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Analysis of Two-Year College Presidents' Ranking of the American Association of Community Colleges' Leadership Competencies

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AN ANALYSIS OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGE PRESIDENTS' RANKING OF THE

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES' LEADERSHIP

COMPETENCIES

by

SANDRA MICHELE TAYLOR

(Under the Direction of Barbara Mallory)

ABSTRACT

Two-year colleges face a leadership shortage in the next decade. Those who lead

two-year colleges need to be prepared to meet challenges of the 21st century and demands

of the institution internally and externally, of new technology, and of curriculum.

Research led by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has resulted

in the identification of six leadership competencies needed for the two-year college

presidency: organizational strategy; resource management; communication,

collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism.

To determine sitting two-year college presidents' ranking of those competencies,

the researcher adapted an AACC survey that was sent to 425 two-year college presidents

in the Southern Regional Educational Board service area. Using the Freidman two-way

analysis of variance by ranks led the researcher to reject the hypothesis that the

competencies were equal; thus the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed ranks test to

determine where the differences were located. The major finding indicated that

organizational strategy is relatively more important than resource management,

communication, collaboration, and professionalism in the current role of leading two-year

institutions.

   To determine if institutional or individual factors affected those rankings, the researcher used the Mann-Whitney test and the Kruskall-Wallis test to detect group differences in the rankings. When considering how the factors of gender, institution size by Carnegie classification, or length of tenure affected the relative importance of the competencies, female two-year college presidents consider organizational strategy and communication relatively more important than male two-year presidents. Regardless of institution size, the six competencies were equal. Resource management is relatively more important to two-year presidents who have served 4-10 years.

  Further investigation needs to be done on how the competencies are being used by two-year institutions of higher education, non-degree leadership programs, and staff development trainers.

INDEX WORDS: Two-year college presidents, Leadership competencies

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The America Association for Community Colleges (2005), or AACC, reports that

the development and ability of leaders, known as "presidents" in the two-year college

environment, are key to the success of two-year colleges and their students. Not only do

presidents make a resounding difference in the lives and prospects of their institutions but

also both the current and future success of two-year colleges depend on the skill of the

institutions' presidents (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 2000). Boggs (2004) describes

challenges facing two-year institutions, particularly providing access to college and

engaging in community responsiveness, and the necessity of prepared leaders to address

them.

To address this issue, the American Association of Community Colleges Board of

Directors approved in April 2005 the Competencies for Community College Leaders, a

framework intended to address changing human and institutional needs (AACC, 2005).

The AACC intended the framework to benefit the leadership development of both

individuals and institutions. The framework includes competencies in six leadership

dimensions, which are (1) organizational strategy; (2) resource management; (3)

communication; (4) collaboration; (5) two-year college advocacy; and (6)

professionalism.

Background of the Literature

Two-year colleges are grouped as such because they generally serve diverse

populations and share a commitment to open access, comprehensiveness, and

responsiveness to local needs (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002). Two-year colleges

offer opportunities for lifelong learning, meet workforce needs, meet the social need for access to higher education, educate increasingly unprepared students, and train individuals to work in an information economy (Milliron & de los Santos, 2004). In 2005, 1,683 two-year institutions existed (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). Two-year institutions in the United States serve 11 million students (AACC, 2006). These students include 45% of all U.S. undergraduates and 45% of first-time freshmen (AACC, 2006). The study body includes 59% women and 41% men (AACC, 2006). Student attendance is 62% part time and 38% full time (full time=taking 12 or more credit hours) (AACC, 2006). The institutions vary in size from enrollments of under 500 students to enrollments of over 10, 000 students (Carnegie Foundation, 2006).

The leader of a two-year institution is generally referred to as "president," rather than "chancellor," which is a term applied to the leaders of larger colleges and universities. The challenges of leading a two-year college have expanded in the last decade and become increasingly complex (Wallin, 2003). Two-year colleges are facing (1) inadequate financial support, (2) increasing student costs, (3) financial aid policy issues, (4) challenges to remedial education, (5) capacity challenges, (6) challenges to their image, and (7) problems with transferability (Boggs, 2004). Prepared presidents are necessary for meeting these challenges (Boggs). Developing a new generation of senior leadership for the two-year colleges is essential if the colleges are to operate successfully in the changing and thus complex environment (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 1999).

In Georgia, presidents are selected for the 34 technical colleges by the commissioner of the Department of Technical and Adult Education after a local committee makes its recommendation. According to the State Board Policy Manual, a

committee made up of local business and industry leaders reviews the applications

(DTAE, 2001). Then, the committee selects, on average, eight people to interview. After

the interviews, the committee sends the names of three finalists to the commissioner. The

commissioner interviews the candidates, makes the selection, and presents the candidate

to the State Board. The new president then steps into the leadership role of the institution.

Development of Leadership Framework

During the last decade, the AACC developed a leadership competency framework

referred to as the Competencies for Community College Leaders (CCCL) out of concern

for both the anticipated presidential vacancies and a decline in the interest of those

preparing for two-year college presidency (AACC, 2005). To begin their development of

a framework of two-year presidency competencies, AACC issued online a survey to

current presidents to determine the most-important competencies for 21st century

presidents. The outcomes for the survey generated competencies in seven areas: (1)

financial planning skills; (2) the ability to create partnerships; (3) the ability to improve

and manage internal and external relationships; (4) the ability to develop a clear vision;

(5) excellent communication skills; (6) political savvy; and (7) adaptability (Shults,

2001).

