documents and then sent the materials to the accrediting agency. Most of the feedback was very helpful. It's been enlightening and helpful. Sometimes they didn't understand what we were saying, so we said it better. Other times they offered some constructive criticism that was good and something we should take into account. I thought the process was very helpful. – *campus president*

- They have not made it easy. We still have to go to them to get approval for new bachelor's degrees. They're not convinced that the college can initiate and follow through with offering our own degrees without their close scrutiny. I don't know if you call that resistance exactly, but it's been a challenge. – *staff*

- At that time we did not have a career services officer for our college. We felt like the accrediting agency was going to deny if we couldn't show how we were going to graduate bachelor's degree students and have some kind of career services available for them. Then it's not going to happen. – *administrator*

- We had to get their approval. They had to come out and do a site visit. They had to be very sure that they thought we had the capacity to actually do this. It's one thing to say this is what you want to be, but you have to prove you have the services and the money. Does your college have the financial wherewithal to do this as an institution? – *administrator*

- They haven't taken off the stipulations that allow eligibility for these particular bachelor's degrees. So that process takes almost 18 months to two

years. It's very cumbersome and they don't consider you mature until…I don't know what it takes. - *administrator*

Faculty. The findings thus far have addressed college leadership and a host of external stakeholders both supporting and opposing the implementation of bachelor's degrees. However, internal perceptions about the implementation of the community college baccalaureate were evident in all interviews and were viewed as one of the most important and controversial mechanisms of support or opposition.

Faculty, like others, were on both sides of the fence concerning the implementation of bachelor's degrees at their institutions. Interview participants described the perceptions among faculty as ranging from excited about offering the additional opportunities and getting to teach upper level courses to flat out refusal to approve curricula for bachelor's degrees. It was believed that much of the opposition was fueled by apprehension and fear of the implications for the college and their own uncertainties about their role in the process. The availability of future resources to establish and support an expanded mission was also noted as a primary concern.

Nine out of ten interview participants expressed the role faculty (and others internal to the college) play as important to the process of offering bachelor's degrees. Interview participants expressed the thoughts of those internal to the college with many different points of view.

- I can't say the faculty members were particularly interested in doing this. It did not come from the bottom up. Now they are. They're pretty keen on it now, but in the beginning it was very different. I was one of them. I loved our community college. I loved our students, many of which were first generation. – *administrator*

- Many wanted to keep the community college mission. – *administrator*

- I think we had faculty who may have felt less valued because they didn't have Ph.D.'s. In some of the programs people were happy with their associate level programs, but were being encouraged to develop a baccalaureate program. Some individuals were a bit reluctant and not really thinking we needed a four-year school. – *faculty*

- I think faculty members for the most part have been supportive. I think they saw it as an opportunity to offer students. Really the issue has always been about the pace and not necessarily the goal. Some would've liked a couple of more years to get it done. – *administrator*

- I think faculty members at first were afraid. They didn't want to be segmented into upper and lower division. – *administrator*

- One faculty member in particular caused quite a scuffle over this and wanted to block the curriculum going through curriculum committee. Ultimately I figured out why. It was a personal thing from that individual's perspective, an insecurity thing more than anything. – *faculty*

- It raised a lot of questions among faculty. Early on there was a lot of questions about pay grade. Do instructors teaching at the 300 and 400-level get paid differently? Are they viewed differently? Is it more prestigious to teach at the higher levels? So I think it started conversations that were probably fairly emotional at times. – *administrator*

- We had some gaps as a two-year institution. So one of the criticisms of me and others was that we've got some core business functions that aren't getting the attention they deserve because you guys are working to get approval for bachelor's degrees. - *administrator*

These comments help paint a picture of the perceptions of faculty and other college employees about implementing four-year degrees. Community colleges have a wide variety of stakeholders and a more diverse mission than many other types of institutions. Support for or opposition to baccalaureate programming was a product of perception among stakeholders. Supporters perceived this to be an access issue while opposition focused on quality, capacity, and their ideas about institutions roles within their state's higher education environment.

Several items on the questionnaire addressed the sources of support or opposition to the community college baccalaureate. This instrument helps assists the researcher in capturing the broader perspectives of the transitional landscape in higher education and comparing them to those an interview sites.

Question #3 shown in Table 5 asked if state influences were a major impetus for offering baccalaureate degrees. Sample size was N = 28.   Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that state influences were influential in the push to offer baccalaureate programming. Thirty-two percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining respondents were neutral in their response.

Question #4 shown in Table 6 asked if local constituents were a major impetus for offering baccalaureate degrees. Sample size was N = 29.   Ninety percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that local constituents were influential in the push to offer baccalaureate programming. Respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed represented 6% of the sample. The remaining respondents were neutral in their response.

Question #5 shown in Table 7 asked if internal college influences were a major impetus for offering baccalaureate degrees. Sample size was N = 29.   The results showed that 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that internal college influences were a primary impetus for offering baccalaureate programming. Respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed represented 10% of the sample. The remaining respondents were neutral in their response.

Table 5

Question 3

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	9	32
2	Agree	8	29
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	7
4	Disagree	5	18
5	Strongly Disagree	4	14
	Total	28	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.54
Variance	2.18
Standard Deviation	1.48
Total Responses	28

Table 6

Question 4

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	8	28
2	Agree	18	62
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	3
4	Disagree	1	3
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3
	Total	29	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	1.93
Variance	0.78
Standard Deviation	0.88
Total Responses	29

Table 7

Question 5

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	8	28
2	Agree	16	55
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	7
4	Disagree	2	7
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3
	Total	29	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.03
Variance	0.96
Standard Deviation	0.98
Total Responses	29

Question #6 shown in Table 8 asked respondents if their institution experienced criticism in their efforts to offer baccalaureate degrees. Respondents indicated they did experience criticism in 59% of cases while 41% indicated their institution did not experience criticism. Sample size was N = 29. Of those respondents who indicated their institutions did experience criticism, the most widely cited source of criticism was other educational institutions at 83%. The next highest category was internal college

Table 8

Question 6

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	17	59
2	Agree	12	41
	Total	29	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.41
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	29

employees cited by 56% of respondents, followed by state officials 44%. One individual

indicated "university partners" as an area of criticism bringing the criticism from other

educational institutions to 89%. Sample size for this group was $N = 18$. Other sources of

criticism are shown in Question #7, Table 9.

Research Question #2: How was the need to offer the CCB justified?

Beyond the perceptions associated with support or opposition to baccalaureate offerings,

the justification of this transition must be satisfied. Many of the same reasons used to

postulate one's support or opposition of community college baccalaureates are provided

Table 9

Question 7

#	Answer	Response	%
1	College employees of your institution	10	56
2	Students of your institution	2	11
3	Other educational institutions	15	83
4	State officials	8	44
5	General public	3	17
6	Businesses	4	22
7	Local officials	5	28
8	Other (Please specify) 　　　University Partners	1	6

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	8
Total Responses	18

as justification. Supporters of the community college baccalaureate point to the needs in their communities and states. They cite shortages of workers in key areas, lack of opportunities due to location or costs, a place-bound population with needs that differ from those currently available in higher education, or niche markets that remain unaddressed.

Those opposing the move to baccalaureate degrees counter with the belief that markets are being met through current higher education offerings and that such a move is

unnecessary. Questions of the ability and capacity of the community college to offer quality programming permeated the discussion.

Interview participants identified the key to justifying the community college baccalaureate is breaking through perceptions about the roles and capabilities of the community college segment of higher education. An examination of the facts associated with local and state needs dictate whether additional offerings are needed to rectify employment gaps. Additional opportunities implemented by community colleges can bolster economies and provide mobility through education where none existed before. The clearest justification for the CCB came from an administrator.

> I'd want to get very close to the economists in my state. Where's the potential for growth in our state? Make sure you have a good sense of what your communities want and are willing to support. Really align yourself with your state's strategy. Be able to justify your goals, state initiatives, and state objectives. But it really ought to grow out of a constituent need. We can better serve these people who are unlikely to be served by anybody else. Show how you're creating a greater opportunity for the people that you serve and creating greater opportunity for your neighbors and that you're creating greater opportunities for your state's vibrant economy and putting people to work in some way. A bachelor's degree may be one of ways to do that, but not if there's really not an economic need.

Justification through a state's workplace statistics "supersedes somebody's university saying they're not going to play that game," as one administrator explained. "Eventually the governor will make that call."

Educational and economic needs of communities along with a state's plan for higher education weighed in making the case for adding baccalaureates. The ten interview participants mentioned the importance of meeting the needs of their communities in terms of support, employment gaps, and opportunity. Eight of ten spoke

specifically about a formal needs assessment as part of their justification process. One

staff member stated,

> We hired an outside research company to come out and collect data on what the
> community needed, what the employers needed, what the students wanted, and
> where the jobs were. That determined the areas that we would offer those four-
> year degrees in.

Participants expressed the needs assessment as a vital part of the process no

matter the setting or state in which they resided. A campus president's comment

demonstrated the role that economics play in justifying baccalaureate offerings.

> Our baccalaureates had to be workforce related, and we had to prove that there
> were employment possibilities for those students. Part of our application package
> is a whole section which includes that these are the jobs, and this is where they
> exist. There are this many jobs. We're going to have this many graduates in the
> whole state, and this many in the region.

In terms of baccalaureate offerings, tying institutional initiatives to state goals and

local needs fulfills that obligation. Interview participants revealed that in [state], as in a

number of other states, budgetary realities meant universities were restricting their

enrollments leaving thousands of students with no opportunity to further their education.

It was a state-wide strategy on the part of the [state] Department of Education to open up

avenues of access through the community college system.

As newly created baccalaureate programs focused on unmet needs in higher

education, administrators also wanted to cater to non-traditional students with very

different needs than traditional students. Populations that were pushed out of traditional

higher education due to life circumstances helped justify the need for offering

baccalaureates through alternate paths. Participants at all interview sites stressed that

much of their reasoning for implementing bachelor's degrees was to serve an overlooked, place-bound population.

- What I do know is that most of the students that are going for our bachelor's degree are very different than the students at the universities. It's a completely different demographic. Most of our students are in their 30's. They need evening classes. They need to go to a school that's right there where they're already based. They don't want to take their kids out of school and move to some college town. - *faculty*

- The folks that are coming to us are folks that are place-bound. They're mothers who have children and are probably not going to complete a degree online. - *campus president*

- The highest degree that a lot of people in the area could get was an associate's degree, and a lot of people in the area are what they call land-locked. They have families. We have an older student population so it's not as easy to move 100 miles from them or take their families 100 miles away. – *staff*

- The great thing about the community college business and why we do so well against the four-year colleges is that we offer them at different hours. We offer them in different vehicles, either online or hybrid or on-campus. That really attracts a whole different group of people. We have a different kind of student profile. – *campus president*

A formal needs assessment helps identify and justify the sustainability of particular bachelor's degrees. Both the literature and interview participants identified nursing and teaching as two areas where shortages tend to be prevalent. But other companies that help drive local economies may have more specific needs that baccalaureate offering could address. Site #3 used in the research is located in a community with a major local employer that was very supportive of the move to baccalaureate offerings. Prior to the institution offering bachelor's degrees, the ability of this employer to acquire highly skilled employees from the local community was limited. The rural nature and lack of higher education offerings in the area were a prohibitive

factor both for the employer and local residents. The support of employers, especially those capable of employing large numbers of individuals, served as justification for addressing skill gaps that could be countered through baccalaureate offerings. Several interview participants noted the importance of their advisory committees in supporting the college's efforts to offer bachelor's degree while ensuring there was sufficient need and high quality programs. This group was viewed as a justification tool and was comprised of faculty, business and industry people from the community, and educational partners.

The cost savings to students is another aspect of the equation that provides justification for bachelor's degrees. In addition to lack of access through physical proximity, the lack of available program openings, conflicting schedules, and the expense of university or private four-year degrees prohibits many from fulfilling their aspirations. Community colleges are a cheaper alternative to the bachelor's degree. "Ultimately, the more people that we educate the better off this state is all around," stated one college staff member. A faculty member noted that at the community college "students can save a ton of money." Although funding for community colleges varies widely by state, many are partially supported through local property taxes thus providing the state a means of meeting its educational goals without the level of expense associated with university programs.

Justification comes back to the economic needs and goals of the state and local economics. According to those interviewed, accrediting agencies and state education

boards require institutions to prove needs exist and carefully document how they will be addressed.

Justification of implementing four-year degrees at institutions with a traditional two-year mission was also addressed through the quantitative research tool. The researcher sought perceptions of college employees from across the nation concerning the justification of such a transition through the questionnaire. Similar to reasons presented for support of the baccalaureate, Question #3 and #4 (Table 5 and Table 6) provide justification for the transition through the backing of key constituents of the institution. Sixty percent responded that state influences, namely state educational goals and economic development, were primary reasons for pursuing baccalaureate degrees. Support by local constituents was reported at 90%. The responses to both of these questions indicate a need and desire for greater opportunity through higher education.

Another item on the questionnaire explored the ease of transitioning from a two-year mission to one that includes baccalaureate offerings. Even though many indicated resistance from four-year colleges and universities, 71% (N = 19) reported the process as one that went smoothly. Only 19% (N = 5) indicated the process was one that did not proceed smoothly. The remaining 11% (N = 3) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the question's statement. Table 10 provides the results.

Research Question #3: How do respondents believe offering the bachelor's degrees impacted the traditional missions of the community college? The historic missions of community colleges include aspects that are not addressed by traditional

Table 10

Question 9

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	5	19
2	Agree	14	52
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	3	11
4	Disagree	4	15
5	Strongly Disagree	1	4
	Total	27	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.33
Variance	1.15
Standard Deviation	1.07
Total Responses	27

four-year colleges and universities. These include developmental education, ESL

(English as a Second Language), and continuing education. Furthermore, community

colleges provide an open door policy to community members. As community colleges

have transitioned to baccalaureate offerings and even transformed into four-year colleges

in some states, interview participants stressed that the basic educational needs for

developmental education, for instance, still exist. Those interviewed identified these four

basic functions as a continued priority of the institution despite the push for four-year degrees.

The transition to four-year institutions takes many forms. The research sites represented colleges that kept their community college status while adding a limited number of bachelor's degrees and those that embraced a status change to four-year colleges and added a multitude of bachelor's degrees. Regardless of these differences, six of the interview participants recognized the institutional roots of their organization and expressed their thoughts on the impact on the college's mission.

- The mission hasn't changed dramatically. We're still open access. We still abide by the mission that was implemented for the community college which was an open access institution for two-year degrees in technical certificates and AS degrees and so on. And we are still that and that is the bulk of admission and our enrollment and our faculty duties as well. It's been expanded to include baccalaureate programs. – *faculty*

- We continue to maintain our community college mission in terms of open access and we do offer primarily associate degrees and certificates. – *administrator*

- We will always be a community college. We will have a community college mission. We'll continue to provide ESL and developmental studies. We'll do associate's degrees from AA and AS all the way through associate of applied science degrees. We will continue to do that and we'll do it well and keep focus. – *administrator*

- What we say is that we are now both a four-year and a two-year institution. So it's an add-on mission. – *staff*

- Bachelor's degrees are viewed as an extension of our mission in terms of access and affordability and what the community needs.- *administrator*

- I think it's an enhancement of the original mission. We've never stopped being part of the community in terms of the service learning and all the organizations we belong to, having the articulation with the area high schools, and those kinds of things. We haven't really changed the physical outreach function. We've just enhanced it. – *administrator*

- The lion's share of what we do still is the two-year mission. I still have adult
  ed going on. I still have the early college high school program going on
  where we take high school juniors and put them in college courses. You
  know, we're still doing all of that stuff. – *campus president*

The questionnaire asked participants if the traditional community college missions

remain as top priorities. Results are shown in Table 11. Participants responded with 87%

(N = 25) indicating they agreed or strongly agreed. Three of the 29 respondents (10%)

indicated the community college missions were no longer priorities.

Table 11

Question 1

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	17	59
2	Agree	8	28
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	3
4	Disagree	3	10
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	29	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.66
Variance	0.95
Standard Deviation	0.97
Total Responses	29

Participants from both the interviews and the questionnaire reported an adherence to traditional missions of the community college and a positive outlook at the new opportunities afforded students.   However, an extended or enhanced mission had implications for the institution that strained those fundamental priorities. Adding a significant element such as bachelor's degrees required time, energy, and resources from a system widely regarded as overburdened and underfunded. Interview participants described the effects.

- Many of the faculty, including me, wanted to keep the community college mission. Right now we still are doing that and I think that is crucial in that you have a community college mission and the four-year. However, what I'm finding is that our two-year one is getting pushed away – even though that's 80% of our students right now. – *administrator*

- That use of resources takes away from those other needs. Our career tech has diminished significantly since we've done that. The focus is getting these bachelor's programs. – *administrator*

- You've got to make hard decisions about where you're going to put your resources. What's going to happen to our mission for lower level students and our mission of accepting students who we know are going to need some developmental help to succeed in college? So, on the one level, it didn't change our mission, but, in terms of resources, that question is being asked all the time. – *administrator*

- We're expanding our mission, but not expanding what resources are available. Community college faculty and administrators are really resourceful sorts of people. We have to be. – *faculty*

Interview participants indicated that adding bachelor's degrees was a significant investment in people and resources. These changes resulted in an institutional culture that was evolving to meet new realities, but the institution was not sure of its future path or what the destination was. Three interview participants specifically spoke to the difficulty of defining who they were. "We struggle with our core mission. Who do we

want to be when we grow up?" commented one campus president. Another

administrator spoke of the difficulty in defining the college as it transitioned from its

past. "When you go through this process, you have a little bit of an identity crisis. We

still say, and we are, a community college – with the capability of offering limited

bachelor's degrees." A faculty member at one interview site saw the challenges as

internal to the college. "We have a lot of growing to do internally. I think, more than

anything, that's the biggest challenge from my perspective."

Table 9

Question 11

#	Answer	Response	%
1	No	7	25
2	Yes (if Yes) Indicate the approximate number of bachelor's degrees available	21	75
	Total	28	100

The questionnaire provided an assessment of the growth of bachelor's degree

programs at institutions across the country associated with the Community College

Baccalaureate Association. Participants from the site interviews indicated that adding

bachelor's degrees had put strain on their systems and in many cases were pushing

traditional missions aside. Results from the questionnaire indicated that 75% of

respondents stated that bachelor's degrees continue to grow (N = 21). Twenty-five

percent (N = 7) of the respondents indicated no more growth. Of those that indicated

continued growth, the average number of bachelor's degrees available at these institutions was nine.

Research Question #4: How do college employees and the public view institutional changes resulting from the CCB? Interview participants described changes that had occurred at their institutions as well as how implementation of the community college baccalaureate affected the culture of the institution. The ten respondents regarded changes in the faculty as significant. Some changes stemmed from new opportunities afforded faculty due to the migration to bachelor's degrees. Others were a direct result of changes in personnel that occurred to meet higher accreditation standards. The hiring of Ph.D. qualified faculty became the norm at the three institutions. With this change came individuals with different expectations and interests than institutions had previously experienced.

- The more Ph.D.'s we've gotten the more they expect the focus of resources, time, and energy to be on the four-year degrees and moving people into those. – *staff*

- A lot of our Ph.D. faculty have professional interests. Their professional expectation is that they will be going to a conference or giving a paper or writing a review or doing something. So that has been a really interesting transition. – *staff*

- You need Ph.D.'s for the bachelor's programs. So we have young, new faculty coming in who are interested in research. It is completely, culturally different. – *administrator*

- We are shifting. The culture is shifting more to the academy and academics are becoming more significant. Even in the tenure process, scholarship and research are becoming more significant. Not more significant than teaching, but it is more significant. – *faculty*

- I think the biggest change is that now it's our faculty creating what they think. So I think that's a huge change from an administration who wanted this to a faculty who wanted it. – *administrator*

Although incoming faculty influenced how the college prioritized its functions, other college employees had reservations. Embarking on bachelor's degrees created tension and concern for some employees. As one administrator declared, "I wouldn't say long-term employees actually fought it or resisted becoming a four-year institution, but they were fearful of losing the sense of community and even family that they felt the community college had." Faculty members who did not meet the new credentialing requirements were thought to be slightly fearful of the implications four-year degrees could have on their employment status. "Our hiring practices have changed. We've hired more Ph.D.'s than before, and I think the faculty that have been around for a while felt uneasy about that. They wonder what's going to happen to their course load," an administrator commented.

Interview participants believed faculty and staff generally embraced the idea of an enhanced mission that included bachelor's degrees. A staff member said, "Faculty have for the most part been supportive. I think they see it as an opportunity to offer students more." A faculty member at the largest institution researched said, "I think there's pride in the fact that we can do this. And we have done it, and it's this new availability to our community."

> It's very exciting. That kind of thing happens to faculty when you give them that opportunity to expand their horizons and develop those junior and senior years…That's probably some of the biggest cultural change I've seen with some of the faculty. – *campus president*

Pragmatic changes resulting from new offerings affected the climate of college campuses. For instance, one administrator commented about the changing culture of her campus.

> I knew I was going to have bachelor's students, but I also had GED on my campus. That's not going to work. I can't have a 15-year-old dropout next to a baccalaureate student. So I physically moved my GED to our sister campus. I started creating a different culture.

Another administrator expressed policy differences and the resulting change. "We went from being open door to having admission criteria. So that really created a totally different program for admitting students." Not only did policy change affect the culture of the campus, but the physical presence and interaction with four-year students brought change across the college. As a faculty member noted,

> The upper division students talk to the lower division students and tell them it's tough. Whereas before, we didn't have that culture. The upper division students were away. They weren't right there talking with other students. So I think that's given some positive reinforcement for performance and expectations.

A staff membered echoed the same thought as she said, "It's elevated the quality of lower division courses." This same individual noted how, because of the bachelor's degrees, a new general education requirement had grown out of several years of experience with students who have no confidence about doing research. She described it as "an interesting concrete change that's occurred largely because we now have bachelor's degree programs."

Along with the bachelor's degrees came a change in student populations. One site noted a bachelor's degree program designed primarily for working adults had far exceeded expectations and brought hundreds of new, non-traditional students onto their campuses. Another site was able to attract a more traditional college aged student as a result of offering bachelor's degrees. An administrator at this institution noted the change by saying "I think the biggest thing has been our student population has

significantly changed. Our average age just four or five years ago was 32 years old. It is

now 24."

Although interview participants expressed pride in their college's efforts and

accomplishments, seven of ten related the struggles and toll it has taken on the people and

programs during the process. The traditional culture of the community college had

succumbed to greater demands accompanying bachelor's degrees. As one administrator

stated about a moratorium of adding more bachelor's degrees, we need "to let ourselves

heal." A staff member commented, "I miss our community college days when it was just

– mellow." Another administrator commented, "It's not as laid back and in my opinion,

not as much fun."

Half of interview participants expressed the struggles their institutions have

encountered as bachelor's degrees have placed more demands on them while revenue has

not kept pace.

- Everybody's expected to do more with less. Just do more as part of duties assigned. – *administrator*

- The baccalaureate programs have put an extra load on everybody without extra pay. So we've been able to it, and it's been fueled more on the energy and enthusiasm of the faculty and the leaders than any monetary payback or investment to those people. – *faculty.*

- We asked a lot of people to absorb it. They've had to absorb the additional work – the registrar's office, financial aid, our front desk personnel, advising, counseling. – *administrator*

- There's an increased burden on everybody to carry and we've done it largely with our two-year resources. – *administrator*

- We're really lean. We haven't seen the ability to add resources so we're really constricted, but we're all working 150%. – *administrator*

- I think there's a lot of pride in the fact that we've been able to do this, despite the fact that we don't get paid any more for it… But I think there's pride in the fact that we can do it, and we have done it, and it's this new availability to our students and our community. – *faculty*

Two interview participants at separate locations brought to light a desire by leaders to pursue bachelor's degrees for reasons other than access and opportunity. An administrator at one of these institutions stated, "I see the biggest problem is administrators aspiring to leave a legacy of some sort of becoming a university." Another administrator expressed his thoughts on the topic of leaders and their agendas.

I'm an access guy. I'm very proud of our focus on the first two years and the pre-year now and the opportunity we provide. I'm very much about meeting the needs of our constituents and being sure we're the best we can be for the people that we serve. I've said all that to say I'm not enamored with creating bachelor's degrees just for the sake of doing that. Some community colleges may see that as prestigious. Some community college presidents my see that as prestigious.

Interview participants described a variety of public views concerning changes resulting from the CCB. "The student population changed because the students view us differently. There is a pride in going to a four-year school," commented an administrator. "The name change was a big deal. Students loved it and felt really proud of it, I think," responded one faculty member. Positive student reactions to the availability of bachelor's degrees and changes of the institution were present in all interviews. "So many of our students were ready and wanting us to do this and jumped on the band wagon. They're excited about this opportunity," stated an administrator. College employees also spoke of changes they recognized in students which did not exist prior to offering bachelor's degrees. A staff member stated, "I think people who never would have thought they could get a four-year degree now believe they can. I mean, it's really quite amazing."

Interview participants reported that even representatives from four-year schools supported the new mission of the community college under many circumstances. "I think that the faculty that currently exist actually have good relationships with the four-year schools," stated a staff member. Not all four-year personnel opposed the community college transition to baccalaureate offerings. Some saw it as good for the state economy and a potential pipeline into their graduate programs. A science faculty member reported that "they had the chair of microbiology from the university come visit us and they were absolutely overwhelmed with the quality of our facility." Interview participants indicated that the perception about what community colleges do and are capable of is changing.