Also in 2001, an AACC Leadership Summit was held. In attendance were college

presidents, AACC board members, members of leadership programs, and representatives

of university doctoral programs. The goal of the summit was to discuss issues such as the

leadership pipeline, leader skills and knowledge base, and leadership programs (AACC,

2002). Following the meeting, the AACC Leadership Task Force was developed to

continue the work begun by the Leadership Summit (AACC, 2002). The Task Force's

focus was retirement and the urgency for developing future leaders based on change in community colleges (AACC, 2002). The action plan had three categories: recruitment of presidents and upper-level managers; preparation of presidents and upper-level managers; and support needed to sustain of presidents and upper-level managers (AACC, 2002).

The AACC's Leadership Task Force identified characteristics and professional skills that all two-year college leaders should possess: (1) understand the mission; (2) be an advocate for the college; (3) have skills in administration (4) foster economic development; and (5) display personal, interpersonal, and transformational leadership skills (AACC, 2002). The Task Force also developed an action plan for developing future leaders, which included goals to recruit, prepare, and sustain presidents and upper-level managers. Holding Leading Forward Summits with affiliated councils of the American Association of Community Colleges; representatives of colleges, states and consortia that had their own leadership programs; representatives of community colleges that had geographic and other special challenges; and representatives of universities with higher education administration graduate degree programs, the AACC developed a competency framework. After refining the competencies, the AACC sent an online survey to all the Leading Forward Summit participants, who validated the Competencies for Community College Leaders.

In April 2005, the American Association of Community Colleges Board of Directors approved the Competencies for Community College Leaders (CCCL), a framework intended to address changing human and institutional needs (AACC, 2005). The AACC intended the framework to benefit the leadership development of both individuals and institutions. The adopted framework, CCCL, identified competencies in

six leadership dimensions, which are (1) organizational strategy; (2) resource management; (3) communication; (4) collaboration; (5) two-year college advocacy; and (6) professionalism.

Description of AACC Leadership Competencies

The AACC also provided descriptors for meeting the six leadership competencies of the CCCL framework. Organizational strategy is met when the president strategically improves the quality of the institution; protects the long-term health of the organization; promotes the success of all students; and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends (AACC, 2005). Resource management is met when the president equitably sustains people; processes; information; and physical and financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the two-year college (AACC, 2005). The communication competency is met when the president uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community; promotes the success of all students; and sustains the community college mission (AACC, 2005). Collaboration occurs when the president develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, and mutually beneficial internal and external relationships that nurture diversity; promote the success of all students; and sustain the two-year college mission (AACC, 2005). Advocacy is met when the president understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the two-year colleges (AACC, 2005). Finally, professionalism is met when the president sets high standards for self and others; works continuously to improve self and surroundings; demonstrates accountability to and for the institution; and works for the long-term viability of the college and community (AACC, 2005).

Leaders of Two-Year Institutions

The profile of two-year college presidents in the 21st century provides insight into current leaders who are expected to demonstrate the AACC competencies. The average age of two-year college presidents in 2001 was 56 years, and nearly 86% were white/Caucasian (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). The percentage of presidents who were female increased from 11% to 28% in the last decade of the 20th century (Weisman & Vaughan). Before becoming president, 37% were provost, 25% were president of another two-year college, and 15% were senior academic affairs officers other than provost (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). In terms of educational level of current presidents, about 46% held a Ph. D., and about 42% held an Ed. D. in 2001; in 1984 only 76% of two-year college presidents held a doctorate (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). Finally, on average, male presidents have spent seven years on the job, while women have spent four (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002).

Presidential tenure decisions vary by state. Seven states' systems are governed by a state Board of Education, twelve states' systems are governed by a State Board of Higher Education, twelve states' systems are governed by a statewide coordinating board, five states' systems are governed by a state governing board, ten states' systems are governed by a Board of Regents, and the rest have systems not typical of these models or that have overlapping authority (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In sixteen states, the presidents report to a chancellor or commissioner (AACC, 2006). For example, in Georgia, the commissioner for technical and adult education selects and dismisses the technical college presidents (DTAE, 2006). In twenty-nine states, local boards have the

responsibility of selecting, evaluating, or dismissing the president (AACC, 2006; Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

The Association of Governing Boards (2006), or AGB, named the selection of a president as the board's most important responsibility. When selecting a president, trustees of governing boards search for candidates with political skills to negotiate with state and federal lawmakers and the business knowledge to be sound financial managers (Basinger, 2002). The AGB (2006) recommended that boards proceed with a search only after defining the institution's current needs and needs in the course of the next decade. Sometimes a president is the right fit for an institution, but if the institution's needs change, the residing president may no longer be considered the necessary person to lead the change (Yates & Roach, 2005). When the governing board does not have an agreed upon list of objectives, a new president will have difficulty (Strout, 2005).