Through the questionnaire, the researcher asked participants to provide their perceptions concerning cultural changes at their institutions as a result of providing bachelor's degrees. Of the 29 respondents, 17 (58%) indicted the culture had changed as a result of the transition. Seven of 29 (24%) indicated the culture had not changed while five of 29 (17%) neither agreed nor disagreed (see Table 13).

Research Question #5: What services are crucial to CCB programming?
Nine out of ten interview participants provided input on the services that were important when adding bachelor's degrees to the college mission. Respondents mentioned a handful of student affairs functions indicating a need for additional help and training in: financial aid, admissions, advising, career placement, marketing, recruitment, and transcript evaluation. "We moved a part-time person to full-time in our registrar's office doing transcript evaluation," said one administrator. She went on to say, "We added a career services person who is college-wide, specifically for the bachelor's degrees.

Table 13

Question 2

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	5	17
2	Agree	12	41
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	5	17
4	Disagree	7	24
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	29	100

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.48
Variance	1.12
Standard Deviation	1.06
Total Responses	29

Career services was a big one." A faculty member added, "It's been a big shift for

advising. The way we go about admitting student to these programs and applying to the

programs and progressing through programs is completely new." One respondent noted

his institution had 16 service functions under their student services umbrella that had to

be evaluated and changed to accommodate bachelor's students. "That's my big piece of

advice," stated a campus president, "make sure you've got your support game together."

Although interview participants expressed the importance associated with additional

support services for baccalaureate programming, few felt the institutional resources were

adequate to provide these services at satisfactory levels. The financial constraints of

providing support services to budding baccalaureate programs was described by several

respondents.

- Not enough support services accompanied the offering of our bachelor's degrees. We had good intentions, but problems with our budget. There hasn't been money to do some of the things we thought we were going to do. – *campus president*

- We wanted to bring in all these students, but we didn't have all of the services for the students. We didn't have all the money to provide all of the services until we brought in all the students. – *staff*

- At the same time we were deploying new degrees we were also going into retrenchment. We haven't seen the ability to add resources. – *administrator*

- Our resource situation is dismal, as it is most places right now. Ours is especially dismal. – *staff*

- There are challenges with resources in particular. I think that's the hardest part. It's people. That's actually where we've got to infuse some resources is people. – *administrator*

- We've asked people to absorb the additional work. We've already brought it to the attention of leadership that how much more can we add without thinking about adding those other resources.

- We were just so caught off guard because we tried to use our regular resources to support all of this. – *campus president*

Seven interview participants stressed the importance of library resources to the

implementation of baccalaureate programming. Baccalaureate programs have more

demanding research components than two-year degrees necessitating a significant

investment. Accrediting agencies have strict requirements that dictate the capacity and

extensiveness of library resources that must be available to students. "Don't forget your

library resources," commented one administrator. "That is something we were told by

the other colleges we visited prior to implementing bachelor's degrees. The accrediting

agency looks closely at that." Another administrator stated, "We obviously had to

enhance our support and library resources to show we could support 300 and 400-level

courses." Most interview participants did not expand on the topic of library resources or

additional data bases required. However, the topic was frequently identified as a support

service essential to an enhanced mission that included bachelor's degrees.

Another area interview participants regarded as essential to bachelor's degrees

was adequate upgrades and adjustments to the institution's infrastructure. Three

respondents stressed the importance of building the infrastructure necessary to admit,

register, and graduate four-year students. As one administrator stated,

> There were 50 to 60 action items to be addressed in order to create the
> infrastructure for just being able to admit a bachelor's seeking student. There
> were multiple steps to be developed and changes needed within our student
> enterprise system. You don't have anywhere to locate information for bachelor's
> degree students. You've got to create that in your system.

Another administrator stated that the college "was so intent on getting the

first baccalaureate launched that the policies, the framework, the procedures were

not in place." A third commented about the lack of support services

accompanying their institution's decision to offer bachelor's degrees. "That was a

big mistake. There was no infrastructure change."

The researcher asked questionnaire respondents to rank additional services

required of adding bachelor's degrees. Along with the opportunity to add additional

services they deemed important, the following choices were provided:

1. new faculty hiring requirements

2. library holdings

3. additional financial resources

4. advising and support staff

5. facility needs.

Of the questionnaire respondents (N = 27), 13 ranked additional financial resources as the most important service required of transitioning to bachelor's degrees. Ten of the remaining 14 ranked new faculty hiring requirements as the most important consideration. Additional advising and support staff was ranked as the third most important item overall. Library holdings ranked fourth with facility needs following. Twelve respondents indicated additional needs in the "Other" categories. Additional services listed by interview participants in these categories were:

- Need for additional faculty

- Finding faculty/HR recruitment

- Revisions to IT Systems

- Marketing

- Admissions and records support

- New administrative hiring requirements

- New curricula development

- Hiring a program manager

- Curriculum revisions

- Funds for faculty to earn higher degrees

- New organizational structure

- New branding and recruitment strategies

In addition to the question asking respondents to rank essential services, the questionnaire also provided respondents the opportunity to respond with open-ended statements in Question #15. It asked respondents to describe the most important components of transitioning to bachelor's degrees. Respondents provided a variety of suggestions they deemed critical. The importance of planning was listed in nine instances; more than any other category. Eight respondents indicated the importance of acquiring qualified faculty and getting faculty in general to buy-in to the baccalaureate initiative of the college.

Adequate financial resources and policy changes were each cited by five respondents as essential components of baccalaureate offerings. Other responses included community buy-in, accreditation, state approval, teamwork, open communication, support services, and college leadership.

Research Question # 6: What do respondents believe are important considerations when exploring the possibility of offering the CCB? Interview participants were asked to provide advice to other institutions that may be considering adding bachelor's degrees. This generated a variety of responses that primarily fell under the general requisite of thorough research and planning. They included:

1. Planning and Research – slow, methodical

2. Needs Assessment

3. Costs

4. Faculty

5. Educational Partners

6. Advice

Planning and research. Seven of ten interviewees emphasized the need to move

slowly through the process to ensure the quality of baccalaureate programs and that

adequate support mechanisms are in place. Individuals from the three interview sites

indicated their time-to-implementation of bachelor's degree was less than ideal under

heavy institutional pressure to move forward. Below are the perceptions of interviewees

concerning this concept.

- Plan ahead. We never want to go that fast again. It was craziness. We had minimal time to do a great job on marketing. We did not provide enough lead time. Get the faculty resources in line and then the other resources that are needed. So that's probably the biggest lesson that we had to learn, but we were on a fast track. – *administrator*

- I would recommend a two-year process if you want to deliver a quality product – to think through some of the things we didn't. – *administrator*

- It's so much better when it's slower. It's thought through. Everybody thought it was too much too fast. – *administrator*

- I would say have a recruiting plan for your bachelor's degree at least a year before you actually introduce the degree. – *staff*

- It was essentially like a freight train going a whole lot faster than it might in other situations with a program. You don't want to go as fast as we did. – *administrator*

- We made policies as we went along and we're still wrestling with some of that fallout. We weren't ready. We moved too fast. - *administrator*

The speed at which institutions implemented bachelor's degrees at the three

research sites was similar. In conjunction with the time pressures expressed by interview

participants to develop and implement new degrees, the importance of proper research

and planning was common to every interview. As one administrator of student affairs

commented,

> Literally you've got to have a template and a systematic process to take everything you currently do and if you're going to add bachelor's degree seeking students to that mix, how will that change the policy, that program, that service, that function?

A staff member at another institution described a process that was much less

dynamic in terms of policy implementation and the process used to accommodate a

changing mission.

> We are in the process of revising policies, but you want to know what we are doing? We are reading the policy manual for the university and adopting them except where it is very clear we do things differently. Going to a four-year institution did not generate that internal soul searching or policy review that you might expect.

Two others noted the importance of research prior to embarking on the

baccalaureate journey and idea of understanding the best practices associated with it.

- We took a lot of advice from other schools around the country. We did a lot of research. But not just curriculum, the process. We really asked a lot of questions. So I would say don't do it in isolation thinking you know all of the answers. Even still, we're experiencing some of the same problems that were mentioned to us. – *administrator*

- I strongly believe in the use of best practices. I think a lot of what we did was based on the best practices of other institutions and I think that saved us a lot of growing pains in that quick pace of growth. We looked for schools that were similar to us and depended on them. Let's call them up and contact them and see if we can build off of what they've already worked the kinks out of. - *staff*

The process of implementing bachelor's degrees varied by institution. An

administrator gave her advice about how to tackle the challenge as an institution. "Put

together a timeline, a recommendation about when things need to be done. What's our

goal and how are we going to get there? With that timeline chart you really try to stay

organized and bring other people in." Figure 2 shows the process used by one of the

institutions where interviews were acquired as a way to organize the people, services, and

timelines associated with implementing any new degree, but felt it was especially
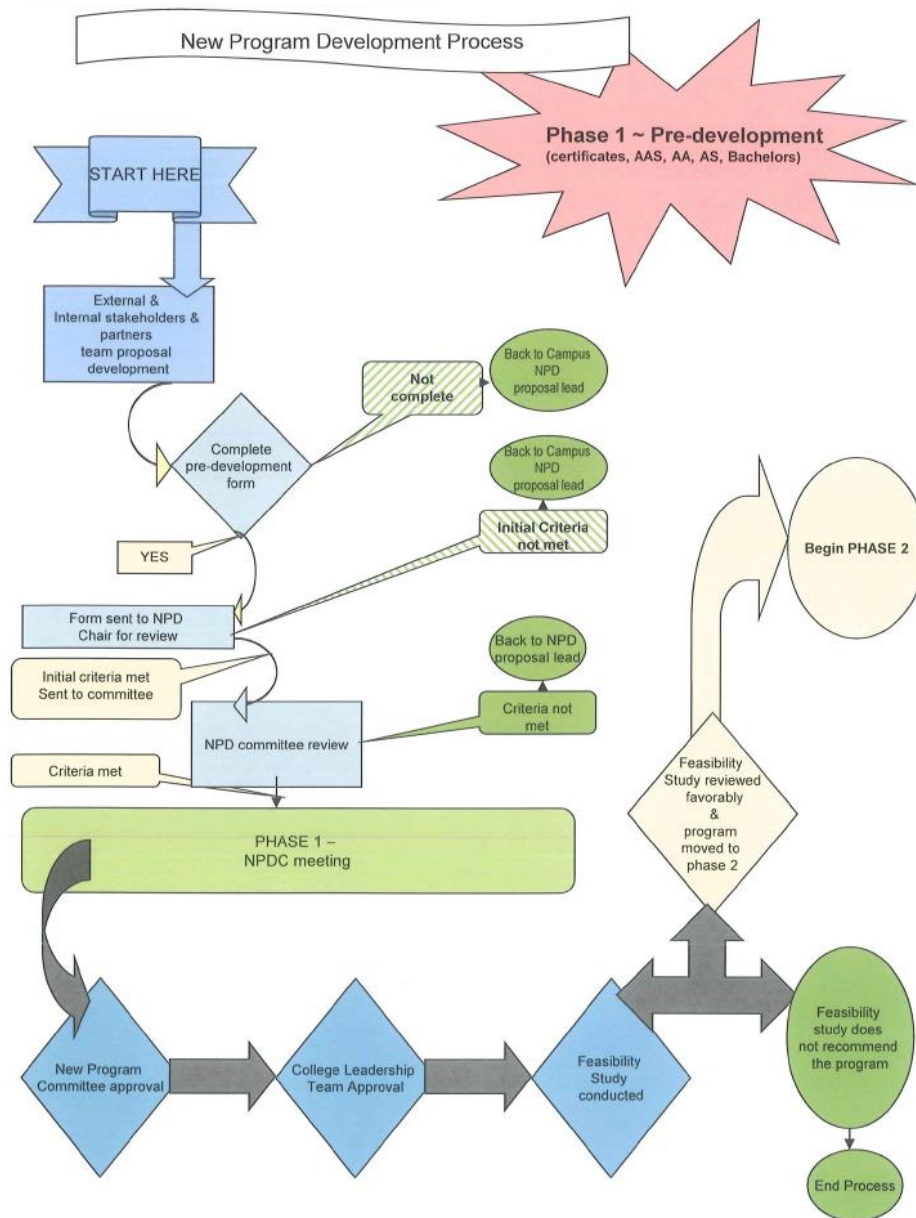
important to the bachelor's degree.

Figure 2. New program development process.

This figure identified each step that needed to be taken, who had responsibility for that process, and what other functions are dependent upon execution of any given task.

Needs assessment. One of the primary components of the process of adding bachelor's degrees to a community college's mission is the justification of need. Six of the interview participants noted the importance of the needs assessment. Four of their statements are provided below:

- I would hire an outside firm to come in and do a comprehensive, stratified needs assessment on the top ten occupations of where you think you're going. – *campus president*

- Figure out where the demand is, what the students really need, what are your resources, what are you strong in, and go from there. There's a lot to be said for building from your strengths. Be realistic and then go for it, with some good planning. – *administrator*

- Stick to the workforce side of things so you can have your justification.

- We looked at all the data with regard to the job outlook. That's how we developed the first two based on that and community surveys and then based on a good fit. – *administrator*

- When building your bachelor's degree programs, you've got to have a good rationale of why you should, and that's because the labor market will bear it. - *staff*

With the needs assessment being such an important part of the process of implementing bachelor's degrees, interview participants provided advice about the importance of acquiring an objective measure of need and guidance from a professional with experience implementing bachelor's degrees.

- Bring in a consultant to do the needs assessment. It gets very hard for local people to be objective about needs assessment. Clearly with a couple of our programs, the input was skewed and it made it seem like there was a market or a need when in reality it wasn't deep or broad enough to sustain. – *staff*

- The most important thing is to bring somebody into the state as a consultant for a fair amount of time that understands it. Get somebody that's been there, done it, and knows the policies that have to be changed. – *administrator*

- The needs assessment that every public institution is going to have to do really needs to be done by some outside folks. Not exclusively, but partially. – *staff*

- For me it would have been really helpful to bring in a consultant that can help you. – *administrator*

The needs assessment and a consultant's expertise help institutions make sound decisions about planning for bachelor's degrees. Interview participants expressed the importance of thorough research and well-laid plans as their most important piece of advice. All interviewees identified good planning as the key element in the transitional process, although some acknowledged this in retrospect to an experience that proceeded in haste. The planning piece encompasses many of the essential components and important considerations of implementing bachelor's degrees thus far addressed in the findings. They include assessing and providing the appropriate level of support services, infrastructure needs, best practices, a realistic timeline, and a pragmatic process designed to steer the institution toward their goal. Additionally, resources were identified as a piece of the puzzle that can influence an institution's ability to accomplish all aspects of a transition to bachelor's degrees. "As you go through and try to implement a baccalaureate degree you need to recognize there are going to be costs associated with that," noted one faculty member.

Costs. Understanding the costs to implement and sustain bachelor's degrees in the long-term was fundamental to the process. "We are constantly meeting about what the impact of adding more bachelor's degrees will have on our balance in the future," stated an administrator. Another administrator commented, "It takes so much more in

terms of resources to have a bachelor's program than it does an associate's program and I don't think we thought through that enough." On a positive note, the ability to offer bachelor's degrees as an extension of an existing associate's degree was identified as one of the ways to accomplish a similar result with less of a drain on other resources. "The financial question is greatly assisted by building on top of things you're already doing well," stated a campus president.

One of the biggest costs associated with implementing bachelor's degrees was identified as the accreditation process. This process inherently comes with large additional expenses. Even though the institution may be accredited from HLC or SACS, for instance, professional programs such as engineering, business, education, and nursing have their own accrediting bodies. Acquiring this accreditation is necessary for colleges so that students graduating with a bachelor's degree can go on to complete a master's degree. Interviewees indicated the requirements set forth by accrediting bodies take considerable time for an institution to navigate and are costly to achieve.

- The issue is around the accredited ones. They're getting accredited; it's just that you have to put all the resources there. You have to do it and it takes time. It will happen and our students will be able to go to grad school. But that was such an eye-opener for me. – *administrator*

- I don't think we thought that through very well. It becomes very critical now, even though they're not necessarily in my college, that the colleges are supported. So it takes away from my college to support those bachelor's programs. We don't have the resources to get them so we have to take away from other resources to do that. – *administrator*

- We didn't realize necessarily how quickly we were going to want to begin getting professional accreditation for our professional baccalaureate degrees and most of them are. It's expensive to go for accreditation. We're scrambling to find money to fund the accreditation process. – *staff*

Faculty. One of the most oft cited elements in terms of resources and accreditation stemmed from requirements of Ph.D. qualified faculty placed on institutions. A minimum of 25% of faculty teaching upper division courses must have a terminal degree in the field of study. "I'd advise people to go through every single one of their faculty credentials and double check to see if people have updated resumes. Credentialing was huge," stated an administrator. However, the literature supports that most institutions had to hire at least some of the faculty they needed to offer bachelor's degrees. This not only changed the makeup and culture of the institution, but added financial burdens that had not existed prior to implementing bachelor's degrees. Managing to get the appropriate faculty hired was noted as a challenge for institutions. "Get the faculty resources in line and then the other resources that are needed. That's probably the biggest lesson that we had to learn," stated one administrator. All interview participants indicated that faculty played an integral part in any transition to bachelor's degrees. Three of those interviewed referred to the additional expenses and challenges of hiring qualified faculty and additional positions while others mentioned different ways in which faculty influenced the process.

Based on their research of other college's experiences, two of the interview participants noted that faculty can be sensitive to divisions that may occur between upper and lower level faculty. A seasoned administrator stated,

> We tried not to create that artificial divide between faculty. Right now we have a really nice mix, and I'm not sensing any great divide amongst our faculty, which was one of the things they said to be careful of when we did our research.

A faculty member indicated concerns of many of her co-workers at the process of implementing bachelor's degrees began to take shape.

> I think making it transparent to the faculty is really important as far as how the baccalaureate process is going to work. There were concerns where people wondered if they were going to lose their job because they didn't have doctorate degrees.

However, opinions on distinguishing among groups of faculty varied. A campus president noted the difficulties it created for hiring qualified faculty. "To my chagrin, we didn't describe baccalaureate faculty as different from other faculty. I think we need more money to attract these people. Paying them on our paltry faculty pay scale is difficult." An administrator noted how important it is to consider how faculty might feel about the process. "They need to be reassured nobody is going to lose their job. We didn't do that. I don't know why we didn't just come out and tell people that wasn't going to happen. We thought it real loudly, but they didn't hear it." Interview participants placed a significant emphasis on faculty when transitioning to bachelor's degrees. As one administrator stated, "So if there's a community college where faculty members are really pushing for it, that would be a big plus."

Educational partners. Any plan to transition to baccalaureate programming needs to include an institution's partners, advised interview participants, including state legislators. "We had to be really thoughtful and mindful that we were going to offer degrees that would not directly compete with another four-year college," remarked a staff member. Not only was it noted to avoid competition, but to keep one's partners in the loop concerning what the college was currently working on and its future plans.

- So we have a history of talking to our partners, sharing with them what ideas we have coming down the road. We've even backed off on one or two where they felt maybe that was too much overlap. – *campus president*

- You really don't want to set up competition with the 500 lb. gorilla. Find those markets where the universities aren't going to care and go for those markets. I think then you can have a happy medium. – *campus president*

- One of the first things I would do is establish a really strong relationship with your regional educational partners. – *administrator*

- You're not in it alone. You've got to take your partners with you. – *administrator*

- Our president met relentlessly with the other presidents just to make sure. They always knew what we were doing. – *administrator*

- It doesn't matter how many times you tell people, you've got to tell them again. So keep it all just really out in the open. – *administrator*

- I think your community relations are really important. Your communication with faculty and the students and surrounding universities; all that is really important. – *faculty*

- We need to build some articulation agreements with other four-year schools with master's programs. We're just starting to have those conversations. – *administrator*

Advice. Community colleges courting the idea of implementing bachelor's degrees were urged to proceed cautiously by interview participants. The essential components presented thus far are a step in that direction, but additional advice was directed toward the breadth and scope of potential bachelor degrees. One staff member commented, "Don't overshoot. Don't do too many. I know we did too many when we did that group of five or six." An administrator commented in regard to degrees in education or nursing, " No. You don't want to start with those. Start with something small, something narrow." She went on to add, "We chose a program which we knew nobody would have so they would never counter

us and try to stop our first one. We needed to have success." Along this same line

of reasoning an administrator spoke of adopting a different mindset than the "do-it-

all" approach under which many community colleges operate.

> It's a good idea to realize from the start that you can't do everything, and you
> can't create a degree for every student. It's impossible when you're first starting
> out. You're not going to have the resources. So I say, "stay focused. Figure out
> where the demand is, what the students really want, what your resources are, what
> you are strong at, and go from there."

The last bit of advice provided through the interview process came from an

individual with years of experience both as a faculty member and now as an

administrator. This individual was excited about the progress the institution had made

but advised others interested in doing so to pursue the baccalaureate with an altruistic

approach.

> Just be really careful in terms of access. If they can have access in any other way,
> keep the community college mission because I am desperately keen on the
> community college mission of educating everybody and nobody else does it as
> well.

The questionnaire asked respondents to provide advice for others interested in

implementing bachelor's degrees in Question #14, an open-ended question. Many of the

same suggestions expressed by interview participants surfaced in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire respondents (N = 25) provide 46 suggestions in regard to this question (see

Table 14).

The "Other" category included comments that provided unique advice as well as

comments that were off topic. Questionnaire respondents provided advice that did not

surface through the interviews. One suggestion was to send a lot of people to the

Table 14

Question 14

Advice to Implementing the CCB	Times Cited
Community Needs Assessment	7
Adequate Time to Implement	3
Faculty	6
Role and Mission	6
Planning	6
Communication	2
Accreditation	4
Consultant	2
Teamwork	2
Other	8
Total	46

Community College Baccalaureate Association annual convention to help them

understand the process, the history, and the lessons of institutional transformation.

Another unique bit of advice suggested starting to build your alumni association from day

one.

Although one interview participant spoke of changes to general education

requirements resulting from implementing bachelor's degree, this was the only instance

with the exception of one of the questionnaire respondents. The suggestion to "review

and revise general education requirements" was offered as important during the planning

stages.

Themes Generated from the Data.

Each interview provided the researcher the opportunity to gather personal insight from an individual with extensive knowledge about implementing the community college baccalaureate and the best practices associated with that transition. The qualitative data along with the open-ended responses on the questionnaire allowed the researcher to both deeply examine instances of the research topics and assess the same concepts on a more broad scale. Through examining the data and answering the research questions several themes emerged. They are:

1. Research and Planning

2. Perceptions about Roles and Capabilities

3. Indirect Results of Offering Bachelor's Degrees

The overarching theme is the importance of research and planning necessary to provide quality baccalaureate programs and do so in a way that supports and sustains these programs. The major theme of Research and Planning consisted of a number of key components:

1. Needs Assessment – gauge of need and feasibility of bachelor's degrees

2. Timeline – adequate time to prepare for implementing bachelor's degrees

3. Funds – assessing current and future needs to offer quality programs

4. Faculty – hiring Ph.D. qualified faculty; curriculum

5. Role and Mission – defining the institution's core functions now and in the future

6. Support Services/Infrastructure – recognizing and providing additional services needed

7. Accreditation – meeting requirement set forth by accrediting agencies

8. Partnerships – transparent relationships both internal to the college and with external stakeholders

9. Leadership/Process – leading, establishing, and organization of the process

The components listed here are pieces of a larger puzzle that interconnect in many ways and are part of the research and planning process that is necessary for institutions enhancing their mission through the establishment and implementation of bachelor's degrees. The implications and meanings of these three themes – Research and Planning, Perceptions about Roles and Capabilities, and Indirect Results of Offering Bachelor's Degrees – will be addressed in Chapter V.

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the objectives and research questions of the study. The researcher used qualitative data from ten interviews at three institutions in different states to address each research question. Results from a nationwide questionnaire provided to institutions that utilize the services of the Community College Baccalaureate Association were then used to augment the findings of interview participants as they pertained to each research question.

In general, support for the community college baccalaureate was reported by interviewees and questionnaire respondents as positive from communities, businesses, and from those internal to the college. It was seen as an opportunity to provide a needed

service that previously had not existed. Resistance typically came from other educational entities which regarded the CCB as unnecessary or as a potential threat. Some internal resistance was also reported from those who viewed baccalaureate offerings as straying from the current mission and culture of community colleges. In general, the resistance was less than anticipated.

Community colleges were found to offer bachelor's degrees primarily for four reasons:

1.   Fill an unmet niche market

2. Address shortages in key markets

3. Provide opportunities for place-bound students

4. Address an increasing demand for higher education that traditional four-year colleges and universities could not meet

College employees expressed a positive perception of transitioning to bachelor's degrees. However, many indicated additional stresses in both human and financial capital which resulted from the process. The core mission comes in to question as resources become scarce.

The data revealed a number of additional services needed to offer quality baccalaureate programs. However, the ability to offer support services was hampered by a lack of resources and an underestimation of the ability of the institution to address the additional strains of bachelor degree seeking students.

Advice generated through the questionnaire and by interview participants resulted in dozens of suggestions, but primarily reflected the importance of research and planning

the process of baccalaureate offerings. Understanding the need, resources, services, and process were identified as important elements.

Perceptions held by college employees, community members, students, legislators, and individuals from other educational institutions about community colleges affect support or opposition of a mission that includes bachelor's degrees.

Interview participants and questionnaire respondents identified institutional changes resulting from the implementation of baccalaureate degrees. Many of these were perceived to be unexpected, but important to understanding the best practices associated with transitioning to bachelor's degrees.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices of implementing and offering a baccalaureate degree at community colleges.