Most boards perform an annual, informal evaluation of presidents, but only about a third of the boards that evaluate presidents have a system for gathering and assessing information (Basinger, 1999). Informal reviews need guidelines, as they can provide boards an opportunity to encourage the president's growth and to assess the governance of the organization (Davis & Davis, 1999).

Annual reviews make the presidency stronger (Davis & Davis, 1999). However, determining what the board expects of the president makes a formal evaluation more difficult to design (Basinger, 1999). Also, these formal, publicly announced evaluations are not in the best interest of the president or the institution because of the drawbacks involved (Davis & Davis, 1999). One of the drawbacks is that critics can present all criticisms at once (Davis & Davis, 1999). Another drawback is that presidential decision

making is held up during the review period because of possible negative reactions (Davis & Davis, 1999). The review may fall during an advantageous or disadvantageous time for the institution and thus affect the president's evaluation (Davis & Davis, 1999). Another disadvantage is that system heads can use the reviews as weapons against campus heads (Davis & Davis, 1999). Also, presidents' rights and privacy may be invaded during the evaluation process (Davis & Davis, 1999).

The evaluations can be of value if used to improve the quality of leadership for the institution's benefit and should ultimately focus on whether the person has done the best possible job for the time and the place (Davis & Davis, 1999). The AGB (2006) recommended that boards establish a process for providing feedback that evaluates a president based upon clearly defined, mutually agreed upon goals. The AACC leadership competency framework can be used to guide boards as they establish their evaluation process (Ottenritter, 2005).

The tipping point for trustees to fire a president remains unclear and usually depends on the situation (Strout, 2005). Presidents have departed from institutions because of fiscal crises, poor relationships with faculty members, lack of administrative-level team spirit, ineffectiveness in managing human-resource issues, personal problems, troubled town-gown relationships, nepotism, abuse of authority, and inappropriate sexual conduct (Martin & Samels, 2004). Presidents are more often asked to resign than fired (Yates & Roach, 2005). Despite increased accountability demanded by the various constituencies, relatively little emphasis has been placed on consistently measuring and improving administrative effectiveness in higher education (Heck, Johnsrud, and Rosser, 2000).

Future of the Two-Year Presidency

Governing boards will soon have hiring decisions to make. The American Association of Community (AACC) colleges reports 45 percent of two-year college presidents plan to retire by 2007 (Shults, 2001). Further, 79 percent plan to retire by 2012 (Boggs, 2004). In addition, many higher-ranking administrators within two-year colleges are nearing retirement (Shults, 2001). For example, the average age of presidents is 56; chief academic officers, 54; and chief student services officers, 52 (Shults). Shults points out that in the next few years, colleges will need to replace 700 presidents, 1800 upper-level administrators, and 30,000 faculty members. The number of students currently enrolled in graduate two-year college administration programs will fill only a fraction of these openings (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). The AACC has identified just 16 programs with two-year college emphasis (Duvall, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Two-year colleges face a leadership shortage in the next decade. Those who lead two-year colleges need to be prepared to meet challenges of the 21st century and demands of the institution internally and externally. Research led by the American Association of Community Colleges resulted in the identification of six leadership competencies needed for the two-year college presidency: organizational strategy; resource management; communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism.

Presidents are often evaluated based on agreed upon goals with the governing board, but in an effort to identify standards for the presidency, the AACC established the six competency-based leadership dimensions (AACC, 2005). These dimensions are necessary for leadership development, as most two-year college presidents are eligible for

retirement in the next five years. Identification of the competency-based performances of the two-year college presidents provide a framework for training and development of future leaders

No inquiries have been made regarding the sitting two-year college presidents' evaluation of the competencies as applied in leading two-year institutions. The extent to which the AACC leadership competencies are ranked as important to the two-year college presidency as perceived by current two-year college presidents is unknown. Insight into how the rankings of the AACC competencies differ by demographic characteristics, using two-year colleges in the Southern Regional Educational Board, is also unknown. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine to what extent college presidents rank AACC leadership competencies important to the presidency of the two-year institution. In addition, the researcher determined the difference in rankings by size of the institution, as well as gender and length of tenure of the current presidents.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do two-year college presidents rank American Association of Community College leadership competencies important to the presidents of the two-year institution?

2. To what extent do the rankings of the competencies differ by the institutional factor of size?

3. To what extent do the rankings of the competencies differ by the individual factors of gender and length of tenure?

Conceptual Framework

A skills-based theory of leadership may be viable for understanding leader performance in dynamic, knowledge-based institutions (Yammarino, 2000). Leadership competencies can be described by the acronym KSA: knowledge, skills, and abilities (Tubbs & Schultz, 2006). Hence, leadership can be framed in terms of the capabilities, knowledge, and skills that make effective leadership possible; and leadership is held to be a potential in many individuals—a potential that emerges through experience and the capability to learn and benefit from experience (Mumford, et al, 2000).

Significance of the Study

The participants in this study served as two-year college presidents who possessed knowledge, skills, and experiences that can be shared with those who aspire to understand the extent identified leadership competencies are important to the presidency. The insight provided by current presidents may prove beneficial to those preparing for the presidency. The understanding and application of these competencies may also be important to those who teach aspiring leaders in university-based programs.