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the reader an understanding of the findings of this research. It identifies common elements concerning the research and planning of baccalaureate degrees and the challenges of overcoming the perceptions associated with community colleges. Additionally, a number of indirect outcomes of implementing bachelor's degrees are discussed as the chapter provides an awareness of both expected and unexpected changes.

The significance of the research is presented along with recommendations for future research on the topic of the best practices of implementing and offering baccalaureate degrees.

Research and Planning

The findings suggest the most important consideration for community colleges considering the addition of bachelor's degree is to have a clear understanding of the institutional upheaval and level of change that potentially lies before them. Thorough research is the first step in grasping the extent of challenges and changes institutions typically endure as they make the transition.

A prominent source for research and information is the Community College Baccalaureate Association which serves multiple roles. The CCBA gathers information

and data pertinent to an expanded mission of bachelor's degrees and encourages research and dialogue. Additionally, the organization encourages access to higher education through a variety of means and strives to break down barriers that prohibit attainment of bachelor's degrees.

The findings indicate a clear requisite of the planning process is the needs assessment. Accrediting agencies require the completion of a needs assessment; it serves as a guide to those interested in developing baccalaureate programming. As college personnel tend to devote focus and effort toward the transition to baccalaureate programming, there is the potential to misstep or make clouded judgments. The professional and personal desires of individuals to implement bachelor's degrees are subjective; however, the needs assessment is rooted in the region's demographics and employment needs. Additionally, research subjects stressed the importance of an experienced external consultant to help college personnel understand the process. The consultant can assist in identifying the services necessary and in decision-making without the influences that can affect those with a personal stake in the institution.

Community colleges are expected to be adaptive to the needs of stakeholders (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The transition to baccalaureate programming was found to be no exception. Interview participants in this study identified a common thread concerning the time-to-implementation for upcoming bachelor's degrees. Pressure to implement bachelor's degrees, often stemming from internal sources, drove the process at a pace that was far quicker than ideal. Those responding to the questionnaire also expressed concern over a rapid push to implement bachelor's degrees, pointing to a widespread issue that

deserves careful consideration. The results suggest a minimum time frame of two years to develop quality bachelor's degrees supported by adequate services.

Part of the planning process naturally includes a financial blueprint of the funds needed to implement and support bachelor's degrees initially and in future years. During challenging economic times, states may scale back on monetary support to education. Funding has been identified as a vital component in an institution's ability to acquire and maintain the additional demands of baccalaureate offerings. Bachelor's degrees come with a host of expenses including hiring of faculty with Ph.D.'s, additional support services, enhanced library service, lab upgrades, and accreditation requirements.

Accrediting agencies require at least 25% of faculty teaching upper level courses to hold a terminal degree. Community colleges traditionally required only master's level faculty. The new structure has resulted in stricter hiring requirements and in some cases, an exodus of faculty who did not hold the doctorate.

Interview participants from all three sites indicated college leaders did not anticipate the degree to which support services necessary for bachelor's degrees would place upon their institutions. Nearly every facet of student affairs was affected; beliefs about existing two-year resources being capable of absorbing new demands were not valid. Resources required to sufficiently offer bachelor's degrees include both financial sources and human capital. Admissions, recruiting, registration, career services, advising, and marketing require significant changes to accommodate bachelor's students. The infrastructure required of the student enterprise system needs considerable modification and enhancement to store and manage additional information pertaining to

third and fourth year programming. Policies need to be modified or developed to handle new situations that were previously not a part of the community college's business practices. Additional staff and the proper training are required in all sectors of support services. Unfortunately, even when these needs were recognized and planned for, interviewees indicated the resources to implement them often fell short. The responsibilities can typically fall on those already overburdened in a system expected to do much with little. McKinney and Morris (2010) identified both cost and policy change as two primary themes. Such challenges can place incredible strain on systems not accustomed to the requirements of four-year programming. The findings of this study were consistent with prior research and underscore the difficulties colleges can experience.

Other costs that can catch institutions by surprise are those of accrediting bodies for professional programs such nursing, education, and engineering. Although institutions may be able to offer bachelor's degrees in professional programs, they are doing students a disservice if they are not recognized by the appropriate accrediting body. Without this designation, students are unable to attend graduate school. The accreditation process can take years to acquire and requires the institution to spend a great deal of resources on faculty, facilities, and services. Institutions in this study were caught off guard. They did not realize what this process entailed and had not appropriately prepared for the costs associated with accreditation. Some programs are naturally more expensive to operate than others. Education and nursing were two that were noted as requiring

more funds than other bachelor programs due to the low student-to-teacher ratios required and extensive clinical and practicum settings.

This study identified similar elements important to implementing bachelor's degrees that prior research has found essential. Although nomenclature and grouping vary, Floyd & Walker (2009) identified important questions to address:

1) Mission

2) Political Support/Opposition

3) Curriculum

4) Resources

5) Faculty and Internal Stakeholders

6) Internal Infrastructure

7) Accreditation

McKinney and Morris (2010) found comparable essentials concerning organizational change accompanying the community college baccalaureate, although classified them more broadly. They include:

1) Justifying the Need

2) Acquiring Authorization

3) Leading the Process

4) Challenges of the CCB Process

5) Changes in Policy and Practice

Perceptions

Community colleges are young institutions in contrast to traditional four-year colleges and universities. Community colleges have existed since the early 20th century, however, their rapid evolution toward today's universal accessibility and comprehensive mission primarily emerged in the 1960's. True to form, they've adapted to meet changing workforce demands and have provided assistance to an increasingly underprepared student population. They have served as an opportunity for millions to continue their education, retrain, or transfer to other institutions. The very nature and role of community colleges demands that they meet an ever-changing educational and economic landscape. The open door policy is designed to provide access to higher education and self-improvement to any seeking it. The costs of community college tuition are kept artificially low in an effort to lessen the financial burden and keep higher education as accessible as possible.

Because community colleges take all students and address fundamental needs other institutions do not, they have long been relegated to a second class status. They have been viewed as a last resort rather than a first choice. However, that perception has shifted as people have come to understand the value of education community colleges provide. The recent recession coupled with the media's focus on student loan debt has boded well for community colleges in terms of perception. These same economic factors tend to stagnate or diminish revenue that is crucial to supporting new programs and providing the level of support newly implemented bachelor's degrees require.

Results suggest a surprising amount of support for community college baccalaureates. In general, stakeholders were excited about the possibility and perceived it as a way to address unmet employment needs, to provide opportunities for students that had not existed before, and to support local economies.

Opposition to bachelor's degrees conferred by community colleges seemed to be a factor of individual beliefs about the community college role and notions about the capabilities of these institutions. Criticisms external to the community colleges primarily came from traditional four-year colleges and universities and focused on what one interviewee referred to as "ignorance" about what community colleges do and the quality of their programming. The stigma of the community college has drastically diminished but tends to be perpetuated by those not associated with it. Bachelor degree programs implemented by community colleges are accredited by the exact same agencies that accredit corresponding university programs. They must have the same requirements and rigor as any other program. Faculty teaching 300 and 400 level courses must meet the credentialing requirements set forth by accrediting agencies. The results revealed a desire by community colleges to exceed the requirements put forth to them in terms of curriculum, minimum faculty credentials, and facilities when developing bachelor's degrees. College personnel at research sites noted that offerings are, at a minimum, equivalent to university offerings with some exceptions.

They are also:

1) Cheaper

2) Offered in a more intimate setting with lower student-to-teacher ratios.

3) Offered in different delivery modes

4) Offered at different times

5) Located in communities where students already live

6) Are less restrictive in terms of their availability and entrance requirements

7) Cater to specific markets that have gone unmet or are underserved

One can see why students find bachelor degree granting community colleges an attractive option. For the place-bound working adult or the traditional-age college student with limited resources, community college baccalaureates provide multiple and expanded opportunities.

Results revealed what some perceived as fear by individuals associated with four-year colleges and universities. From a student perspective, the community college has some attractive advantages over traditional baccalaureate granting institutions. Educational partners opposed to the enhancement of an extended community college mission may be unsure of the ramifications for neighboring institutions. Competition for students can pit educational entities against one another. Community colleges that were small or rural reported that their success in implementing bachelor's degrees was tied to the fact that universities did not see them as a threat.

Although community colleges are not right for every student, they compare well with other forms of higher education when comparisons of value are made. Criticisms of the community college baccalaureate were viewed by some as a defense mechanism that outwardly appeared to be based on concerns of quality, but contained an element of self-preservation, a resistance to change, and an ill-conceived sense of superiority. The role

and mission of community colleges continues to be redefined. States and their

educational partners must be willing to change with those needs.

The drive behind a transition to bachelor's degree is internally fueled as college

personnel recognize a need and thrive on providing opportunities for students. The

results revealed a segment of community college personnel unsupportive of

implementing bachelor's degrees that paralleled much of the reasoning stemming from

external sources. Three factors influenced those who were opposed to the enhanced

mission of bachelor's degrees.

1) Community colleges already have a variety of obligations and struggle to

   meet those under funding formulas that leave something to be desired. Many

   felt this was too big a task for their institutions to undertake when gaps due to

   financial shortfalls already exist.

2) The culture and atmosphere present on many community college campuses

   was potentially at risk. Interview participants described the traditional

   campus as a family environment with a caring attitude that made working

   there fulfilling and enjoyable. Many feared the loss of that setting if colleges

   transformed into something more like their university partners.

3) Community college faculty and staff were unsure of how change might affect

   them and their place within the new institution. Ross (2006) and Kielty

   (2010) identified college personnel, primarily faculty, as key proponents in

   any successful attempt to implement bachelor's degrees. They noted the

   importance of faculty in the decision making process and "buy in" of a

mission which included bachelor's degrees. Opportunities for professional development were also essential to the process.

Internal opposition paralleled much of the reasoning stemming from external sources. Some felt the institution was already stretched beyond its limits and there was no room within the organization to pursue bachelor's degrees. Others questioned the core mission of the community college and wondered how an enhanced mission might affect developmental education or workforce training and the status of resources currently used to support those functions. Fear also surfaced internally as employees weren't sure how their jobs may be affected or if their credentials were suitable to continued employment under stricter requirements. Colleges considering implementing bachelor's degrees need to be aware of these pitfalls capable of eroding the baccalaureate initiative from the inside before it makes it off the ground.

Indirect Results of Offering Bachelor's Degrees

The research and planning component has emerged from this study as one of the top priorities for community colleges considering an enhanced mission of bachelor's degree. Even though colleges planned for change, a number of indirect results occurred out of offering bachelor's degrees. As Hofland (2011) stated in her research, "Some of the impacts were planned, and some were unforeseen." (p. 175). This research revealed some results that were viewed as negative consequences, but the researcher discovered a greater number of positive factors that benefitted the college and perhaps were not part of the planning process.

Faculty. Accreditation requirements brought credentialing criteria that changed the atmosphere of the college as a greater number of Ph.D.'s filled faculty ranks. Although some were already present in the community college setting, institutions brought in several additional faculty members or had a significant turnover as bachelor's degrees were implemented. These individuals brought with them interests and expectations, such as research, that had not been part of the community college mission before. Faculty members given the opportunity to develop and teach an upper level curriculum were described as "coming alive." Additionally, the recruitment of new faculty brought diversity to the campus as they were recruited from around the country and beyond. One interview participant described this phenomenon as beneficial to the college and particularly to students. Since many faculty members teach both upper and lower division courses, it provided students exposure to more of the world than would have been possible without bachelor's degree existing on the campus.

College personnel discovered that, as their institutions acquired new Ph.D. faculty, it led to more possibilities for other types of offerings. For instance, hiring faculty to teach in engineering programs or nursing programs led to opportunities to offer bachelor's degrees in high demand areas such as secondary education in math and science.

Students. Students at institutions where bachelor's degrees had been implemented were described as having the advantage of mingling with upper division students and learning first-hand the challenges and expectations of upper level work. Before colleges offered baccalaureate degrees, upper level students were not present and

did not influence traditional two-year students in the same fashion. Course rigor and the

importance of grasping the core concepts of pre-requisite courses took on new meaning

for lower level students. The study revealed that a shift in curriculum had also occurred

as higher quality and a greater level of rigor were pushed down to lower level courses,

thus improving those courses. All students had access to upper division faculty with

extensive expertise. Students began to realize the importance of their first two-years of

college work as upper division courses did not always adhere to the open access policy.

The mindset changed as students interested in going on were heading to a more

competitive setting. Some colleges expect the completion rates of their two-year students

to rise because students saw the possibility of obtaining a bachelor's degree was within

their reach.

      Academic culture. Baccalaureate offerings can also have dramatic effects on

student populations. One college professional noted the dramatic drop in the average age

of their student population as a result.   Students were staying with the college longer and

transferring from other two-year schools to complete their bachelor's degrees. However,

the opposite was discovered as well. Particular bachelor's programs designed for the

working adult have been exceedingly successful at some institutions bringing hundreds of

additional students to campus. Some colleges have added sports which did not exist

before, bringing a new kind of student to campus and the potential for new opportunities,

heightened school spirit, and a cultural shift that may accompany the transition.