The researcher studied the extent that current two-year college presidents rank the competencies as important and how demographically different groups rank the competencies. To fill the impending leadership vacancies due to anticipated retirements, future presidents can benefit by understanding the competencies in context in order to prepare for two-year college leadership. As the AACC competencies have been recently identified, the researcher believes the ranking of the competencies by sitting presidents may inform the professional literature and the population of future two-year college presidents.

Future presidents may prepare for the role by understanding the competencies through the knowledge, skills, and experiences of sitting presidents. The findings of this study also added to the professional literature regarding the leadership competencies in higher education, specifically two-year institutions. In addition, those who are engaged in professional development of leaders, whether formally or in-house, may find the information beneficial. The AACC, the professional organization of two-year institutions, is also very interested in leadership development and continued development of the framework of leadership.

Remaining in the two-year college system, the researcher seeks promotion to administration and eventually to the presidency. Analyzing data on the relative importance of AACC leadership competencies may yield information that could be beneficial to other administrative positions within the two-year institution, which are often entry-level positions to the presidency. Ninety percent of presidents were employed at a two-year college before becoming president, and leadership development can be nurtured to increase the capacity for becoming a president.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

To collect the data to analyze the rankings of two-year college presidents in regards to the identified leadership competencies' importance, the researcher mailed a survey to 425 two-year college presidents in the 16-state Southern Regional Education Board area. The researcher adapted the AACC survey to be used for data collection as the major instrument in the quantitative design of this study. The researcher also evaluated the differences in ranking by both institutional and demographic factors.

The survey was based upon an American Association of Community Colleges instrument and a review of the related literature. The survey consisted of 24 items, which were mapped to the six major competencies. In addition, the survey contained a demographic section that asked for each respondent's length of tenure, age, gender, ethnicity, highest degree obtained, previous job held, if that job was held at the current institution, and the current institution's location and size. Pilot testing was used to establish validity before the mailing. The survey was mailed to 422 two-year college presidents, and follow up reminders were sent to improve response rate.

After the initial mailing, 53 surveys were returned for a 13% response rate. Additional requests yielded 117 surveys, for a response rate of 40%. The researcher analyzed the data to respond to the research questions of the study.

Definitions

1. *American Association of Community Colleges*—This organization began as a forum for the nation's two-year colleges and designates itself is the primary advocacy organization for community colleges at the national level that works closely with directors of state offices to inform and affect state policy, in addition to being involved with federal higher education efforts. AACC supports and promotes its member colleges through policy initiatives, innovative programs, research and information and strategic outreach to business and industry and the national news media (AACC, 2006).

Summary

Future two-year college presidents will need preparation for the challenges they will face. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) recently identified the competencies needed by two-year college presidents. However, no studies have been

conducted to assess the evaluations of sitting two-year college presidents concerning the importance of these leadership competencies. The insight that sitting presidents possess concerning the importance of the leadership competencies may impact the preparation of future leaders. The researcher evaluated these rankings to provide insight into the leadership competencies that presidents are expected to employ as leaders of two-year institutions.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (2006) notes that in the last few years, a remarkable consensus has begun to emerge about a new public agenda for postsecondary education in America, with an imperative to increase production, quality, and affordability all across the educational pipeline without a substantial new infusion of public revenues. Each sector and institution—from private colleges to public research universities—have a role to play in this new public agenda. The single greatest influence on the success or failure of the agenda, however, will be the public two-year colleges because they are the largest sector of higher education and can be the most cost-effective route to educational success for students (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2006). No other institution in American education plays a more difficult role than the two-year college (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Two-year colleges provide access, exhibit community responsiveness, place a clear focus on student learning, practice resourcefulness, and possess an entrepreneurial spirit, creativeness, and innovativeness (Boggs, 2004).

In this chapter, the researcher presented the history and profile of the two-year college, the challenges faced by two-year college presidents, the need for prepared presidents and for a coherent knowledge base, the challenges to leadership preparation, the development of a coherent knowledge base, the identified leadership competencies and the factors affecting their usage, and a summary.

History of the Two-year Colleges

Though these institutions are a 20th century addition to higher education, two-year colleges evolved from earlier ideas regarding higher education. Three situations laid the foundation for the modern two-year college (Boone, 1997). Thomas Jefferson believed education should be practical, as well as liberal, while accessible to large groups of people (Boone, 1997). Andrew Jackson's believed the nation should provide funds for public education of its people (Boone, 1997). Support for public education was shown by the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 (Boone, 1997). Today, 1, 685 two-year colleges educate 6, 656,105 students, 38% of those enrolled in postsecondary education (NCES, 2005).

With the United States facing challenges in the early 20th century, such as global competition, national and local leaders believed a more skilled workforce would build economic strength to address the challenges. However, many high school graduates were foregoing college in part because they did not want to leave their hometowns for a distant college (AACC, 2004). During the same period, the country's rapidly growing public high schools were seeking new ways to serve their communities, often adding a teacher institute, manual learning (vocational education) division, or citizenship school to the diploma program. The high school-based community college, as first developed at Central High School in Joliet, Illinois—and founded as Joliet Junior College in 1901— was the most successful type of addition (AACC, 2004).