      Requirements of offering bachelor's degrees brought services to campus such as

dramatically increased library holdings and research assistance available to all students of

the college. Some colleges have implemented writing and research centers on campus necessary for upper division coursework and beneficial to all students and faculty. Career services was another area identified as one experiencing additional support as institutions moved into baccalaureate offerings. The research revealed that bachelor's degree seeking students expected more support from the institution, especially those that have prior experience from a four-year institution. Higher expectations of baccalaureate seeking students tended to catch institutions off guard as most thought of bachelor's degrees as a pathway for their current two-year students.

Policy. As institutions go through the planning process, countless policies have to be created or amended. Institutions with a strong governance structure can use this opportunity to reevaluate every policy and ensure sound practices are employed. This was viewed as a positive outcome of having added bachelor's degrees. Without the nudge to reevaluate the way things are done, policy can sometimes become antiquated and inefficient.

On the other hand, individuals from institutions that implemented community college baccalaureate programs reported doing so in a timeframe that felt as if the process was very rushed. Those institutions that did not take the time to thoroughly evaluate and consider needed policy change found themselves backtracking as the ramifications of shortsighted decision-making became evident. Poorly planned decisions left institutions struggling to define how to proceed at a time when they were also feeling unsure about their identity and direction.

Employment market. Opportunities for place-bound individuals were one way institutions justified their transition to baccalaureate offerings. These individuals are often working adults living in the local area or those with community or family ties who otherwise are unlikely to pursue further education outside of the region. As community colleges addressed the needs of these populations, the potential to flood the market arose. Place-bound students tended to remain so even after obtaining bachelor's degrees. As newly created bachelor's programs increase in popularity with place-bound students, the local market may become saturated, particularly when niche markets are the focus.

Accountability. All higher education institutions have experienced an increase in the level of accountability and measureable outcomes they are expected to produce. Community colleges are notorious for low levels of completion, but the criteria for measuring these rates is designed for four-year colleges and not the many missions of the community college. Community college students who transfer to four-year colleges early or leave college upon securing employment are measured as failures for the community college. Additionally, a much higher percentage of community college students are part-time and have no intention of completing the degree in the limits of the timeframe used to measure a successful "completer." With work, parental responsibilities, and a lack of resources, the likelihood of something tripping up community college students is greater than for other types of institutions.

One of the methods used by community colleges to show success of students as they move through programs is through documentation of awards achieved along the way. These may include certificates, diplomas, and degrees. They become important

benchmarks during the program review process and provide justification for continuation of programs and revenues associated with them. Institutions in this study had varying policies concerning entrance into bachelor's degree programs. Some allowed only those with associate's degrees to enter their bachelor's programs. Others gave students the option of declaring their goal of attaining a bachelor's degree at admission. This can cause a phenomenon where the institution is no longer issuing the certificates and associate's degrees it historically turned out. The program justification piece suffered and institutions have backtracked to develop policy that maintains this valuable tracking data and allows student to achieve stepping-stone awards on their paths to baccalaureate completion.

Classification of students. The classification of students as associate or bachelor's seeking has become difficult at institutions under a baccalaureate-granting transformation. Students nearing the completion of their two-year degree need to be able to be provisionally admitted to bachelor's programs. The lines become blurred concerning classification of students and have left financial aid offices struggling to work out the details. Institutions with both kinds of students felt they did not have a clear grasp on their student demographics because students could fall under more than one classification.

Educational relationships. College personnel spoke of the importance of their educational partners. At times, partners were opposing the efforts of community colleges to expand their mission, but this phenomenon was less than expected. Community college personnel did not expect their university partners to seek partnerships with them

as a pathway to graduate programs. However, some four-year colleges have realized the opportunity to bolster their graduate programs and have approached community colleges about pathways to master's degrees. This constitutes a new realm of opportunity and culture for community colleges as a result of offering bachelor's degrees.

Personal growth. The last novel occurrence expressed by college personnel concerned students and the personal growth many experienced because the college had elected to implement bachelor's degrees. College employees recognized a new awakening in students who now realized that a bachelor's degree was within reach. The opportunities afforded them through upper level offerings were described as a process that helped students find themselves. It helped them develop their passion, one they possibly had little knowledge of prior to the baccalaureate opportunity provided by the community college. Witnessing this was described as one of the most rewarding aspects of enhancing the community college mission.

Significance of Findings

The research provided an understanding of the challenges currently facing community colleges as they prepare for an extended mission of baccalaureate programming. Other researchers have examined similar aspects of the community college baccalaureate prior to this study but focused primarily on the Florida system or a particular segment of the community college baccalaureate such as funding, faculty, or organizational change. Although these are all important topics and provide a basis for any research on the CCB, some of the leading information about the phenomenon is dated and doesn't account for the latter half of the history of CCB offerings. Bachelor's

degrees offered by community colleges have been identified as one of the top trends in community colleges (Chen, 2008) and warrants multiple broad assessments. The inclusion of quantitative data from different states with varying characteristics bolsters the validity of the results as it is applicable to a greater number of institutions affected by state and local influences with both common and unique characteristics indicative of community colleges and the populations they serve.

The results provided specific criteria for implementing bachelor's degrees, particularly concerning research and planning of the process. They provided a template for institutions embarking on the baccalaureate journey and served an "awareness" role for manifestations resulting from the baccalaureate. The results also clarified the root causes of opposition faced by community colleges as they struggle to change the perception of their role in higher education and provides suggestions on how to combat both internal and external doubt about the capacity of community colleges.

The results are significant in that they courted a wide audience from across the United States. Although community colleges have similar missions regardless of location, the very essence of these institutions is to address local needs and challenges according to regional stakeholder demands. This research looked at individual case studies as well as captured overall perceptions through quantitative measurement. The results provided a deeper understanding of implementing and offering the community college baccalaureate and contributed to the topic literature.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study's results provided insight to the importance of research and planning for institutions considering extending the community college mission to include bachelor's degrees. There are a multitude of considerations to implement bachelor's degrees and even with careful planning institutions routinely fall into common predicaments.

The data gathering aspect of the questionnaire left room for improvement as the response rate did not provide adequate numbers to run a statistical analysis of the results. Multiple efforts to gather multi-state data could provide a more complete snapshot; this may be easier to achieve as more states consider the economic and social advantages of implementing baccalaureates at community colleges.

The most extensive information on the CCB is from Floyd (2005). This book provides a thorough understanding of the community college baccalaureate and issues surrounding it. More recent research has continued to examine the phenomenon, but typically offered a narrowly defined focus on a single aspect such as funding or faculty. However, this study garnered information from many regions of the country and serves to enlighten the reader of the ins and outs of implementing bachelor's degrees.

Several of those asked to provide their perceptions of the community college baccalaureate found they were unable to answer some of the researcher's questions due to the short time period their institution had been offering the baccalaureate. Employment information or graduate school status of those successfully completing newly implemented bachelor's degree programs was often unavailable to the researcher. The

programs had simply not been in place long enough to gather sufficient data or interpret trends associated with the programs. Future research could examine these programs after five or ten years of graduates and analyze the success of graduates and market bearing capacity. There would also be value in researching how programs have changed since their inception as colleges mature and become more adept at the processes involved in offering bachelor's degree.

Summary

The community college baccalaureate offers a glimpse of impending changes that challenge traditional higher education models. This transition challenges the traditional roles assigned to community colleges and is fueled by rapid change in the economic and social conditions that dictate available opportunities. The premise of the community college baccalaureate is access. It can fill niche markets or assist in meeting high demand employment fields. It can provide opportunities for place-bound students and meet educational demands in underserved areas. It provides access to bachelor's degrees for those with limited resources who would otherwise be prohibited from attaining additional education.

This study identified research and planning as the most important factors of implementing and offering bachelor's degrees. Nine essential elements were found:

1) Needs Assessment

2) Timeline

3) Funds

4) Faculty

5) Role and Mission

6) Support Services/Infrastructure

7) Accreditation

8) Partnerships

9) Leadership

The findings parallel those of prior studies, but the solicitation of both qualitative and quantitative data from several states lends credence to the results.

The research revealed the way one's perception of the community college affects the support or opposition to the expansion of the community college mission to include bachelor's degrees. Interviewees perceived opposition as coming primarily from universities' personnel with pre-conceived notions about what community colleges do and what they are capable of. Perceptions of the community college as a second-class institution reflect antiquated views and a misconception of the educational value these institutions provide. Internal opposition to the community college baccalaureate stemmed from concerns about the effects of adding bachelor's degree to the current mission or from one's own doubt about their roles within it.

The implementation of bachelor's degrees brought changes that were both expected and unexpected. The community college baccalaureate has the potential to change the culture of the institution through students, faculty, and focus. This change is both challenging and rewarding. The role of community colleges is to meet the educational needs of stakeholders and to do so in a manner that is adaptive, accessible, and affordable. The community college baccalaureate is viewed by many as the next step

in fulfilling its obligations to those it serves. Community colleges are ever-changing institutions and the community college baccalaureate may be the natural evolution of their role, mission, and responsibilities to the communities in which they reside.

References

Bemmel, E. P. (2008). *A cost-effectiveness analysis of two community college baccalaureate programs in Florida: An exploratory study*. (Doctoral dissertation). Florida Atlantic University. ProQuest No. AAT3338441.

Bottorff, E. A. (2011). *The community college baccalaureate: A study of capital costs in Florida*. (Doctoral dissertation). Florida Atlantic University. ProQuest No. AAT3480600.

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done?. *Qualitative Research*, *6*(1), 97-113. doi:10.1177/1468794106058877

Chen, G. (2008, February 12). Seven trends in community colleges. *Community College Review*.

Clark Plano, V. L. & Creswell, J. W. (2008). *The mixed methods reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cohen, A. M. & Brawer, F. B. (2008). *The American community college*. (5th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Community College Baccalaureate Association Website. (2012). Retrieved from www.accbd.org.

Creswell, J. W. (2002*). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative approaches to research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Internet, mail, and mixed mode surveys: The tailored design method*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Eaton, J. (2005). Why community colleges shouldn't offer baccalaureates. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 52,(10).

Evelyn, J. (2003). Making waves in Miami. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 49, (31).

Floyd, D. L. (2005). Community college baccalaureate in the U.S. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (2005). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends & policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Floyd, D. L. & Walker, K. P. (2009). The community college baccalaureate: Putting the pieces together. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 33, 90-124.

Fonte, R. (2011). The Community College Alternative. *Academic Questions*, *24*(4), 419-428.

Furlong, T. E., Jr. (2005). St. Petersburg College. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Gellar, H. (2001). A brief history of community colleges and a personal view of some issues. George Mason University. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED459881).

Gonzalez, J. (2011). Go to community college, earn a bachelor's degree: Florida likes that combination. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 57, (39).

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-methods evaluation designs. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11, 255-274.

Grothe, M. (2009*). The community college applied baccalaureate degree: Employers' and graduates' perspectives*. (Doctoral dissertation). Oregon State University. ProQuest No. AAT3393685.

Hofland, B. S. (2011). *A case study of the community college baccalaureate: What happened in ten years?* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Kielty, L. (2010). *Factors that influences faculty intentions to support the community college baccalaureate*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Florida. ProQuest: AAT 3427261.

Lorenzo, A. L. (2005). The university center. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Manias, N. (2007). *The baccalaureate community colleges in Florida: A policy evaluation*. (Doctoral Dissertation). University of South Florida, Tampa, Fl. ProQuest No. AAT3292527).

McKee, J. V. (2005). Westark's workforce baccalaureate. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

McKinney, L. & Morris, P. A. (2010). Examining an evolution: A case study of organizational change accompanying the community college baccalaureate. *Community College Review*. 37(30),187-208.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Miller, D. S., & Slocombe, T. E. (2012). Preparing student for the new reality. *College Student Journal*, *46*(1), 18-25.

Mills, K. (2003) Community college baccalaureates: Some critics decry the trend as "Mission Creep." National CrossTalk. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. 11 (1).

Pershin. G. (2006*). Adoption of policies that permit community colleges to grant bachelor degrees in Florida: Frame analysis*. (Doctoral dissertation). Florida State University. ProQuest No. AAT3252158.

Petry, D. K. (2006). *The transformation of five Florida community colleges: Converting to baccalaureate degree-producing programs*. (Doctoral dissertation). The University of West Florida. ProQuest No. AAT3203247.

President's Commission on Higher Education. *Higher Education for American Democracy: Vol. I, Establishing the Goals*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1947.

Remington, R. & Remington, N. (2005). The baccalaureate as an agent of change. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Romano, R. M., & Dellow, D. A. (2009). Technological change, globalization, and the community college. *New Directions For Community Colleges*, (146), 11-19.