During their early years, two-year colleges were an extension of high schools. Joliet, the oldest existing public two-year college, added a fifth and sixth year of courses to a high school curriculum. In the 1920s, enrollments were low—typically 150

students—and the colleges offered general liberal arts programs, solid academics, as well as a variety of student activities (Kasper, 2003; AACC, 2004). Fort Scott Junior College in Kansas, for example, not only fielded several athletic teams, but also supported a student newspaper, government, thespian society and orchestra (AACC, 2004).

Also in 1920, both public and private junior colleges felt a need to join together to articulate the role and mission of the junior colleges (Boone, 1997). Meeting in St. Louis, a group of presidents from both public and private junior colleges founded a national organization to function as a force for the nation's two-year colleges (Boone, 1997). What began as the American Association of Junior Colleges became the American Association of Community and Junior colleges in 1972 to reflect the names associated with most public two-year institutions. This association evolved, becoming the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in 1992 to reaffirm the community orientation of the public colleges as they continued to dominate the two-year college scene (Boone, 1997).

Originally, many two-year schools saw themselves as feeders to the universities, a preparation for university life and a career (Lucas, 1994). However, by the late 1920s and early 1930s, the trend was for these schools to view themselves as terminal institutions where those with limited means (some believed limited abilities and aspirations) could prepare for the skilled trades and semi professions (Lucas, 1994). During the Great Depression of the 1930s, two-year colleges began providing job training as a way to ease widespread unemployment, a trend that continued through the 1940s and 1950s (Kasper, 2003; AACC, 2004). As World War II ended, the conversion of military industries to consumer goods created the need for workers to fill new, skilled jobs. At the same time,

national leaders decided that the best adjustment for returning soldiers was to send them to college. Therefore, Congress passed the Serviceman's Readjustment Act—known as the GI Bill of Rights—in 1944, thus boosting the enrollment of public junior colleges and other higher educational institutions (Boone, 1997).

Another force from the 1940s that impacted the two-year college movement was a 1947 report prepared by the President's Commission on Higher Education for American Democracy, commonly known as the Truman Commission Report. This report recommended the establishment of a network of publicly supported two-year institutions to be called "community colleges" that should be within the reach of all people, charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers for the community, offer continuing education for adults as well as technical and general education, be locally controlled, and be part of the nation's public higher education network (Boone, 1997).

Two-year colleges became a national network in the 1960s with the opening of 457 more public colleges – whereas only 412 were in existence before that decade (AACC, 2004). Also, as baby boomers reached college age in the 1960s, two-year college enrollments increased, fueling economic growth and spurring the building of many new public two-year colleges (Kasper, 2003; AACC 2004). Construction was motivated by increased enrollment. Facilities were funded by a robust economy and supported by the social activism of the time, and the number of two-year colleges has steadily grown since the 1960s (AACC, 2004). This growth of facilities coincided with a large increase in student enrollment, from about 1 million students in 1965 to 2.2 million by 1970 (Kasper, 2003).

During the 1970s two-year colleges became a major part of the American educational system, with enrollments doubling again from 2.2 million in 1970 to 4.3 million by 1980 as a result of more baby boomers coming of age, more parents desiring a post secondary education for their children, and students seeking draft deferment during the Vietnam War (Kasper, 2003). Though enrollment increased only 23 percent between 1980 and 1989, today two-year colleges educate more than half the nation's undergraduates (Kasper, 2003). In the 1996-97 academic year, 9.3 million people took credit courses at two-year colleges while another five million took noncredit classes, the majority of which were workforce training courses. Since 1901, at least 100 million people have attended two-year colleges (AACC, 2004). In 2005, 1683 two-year institutions existed: 1061 public and 622 private (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

Profile of the Two-Year Institution

Two-year colleges are grouped as such because they generally serve diverse populations and share a commitment to open access, comprehensiveness, and responsiveness to local needs (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002). However, significant differences exist among and between colleges: differences in size, governance, financial resources, specialized staffing, local involvement with business and industry, and student characteristics (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002). Each state varied in its establishment of two-year college systems and comprehensive community colleges (Boone, 1997). During the growth of two-year colleges, some states, including Virginia and Massachusetts, created entire systems of state community colleges while others, including California and Texas, used state resources to expand local institutions and add

new ones (AACC, 2001). Specifically, North Carolina focused on having economic development as the main thrust of its two-year post-secondary schools, identifying workforce preparedness (vocational education) as the major need its system would address (Boone, 1997). Initially designated as industrial education centers and technical institutes, these two-year institutions were designated as community colleges in 1963 and given a broader mission in addition to technical education: general education, continuing education, and a focus on the community (Boone, 1997).

Another state, South Carolina, wanted its two-year postsecondary institutions viewed as the centerpiece for attracting industry and preparing a workforce for existing and new industries. The schools are comprehensive in terms of programs, but they are designated technical colleges (Boone, 1997). Moreover, Georgia's technical college system was begun in the late 1950s, as returning veterans from Korea and rural citizens displaced by the increasing mechanization of agriculture created an increased demand for technical training (Breeden, n.d.). Ultimately, each two-year college is a distinct educational institution, loosely linked to other two-year colleges by the shared goals of access and service, open admissions, and the tradition of charging low tuition. However, each two-year college has it own mission within the community it serves (AACC, 2004).