Ross, D. G. (2006) *Two-Year colleges offering baccalaureate programming: Faculty development and support needs.* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Nebraska-Lincoln. ProQuest No. AAT3243744.

Schumacher, S. & McMillan, J. H. (1993). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction.* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Skolnik, M. L. (2005). The community college baccalaureate in Canada. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) pp. 443-466. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Teddlie C. & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavior sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Tillary, D., & Deegan, W. (1985). *The evolution of two year colleges through four generations*. In W. Deegan & D. Tillary (Eds.), Renewing the American community college: Priorities and strategies for effective leadership (pp. 3-33). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Townsend, B. (2005). A cautionary view. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Von Wagoner, R. J. (2004). Influencing the perception of organizational change in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28, 715-727.

Wattenberger, J. (2002). Colleges should stick to what they do best. *Community College Week*, 13, (18).

Walker, K. P. (2005). History, rationale, and community college baccalaureate association. In Floyd, D. L., Skolnik, M. L., & Walker, K. P. (Eds.). *The community college baccalaureate: Emerging trends and policy issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Yin, R. K. (2008). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

The Community College Baccalaureate: Implementation and Best Practices
Interview Protocol

Tell me about your role/involvement in your bachelor's degree programs.

How long have you been involved with the CCB?

Who do you work with most closely in your program-related duties?

What was the primary impetus for change in your state or at your institution when the baccalaureate was being considered?

Describe the parties that held an interest in offering the CCB.

Did you experience criticism? If so, how did you counter the critics?

Describe a time when your institution experienced roadblocks to making this transition.

Can you provide an example of unexpected hurdles or costs?

How has the mission of your institution changed?

Is the baccalaureate viewed as an extension of the community college mission in terms of access, affordability, and responsiveness to community needs?

How do your bachelor's degree programs fit in the overall makeup of the college?

Describe any cultural changes that have resulted from offering four-year degrees.

How have faculty viewed institutional changes resulting from the CCB?

What support services have accompanied the offering of the community college baccalaureate?

> How were these developed?

> Has the college as a whole benefitted from additional support services? Please explain.

Describe the matriculation opportunities of your four-year graduates.

> Have they experienced any difficulties in this area?

> What do you believe the future holds for your four-year graduates looking to enter graduate programs?

How have your four-year offerings evolved since their inception?

> Do you envision them growing in the future?

What trends or upcoming challenges do you see for the community college baccalaureate?

What advice would you give to other states or other two-year institutions who might be considering the baccalaureate?

Are there other ideas that you want to share that are relevant to this topic?

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Title of study: The Community College Baccalaureate: A Mixed Methods Study of Implementation and Best Practices

Introduction:

The following research study examines the best practices of implementing and offering bachelor's degree at community colleges. In order to understand essential services and institutional change accompanying the community college baccalaureate (CCB), employees and staff of CCB institutions are invited to participate in one-on-one interviews to discuss their experiences.

Background Information:

Nineteen states currently offer the CCB and others are considering the transition. Bachelor's degrees offered by community colleges are intended to fill an unmet need in higher education. The changing role of the community college is a controversial one. This research addresses the best practices of the expanded role community colleges are undergoing.

Purpose of this research study

The purpose of the study is to better understand the best practices associated with implementing and offering the community college baccalaureate. The research will focus on influences affecting the offering of the CCB, essential components of CCB programs, and institutional change resulting from the addition of bachelor's degrees. The overall goal of the study is to identify important aspects of transitioning to the CCB and provide a template for those considering implementation of the CCB.

Procedures

Participation in the study will require approximately 60 minutes of your time and will consist of a one-on-one interview addressing your experiences with the community college baccalaureate. Interviews will be audio taped with your permission. All responses will remain anonymous. Interviews will occur in an office setting at your place of business.

Risk and/or Discomforts

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Benefits:

This research helps identify important components and considerations of the CCB. The results of this study may influence and benefit education policymakers and students and could lead to an economic impact in regions where the CCB is adopted.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal

You, the college employee, are free to choose to participate in the study. You, the employee, may refuse to participate without any loss of benefit, which you are otherwise entitled to. You may also refuse to answer some or all of the questions if you don't feel comfortable with those questions.

Confidentiality
The information provided by you will remain confidential. Nobody except the principal investigator will have access to it. Your name and identity will also not be disclosed at any time. However, the data may be seen by Ethical review committee and may be published in journals or elsewhere without giving your name or disclosing your identity.

Available Sources of Information
If you have additional questions you may contact the Principal Investigator Stan Essink, Central Community College via email, sessink@cccneb.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you should contact the IRB Office at 402-472-6965 or irb@unl.edu.

Principal Investigator: Stan Essink

Advisor: Dr. Barbara LaCost, 402-472-0988

Institute: Department of Educational Administration, University of Nebraska — Lincoln.

AUTHORIZATION
I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws. Regardless of your decision to participate or not participate in this study, it will not affect your relationship with the investigators or the University of Nebraska —Lincoln.

Participant's Name (Printed or Typed):
Date:

Participant's Signature:
Date:

Principal Investigator's Signature:
Date

Appendix C

Questionnaire

Welcome! This survey is about transitioning to the bachelor's degree. Your responses are important to the role of the community college and to further research in higher education. Thank you for your participation.

0% [   ] 100%

>>

As your institution transitioned to offering/conferring the bachelor's degree, the traditional missions of your community college remain as top priorities.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

The college culture has changed at your institution as a result of providing bachelor's degrees.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

0%◼☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐100%

>>

A major impetus for establishing bachelor's degrees at your institution came from state influences.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

A major impetus for establishing bachelor's degrees at your institution came from local constituents.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

A major impetus for establishing bachelor's degrees at your institution came from internal college influences.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

0% ▮▮▮▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ 100%

>>

Did your college experience criticism in its efforts to offer the bachelor's degree?

- ○ The college experienced criticism.
- ○ The college did NOT experience criticism.

0% [■■■■] 100%

>>

Indicate from which of the following sources your institution experienced criticism of offering bachelor's degrees. (Check all that apply)

- ☐ College employees of your institution
- ☐ Students of your institution
- ☐ Other educational institutions
- ☐ State officials
- ☐ General Public
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Local Officials
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

[_____]

0% [■■■■] 100%

>>

N

Rank in order of importance the additional services required of transitioning to bachelor's degrees. (*Drag responses to the appropriate location*. 1 representing the most important, 2 the next, and so on. If other items are important please indicate them in the "Other" categories and rank them accordingly.)

Additional financial resources

Library holdings

Facility needs

Advising and support staff

New faculty hiring requirements

Other   [   ]

Other   [   ]

0% ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ☐ 100%
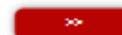
>>

N

Transitioning to bachelor's degrees at your institution can be described as a process that went smoothly.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

The opportunity for graduates of your bachelor's programs to matriculate to graduate programs at other institutions is available.

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Have baccalaureate offerings continued to grow at your institution?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes (if YES) Indicate the approximate number of bachelor's degrees available.

0% ▓▓▓▓▓ 100%

>>

N

How long has your institution been offering/conferring bachelor's degrees?

- Less than 3 years
- Between 3 and 6 years
- Between 6 and 10 years
- More than 10 years

How would you describe your role concerning the bachelor's degrees at your institution?

- Faculty
- Administrator
- Support Staff
- Other (Please specify)

0% █████████ 100%

>>

What advice would you give to others looking to implement the bachelor's degree at community colleges?

0%![100%]

>>

Please describe the most important components of transitioning to bachelor's degree programs.

0%![100%]

>>

Thank you for taking the time to share your perspectives on these important topics. Your responses will be used to study nation-wide trends in community colleges and promote their role in higher education.

0% ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ 100%

Appendix D

Cover Letter

Sent: December 4, 2012
Survey Available online until December 14, 2012

Subject: Survey – Implementation and Best Practices of Transitioning to Bachelor's Degrees

Dear Community College Baccalaureate Member,

We are writing to ask for your participation in a research questionnaire focusing on the implementation and best practices of baccalaureate offerings at community colleges. We are asking member institutions of the Community College Baccalaureate Association to reflect on their experiences and provide advice to others interested in offering the bachelor's degree.

This questionnaire is part of a mixed-methods dissertation study focusing on the essential elements of the expansion of the community college mission. The primary researcher is Stan Essink, faculty member at Central Community College in Hastings, Nebraska and doctoral student at the University of Nebraska. As Executive Director of the Community College Baccalaureate Association, I have agreed to facilitate the distribution of this survey. Your responses are valuable to this research and to understanding the evolving trends in higher education.

This is a short survey and should take you no more than ten minutes to complete. Please click on the link below or paste it to your web browser to begin the survey.

Survey Link: https://unleducation.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5znAGmrtQQNsDhr

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The access code is used to ensure that only intended participants may access the survey and that responses are kept confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be reported as aggregated data. Should you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact the primary or secondary investigator listed at the close of this email. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you can call the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965. There are no known risks associated with this research.

We appreciate your time and consideration in completing this survey. It is only through the help of professionals like you that we continue to progress and enhance the educational offerings of community colleges.

Many thanks,

Beth

Beth Hagan, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Community College Baccalaureate Association
239-947-8085
www.ACCBD.org

Stan Essink – Primary Investigator   Dr. Barbara LaCost
Faculty - Central Community College   Associate Professor
Doctoral Student– University of Nebraska   Secondary Investigator and Advisor
402-461-2537   402-472-0988
sessink@cccneb.edu   blacost1@unl.edu

Appendix E

Follow-up Letter

From: Beth Hagan [bhagan7@aol.com]
Sent: December 13, 2012
To: dddddd@ddd.ddd
Subject: Survey – Implementation and Best Practices of Transitioning to Bachelor's Degrees

December 13, 2012

Hello,

We recently sent you an email with a link to a questionnaire concerning implementation and best practices of transitioning to bachelor's degrees. If you have already completed the survey, we sincerely appreciate your time and input concerning this important topic.

If you have not yet responded, we would like to urge you to complete this short survey. We plan to end the survey shortly, so we wanted to email everyone to make sure those who have not responded had a chance to participate.

Please click on the link below or paste it to your web browser to begin the survey.

Survey Link: https://unleducation.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5znAGmrtQQNsDhr

We appreciate your time and consideration in completing this survey. Your responses are important to the community college mission and to educational futures of students across the country.

Many thanks,

Stan Essink – Primary Investigator   Dr. Beth Hagan – Executive Director
Faculty - Central Community College   CCBA
Doctoral Student – University of Nebraska   239-947-8085
402-461-2537   bhagan7@aol.com
sessink@cccneb.edu
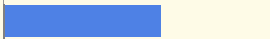
Dr. Barbara LaCost
Associate Professor
Secondary Investigator and Advisor
402-472-0988
blacost1@unl.edu

Appendix F

Survey Report

1. As your institution transitioned to offering/conferring the bachelor's degree, the traditional missions of your community college remain as top priorities.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		17	59%
2	Agree		8	28%
3	Neither Agree Nor Disagree		1	3%
4	Disagree		3	10%
5	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
	Total		29	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.66
Variance	0.95
Standard Deviation	0.97
Total Responses	29

2. The college culture has changed at your institution as a result of providing bachelor's degrees.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		5	17%
2	Agree		12	41%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		5	17%
4	Disagree		7	24%
5	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
	Total		29	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.48
Variance	1.12
Standard Deviation	1.06
Total Responses	29

3. A major impetus for establishing bachelor's degrees at your institution came from state influences.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		9	32%
2	Agree		8	29%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		2	7%
4	Disagree		5	18%
5	Strongly Disagree		4	14%
	Total		28	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.54
Variance	2.18
Standard Deviation	1.48
Total Responses	28

4. A major impetus for establishing bachelor's degrees at your institution came from local constituents.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		8	28%
2	Agree		18	62%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		1	3%
4	Disagree		1	3%
5	Strongly Disagree		1	3%
	Total		29	100%
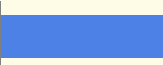
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	1.93
Variance	0.78
Standard Deviation	0.88
Total Responses	29

5. A major impetus for establishing bachelor's degrees at your institution came from internal college influences.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Agree		8	28%
2	Agree		16	55%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		2	7%
4	Disagree		2	7%
5	Strongly Disagree		1	3%
	Total		29	100%
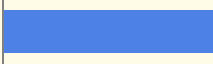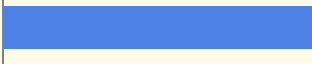
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.03
Variance	0.96
Standard Deviation	0.98
Total Responses	29

6. Did your college experience criticism in its efforts to offer the bachelor's degree?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	The college experienced criticism.		17	59%
2	The college did NOT experience criticism.		12	41%
	Total		29	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.41
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	29

7. Indicate from which of the following sources your institution experienced criticism of offering bachelor's degrees. (Check all that apply)

#	Answer		Response	%
1	College employees of your institution		10	56%
2	Students of your institution		2	11%
3	Other educational institutions		15	83%
4	State officials		8	44%
5	General Public		3	17%
6	Businesses		4	22%
7	Local Officials		5	28%
8	Other (Please specify)		1	6%