The colleges are grouped by The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. In 1970, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed a classification of colleges and universities to support its program of research and policy analysis. Derived from empirical data on colleges and universities, the "Carnegie Classification" was published for use by other researchers in 1973, and subsequently updated in 1976, 1987, 1994 and 2000. For over three decades, the Carnegie

Classification has been the leading framework for describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education; it has been widely used in the study of higher education, both as a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty (Carnegie Foundation, 2006).

The following Carnegie classifications were to classify two-year colleges in this study: Associate's-- According to the degree data, these institutions awarded associate's degrees but no bachelor's degrees.

VS2: Very small two-year. Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of fewer than 500 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

S2: Small two-year. Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 500–1,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

M2: Medium two-year. Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 2,000–4,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

L2: Large two-year. Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 5,000–9,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

VL2: Very large two-year. Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

Changing Mission and Current Challenges within the Two-Year College System

The American two-year college is unique, with that uniqueness resting on a foundation of egalitarian education and democratic ideals (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989). The two-year colleges offer opportunities for lifelong learning, meet workforce needs, meet the social need for access to higher education, educate increasingly

unprepared students, and train individuals to work in an information economy (Milliron & de los Santos, 2004). Nonetheless, two-year colleges must pursue increased involvement in the affairs of the community, increased diversification, continued professional growth of all members, increased collaboration with the economic sector, external funding, and increased accountability (Boone, 1997). Two-year colleges are both old and new: old because they have existed in the same format for 30-40 years—with a commonly understood mission within the community it serves, purpose, and philosophy—and new because they continue to grow and evolve within that common mission (Duvall, 2003). However, threats to the mission exist: inadequate financial support, increasing student costs, financial aid policies, challenges to remedial education, capacity challenges, challenges to image, and problems with transferability (Boggs, 2004).

Two-year colleges are undergoing changes, and their environments are characterized by many challenges. The challenges are: a continuing scarcity of resources; changing student and staff demographics; a shift in emphasis from teaching to student learning and learning outcomes assessment; costly and challenging technological developments; increasing regulation from outside agencies; increasing demands for shared governance from internal constituents; public skepticism about their ability to meet the needs of contemporary consumers; competition from the private sector; blurring of service area boundaries as a result of distance and online learning; and a reduced emphasis on degree completion with a growing interest in other forms of credentialing (Sullivan, 2001). In addition, the colleges must struggle to find relevance in a global economy, face both competition and the move toward privatization, handle the challenges

of distance education, provide competency-based programs, watch as their mission boundaries are blurred, and confront new funding challenges (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000).

<div align="center">Challenges Faced by Two-Year College Presidents</div>

With these changes, three challenges stand out as having the greatest likelihood of impacting the two-year colleges and their presidents: technology, competing demands (finding ways to avoid limiting access and opportunity, while also providing the advanced education that is essential to success in the competitive workplace), and the changing concept of community (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). A more recent study by Cedja and Leist assessed the impact of the challenges reported in the earlier studies (Cedja & Leist, 2006). Survey respondents indicated that external, internal, and technology challenges or issues remained high or very high, and fiscal concerns continue as the dominant challenge facing two-year colleges (Cedja & Leist, 2006). Because two-year colleges are steeped in tradition, process, and institutional culture, change of any significance could potentially generate problems for leadership and must therefore be managed carefully (Phelan, 2005).

During the boom period of community college growth, presidents came from varied backgrounds. Either despite or because of this, the presidents played a major role in shaping the community college's mission and bringing a focus to the presidency (Vaughan, 1988). Originally, the focus was to move into an area, build buildings, hire faculty and staff, recruit students, put the teaching and learning process in motion, and sell the idea of the college. The focus is on the position itself (Vaughan, 1988). The function of the presidency is to manage the institution, create the campus climate, and

interpret and communicate the institution's mission (Vaughan, 1988). The president must be the institution's educational leader if these functions are to be effectively carried out (Vaughan, 1988).

Consequently, two-year college presidents face a number of changes in the 21st century. The challenges motivated by these changes are: application of technology in teaching and learning; emphasis on assessing learning outcomes; public concerns for institutional accountability; the management of information (student, employee, financial) within the institution; community relations; raising funds from both public and private sources; media relations; federal and state legal issues; litigation; personnel management; internal constituent relations including governance; collective bargaining; state and local finance issues including facility bonds; facility management; accreditation requirements; and fair treatment of intellectual property (Duvall, 2003). The roles and directions of two-year colleges, therefore, are changing. There is a move to offer bachelor's degrees and to expand programming beyond transfer education and vocational instruction (Hammons & Miller, 2006). There is a move to shift from local funding bases to competing for state allocations (Hammons & Miller, 2006). There is a move to engage in more fundraising than every before, and there is even a move to manage intercollegiate athletic programs (Hammons & Miller, 2006).

The changes and challenges have begun to impact leadership. By a survey, conducted by Amey and VanDerLinden, two-year college presidents indicated that institutional missions had expanded, funding issues and state-required accountability had appeared, and technology had helped change the means in which missions were accomplished (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). For the future, these presidents see an

increase in the need for vocational training, the use of technology in instruction and administration, and increased development of certificate and baccalaureate programs (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002).