Other (Please specify)
University partners

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	8
Total Responses	18

8. **Rank in order of importance the additional services required of transitioning to bachelor's degrees.**

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Additional financial resources	13	7	4	1	2	0	0	27
Library holdings	1	1	9	10	5	1	0	27
Facility needs	1	2	1	6	12	3	2	27
Advising and support staff	1	7	7	6	5	1	0	27
New faculty hiring requirements	10	8	3	3	3	0	0	27
Other	1	2	3	0	0	21	0	27
Other	0	0	0	1	0	1	25	27
Total	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	-

Other	Other
Need for additional faculty	
finding faculty/HR recruitment	
Revisions to IT Systems	
Marketing	Curriculum revisions
Admissions and records support	Funds for faculty to earn higher degrees
New administrative hiring requirements	New organizational structure (i.e. deans)
new curricula development	New Branding & recruitment strategies
Hiring Program Manager	

156

Statistic	Additional financial resources	Library holdings	Facility needs	Advising and support staff	New faculty hiring requirements	Other	Other
Min Value	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Max Value	5	6	7	6	5	6	7
Mean	1.96	3.74	4.59	3.37	2.30	5.19	6.85
Variance	1.50	1.12	1.94	1.63	1.91	2.54	0.36
Standard Deviation	1.22	1.06	1.39	1.28	1.38	1.59	0.60
Total Responses	27	27	27	27	27	27	27

9. **Transitioning to bachelor's degrees at your institution can be described as a process that went smoothly.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly agree		5	19%
2	Agree		14	52%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		3	11%
4	Disagree		4	15%
5	Strongly Disagree		1	4%
	Total		27	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.33
Variance	1.15
Standard Deviation	1.07
Total Responses	27

10. The opportunity for graduates of your bachelor's programs to matriculate to graduate programs at other institutions is available.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly agree		15	56%
2	Agree		9	33%
3	Neither Agree or Disagree		2	7%
4	Disagree		1	4%
5	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
	Total		27	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.59
Variance	0.64
Standard Deviation	0.80
Total Responses	27

11. Have baccalaureate offerings continued to grow at your institution?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	No		7	25%
2	Yes (if YES) Indicate the approximate number of bachelor's degrees available.		21	75%
	Total		28	100%

Yes (if YES) Indicate the approximate number of bachelor's degrees available.
11
3
21
3
20
10
7
8
3
23
3
24
5
24
10
15
10
5
3
7
1

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.75
Variance	0.19
Standard Deviation	0.44
Total Responses	28

12. How long has your institution been offering/conferring bachelor's degrees?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than 3 years		8	30%
2	Between 3 and 6 years		10	37%
3	Between 6 and 10 years		6	22%
4	More than 10 years		3	11%
	Total		27	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.15
Variance	0.98
Standard Deviation	0.99
Total Responses	27

13. How would you describe your role concerning the bachelor's degrees at your institution?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Faculty		0	0%
2	Administrator		24	89%
3	Support Staff		0	0%
4	Other (Please specify)		3	11%
	Total		27	100%

Other (Please specify)
President
I am the Director but also a faculty member
Developer

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	4
Mean	2.22
Variance	0.41
Standard Deviation	0.64
Total Responses	27

14. What advice would you give to others looking to implement the bachelor's degree at community colleges?

Text Response
Obtain community support and work closely with others that have gone through the process - especially with the accrediting agency.
Know your community and get them involved with idea of internships early on; establish an implementation TEAM with members of all departments impacted; be ready for more interest than expected; recruit faculty early; work with current faculty early to get their buy in to enhancing their academic credentials to the doctoral level as needed; get as much paperless as quickly as possible; create degree plans for cohorts of FT as well as PT students; build your baccalaureate alumni association from day 1; create baccalaureate traditions.
Baccalaureate degrees are not panaceas. As such, they should be undertaken in response to stakeholder needs and not for the wrong reasons (e.g., to increase institutional prestige). Should see Dr. Scott Newman's Journal of the New Comprehensive College article entitled "Courting the Baccalaureate: A Primer."
Send lots of people to the CCBA meeting since many people need to have a good feel of the processes, the history, the lessons, etc.
Do it but understand there will be opposition, first ensure the college employees understand what is happening.
Regular communication and planning across the institution including Academic Affairs/Student Affairs/Business Affairs/IT/Enrollment Management/Student Services is

critical for smooth transition and ongoing success.

It is a lot of work, so build a great team of people who are willing to put in the time and effort.

Keep the focus on workforce related degrees. Keep your community college open access mission. Do not have a split between faculty who teach associate degrees versus bachelor's degrees.

Use consultants to assist with designing you bachelor degree. Faculty and staff that are currently in an associate program don't readily have the ability to stretch and imagine how the bachelor degree should be designed.

Advisory committees within community vital as you move forward, focus on meeting needs of service area.

We are now classified as baccalaureate and planning for our first master degree.

Planning is essential to a smooth transition.

Get a clear assessment of the need before strategizing.

Ensure that faculty tenure committees emphasize the community college mission. Hire new presidents, vice presidents, and deans that have experience with all baccalaureate degree models. Review and revise general education requirements. Review faculty workload requirements. Ensure that accreditation liaison keeps line of communication open with all campus constituencies regarding requirements.

The best decision we made was that every baccalaureate degree would have a capstone experience as a graduation requirement as an important quality assurance feature. Similarly, we made a commitment to seek the highest level of accreditation or industry certification available for every baccalaureate program. The quality issues are a challenge, even for high-performing community colleges such as ours.

Don't rush.

It is time consuming and challenging to administer at the state, regional and national level but it is worth it.

1. Go slowly:3-5 year plan 2. Employ consultants for mature programs 3. Clearly articulate existing associate degrees with new baccalaureate degrees 4. Provide faculty development for current faculty to earn higher degrees 5. Ensure adequate financial resources.

To use the state's system to ensure they have captured the lessons learned from other programs.

Nothing substitutes for proper planning.

Don't develop and implement bachelor's degrees at the cost of your two-year degrees.
Be sure to research both the community needs and national accreditation, if available in the area of learning in the planning process. The state is now also requiring reports on all of these programs, so be prepared for additional reporting. Be sure you have the appropriately credentialed faculty.
The community college baccalaureate is an extension of our workforce development mission....hang your hat on that.
Make sure your institution's role is clearly defined at the state level for reporting purposes.
Allow ample time and support for those charged with implementation. We had less than a year and a half to begin our first baccalaureate program from the time our board charged us to pursue this move.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	25

15. Please describe the most important components of transitioning to bachelor's degree programs.

Text Response
Community need, Accreditation, State approval
The TEAM; the reasons the students are coming to get their degree and why they are coming to your institution.
1. Open internal and external communications. 2. Identification of major institutional changes required. 3. Resource identification. 4. Establishment of clear, reasonable short- and long-term expectations for new program(s).
You need lots of people working on this together in well thought out committees or teams.
Changing the mission. Finding the Doctoral prepared faculty. Believe in your own expertise. Have fun.
Planning, Internal Communication, External Communication, Data Driven Decision Making, Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation (surveys/focus groups/trend analysis). One Administrative Leader/Coordinator to ensure quality and consistency. Involvement/Monitoring of relevant State Policy and Regulations
1) Get everybody involved in the organization. The more buy-in, the better. 2) Decide

on the steps in the process. 3) Determine a time-line and stick to due dates. 4) Make sure that you have the right faculty and advising support staff to work with the students. 5) Have a strong recruiting plan and implement it.   6) Be customer service oriented! 7) Work with the business community on experiential and service learning projects for the students to help make them more employable.

Faculty buy-in. Board support.

Competitive program content and partnership with local employers.

Credentialed faculty availability, ability to recruit qualified faculty, anticipated enrollment growth.

Faculty buy-in. Helping the marketplace to understand the new institution.

The college needs to be aware of the regional accreditation requirements, state requirements, and specialized accreditation requirements.

Assessing the local community. Garnering the support of legislators. Assuring financial resources are available.

Addressed local and state workforce needs in mining, education, and nursing. Provided a baccalaureate option for rural, place-bound students. Faculty development of upper-division classes strengthened areas and provided more depth in lower-division offerings.

The programs need to have an adequate and assured funding support for the initial 3-5 years. They cannot be subject to uncertain funding during the start-up phase.

Faculty buy-in. Planning. Institution's capacity for change and transition. Accreditation requirements. Insufficient staff. Insufficient knowledge of the requirements of a baccalaureate granting institution. Ignorance.

The most important component is persistence and the willingness to find solutions to all the perceived barriers.

1. Comprehensive needs assessment   2. Strong academic leadership   3. Expand admissions, recruitment and marketing plan.   4. Develop and implement bachelor's degree approval process (i.e. curriculum committee, state department of education, national accreditation guidelines).

Involving faculty early in the process and academically let them drive the train. Involving everyone that will be touched by the new degree early in the process

Planning and leadership plus demand.

Program development & resources (financial & human).

Streamline the movement of students from AA/AS to the bachelor's level. Recruitment is important.

Accreditation followed by financing followed by development and maintenance of a rigorous program.

Faculty who meet minimum requirements. Assessment for general education core. Student and faculty collaborative research.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	24

Appendix G

States Granting the Community College Baccalaureate

Courtesy of the CCBA at http://www.accbd.org/resources/baccalaureate-conferring-locations/?ct=US
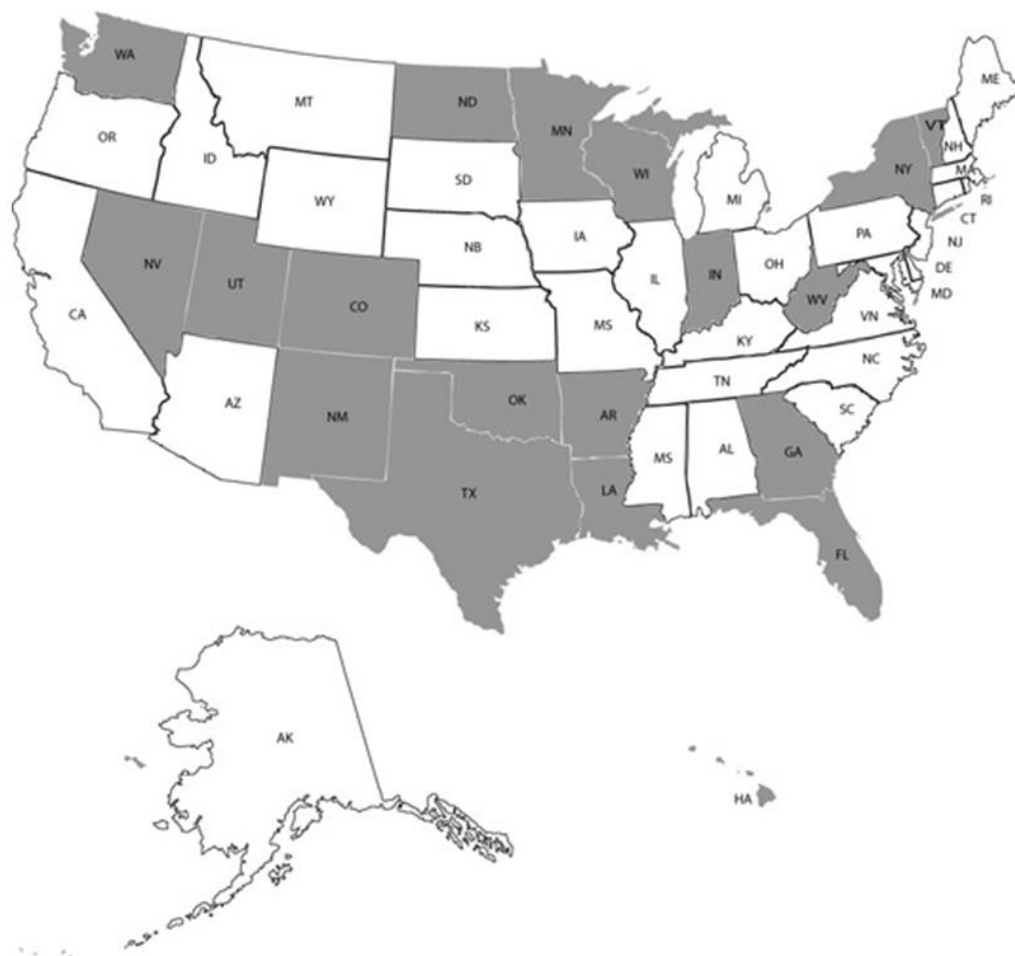
Appendix H

About the Author

About the Author

Stan Essink earned a B.S. in Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Hastings College with an endorsement in psychology. He began his educational career teaching in several K-12 schools in Nebraska and Kansas. He has been a faculty member at Central Community College in Hastings, Nebraska since 2001. He has taught in both the Skilled and Technical Sciences cluster and in Academic Education.

In 2011, the author earned the Community College Leadership Certificate from the Educational Administration department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.