A variety of external issues also face two-year college presidents, and those issues differ by region (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). In the Southeast, for example, state financial support, links to business and industry, and meeting the needs of the community were the issues of highest importance, much like the rest of the nation. However, the Southeast, more so than other regions, cited as important K-12 student preparation, accountability to government agencies, and fund raising. Internal issues exist as well (Amey & VanDerLinden). Ranked highest were student retention, creation of new program delivery systems, student recruitment and marketing, fiscal management and resource allocation, and strategic planning (Amey & VanDerLinden).

Therefore, the challenges of meeting the needs of two-year college presidents for 2010 and beyond are evident, and the old assumptions made about leadership cannot be relied upon in a technological, fast-paced environment, with a growing ethnically diverse population (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). With those changes and challenges, presidents should constantly analyze what leadership not only should be, but must be, if two-year colleges are to meet the challenges facing them (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). The challenge is to preserve the mission and values of the two-year college; consequently, recent research has documented the need to prepare future presidents (Boggs, 2004).

Need for Prepared Presidents

What is needed to enhance the quality and clarity of the two-year college mission is excellent leadership (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989). However, the shortage of long-term, successful presidents threatens the two-year college system (Carroll & Romero, 2003). Today's presidents operate in a more complex world and are expected to respond even more quickly to meet emerging community and national needs. However, in an American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) survey in 2001, respondents declared that they were not prepared for several aspects of two-year college leadership, including internal and external relationships, fundraising and financial management, working with governing boards, and incivility in campus communities (Boggs, 2003). Therefore, developing a new generation of senior leadership for the two-year colleges is essential if the colleges are to operate successfully in the changing and thus complex environment (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 1999). Presidents must possess a solid commitment to and participate in continuous learning because of the ever-changing higher education landscape (Phelan, 2005). However, unlike business and industry, academia does not provide systematic processes for leadership development, so everyone has to figure out the learning processes and lessons independently (McDade, 1997).

Differences between the Presidencies of Two and Four-year Colleges

The dilemma of the presidency is reaping the rewards of public satisfaction, while bearing the blame for public unhappiness (March & Weiner, 2003). The strengths, style, and weaknesses of the college president will also be seen as those of the college (Whisnant, 1990). Moreover, the challenges of leading a two-year college have expanded in the last decade and become increasingly complex, while the tenure has become shorter

(Wallin, 2003). Two-year colleges, far more than four-year institutions, are called upon to serve a variety of educational functions—adult basic education, remedial education, job training and certification, workforce skill development, continuing education, and transfer preparation—and very diverse student populations, while operating with lower levels of staffing, heavier teaching loads, less adequate physical facilities, and fewer academic resources (Institute of Higher Education Policy, 2006). Because of the complexity of the mission, two-year college presidents face different challenges than those with less complexity in their mission.

The role of today's two-year college presidents is difficult due to inadequate resources (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). The presidents of two-year institutions are expected to meet a governing board's needs for counsel, inspire faculty and staff in matters of curriculum and instruction, serve as a model of ethical behavior, and provide the vision for the entire community without the advantages enjoyed by many university presidents. University presidents often have a foundation to provide financial flexibility, a small army of support staff to meet needs, faculty tenure, and the prestige of the position (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). University presidents were once selected because of their record as scholars—research writing, grants, and theory building—and their training has been on the job, moving through the ranks, taking advantage of leadership development programs offered by professional associations or universities. However, those qualities do not match the missions and functions of the two-year college (Piland & Wolf, 2003). Good two-year college presidents possess the characteristics of master teachers, mentors, agents for change, and community builders (Hines, 1992). In addition, presidents must constantly learn and adjust their conceptions of leadership (Eddy, 2005).

Currently, three skills are needed to face the changing nature of the two-year college presidency: the ability to manage the completion of tasks; a commitment to developing human resources; and the ability to lead organizational change (Wallin, 2003). Even though leadership shows itself uniquely in each two-year college, one important common element is the connection of leader behavior to leadership—what leaders feel and how they act it out (Wharton, 1997). Future leaders will be needed, especially leaders who demonstrate knowledge and skills of 21st century leaders (Boggs, 2003).

<center>Need for a Coherent Knowledge Base</center>

Although leaders with specific skills will be needed, the lack of a coherent knowledge base in two-year college leadership exists (Brown, Martinez, &Daniel, 2002). Roeuche, Baker, and Rose published a 1989 study of the two-year college presidency. In their study, the researchers attempted to identify writings associated with the leadership styles and qualities of two-year college presidents over a twenty-year span, using ERIC, professional journals associated with the two-year college movement, doctoral dissertations, and other selected publications. The researchers discovered that much had been written about two-year colleges, about leadership styles and qualities, and about four-year college presidents. However, when the authors focused on leadership styles and qualities of two-year college presidents, the literature was deficient.

Research regarding two-year college presidents began to emerge near the end of the twentieth century. Presidents were encouraged to concern themselves with delegation, personnel selection, decision-making, interpersonal skills, knowledge of and commitment to the mission, planning, organizing, information processing, public relations,

professionalism, finance/budgeting, performance appraisal, a peer network, and scholarly

writing (Hammons & Keller, 1990). The literature from the same time was concerned

with institutional vision and revitalization, ethical leadership, institutional empowerment

and transformation, political leadership, and institutional conceptualization and survival

(Duncan & Harlacher, 1991). In the meantime, the participants in the American

Association of Community Colleges 1993 Presidents Academy reported that presidents

need communication skills, resource management ability, technologic literacy, people

skills, global orientation, and sensitivity to issues of cultural and economic diversity

(Addy, 1995).

By the end of the twentieth century, additional research revealed more insight into

leadership for two-year institutions. For example, three qualities to be considered as

prerequisites for a successful presidency were personal adaptability, role flexibility, and

sound judgment (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). Seven major themes of the two-year college

presidency were discussed: creating a shared vision; communicating the vision; building

relationships; developing a supporting organizational culture; guiding implementation;

exhibiting character; and achieving results (Pielstick, 1998). One group— McFarlin,

Crittenden, and Ebbers (1999)—even named the nine characteristics of an outstanding

president: completion of a terminal degree; the study of higher education and two-year

college leadership; scholarly publishing and presentations; preparation as an agent of

change; previous career position; participating as a protégé in a mentor-protégé

relationship; using peer networks; previous participation in a leadership preparation

activity; and knowledge of contemporary technology (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers,

1999).

At the turn of the century, presidents were encouraged to possess vision, integrity, confidence, courage, technical knowledge, ability to collaborate, persistence, good judgment, and the desire to lead (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000). Others recommended teamwork, information sharing, core competency focus, customer service emphasis, and market foresight (Alfred & Rosevear, 2000). A new skill set was named: effective listening and feedback skills; effective writing skills; developing and communicating a vision; conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation skills; understanding of the two-year college mission; understanding of interpersonal communication; effective public speaking skills; institutional effectiveness; assessment and analysis; curriculum development; and organizing and time management skills (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002). In addition, three skills were named of most importance and value to the two-year college president: budget management; developing positive relationships with local political leaders; and developing positive relationships with state political leaders (Wallin, 2003). More recently, further skills were named: financial planning know how; ability to forge partnerships; ability to improve and maintain relationships within and outside the college; ability to develop and clear vision for the college; excellent communication skills; political savvy; and adaptability (Boggs, 2004). Future presidents are also warned about the leading threats to the legitimacy of a presidency: being a cultural misfit; exhibiting managerial incompetence; allowing the erosion of social capital; showing inattentiveness; being grandiose; and participating in misconduct (Bornstein, 2003).

One of the concerns for the future of the two-year college presidency is that future presidents may not be introduced in any systematic fashion to the most basic, but not

necessarily obvious, qualities upon which all effective presidencies will be based in the next century (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). The research also reveals that professional development remains an individual set of activities, and there seems to be little systematic effort to support the development of future leaders (Amey, 2005). Therefore, the current efforts of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to examine what is needed to "lead forward" are important in closing the gap between what future presidents need to know and how they will acquire that knowledge (Amey, 2005).

Challenges to Leadership Preparation

In the early years of two-year colleges, leaders and administrators had backgrounds much like their faculty, holding master's degrees, and the experience gained moving through the ranks was seen as sufficient preparation (Duvall, 2003). However, in the 1950s and 1960s, the doctoral degree became important for two reasons: a desire to professionalize the role and the rapid growth of the colleges that left no time to develop leaders in-house (Duvall). This trend continued, and the doctoral degree is almost a necessity for those attempting to attain the presidency or any other top-level leadership position (Duvall). Interestingly enough, among institutions of higher education, only two-year colleges fill most of their presidencies with education-degree holders (Vaughan, 2004).

In the next 10 years two-year colleges will need to replace 60 percent of the presidents (Shults, 2001). However, preparation of presidents and other two-year college leaders has declined (Shults). In addition, the number of people prepared to step into leadership roles at higher levels has fallen: the number of advanced degrees conferred in two-year college administration decreased 78 percent between 1983 and 1997 (Shults).

University-based Educational Administration Degrees

However, 140 university-based degree programs have some coursework in the two-year college (Boggs, 2003). The AACC has identified sixteen programs with two-year college emphasis (Duvall, 2003). Nevertheless, education degrees themselves are under fire. University-based educational administration programs are criticized as suffering from (1) curricular disarray, (2) low admissions and graduation standards, (3) weak faculty, (4) inadequate clinical instruction, (5) inappropriate degrees, and (6) poor research (Levine, 2005). Doctoral education should do the following: (1) shorten the time to the degree, (2) determine the essence of the degree, (3) develop more diversity among degree recipients, (4) increase students' exposure to technology, (5) prepare students for a wider variety of professional options, (6) incorporate an understanding of the global economy and environment, and (7) make interdisciplinary work a more integral part of doctoral education (Center for Instructional Development, 2001).

Relevancy of the Higher Education Degree

Even though a degree with emphasis in two-year college leadership is characteristic of presidents labeled outstanding by their peers (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 1999), the relevancy of the higher education degree and the preparation of those graduates are also in question. The leadership challenges have changed, but the leadership programs have not, and alumni are dissatisfied with the programs (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002) Community college leaders who graduated from higher education leadership programs say that what they learned in school did not prepare them for what they face on the job (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel). Emerging leaders receive no

job training, (2) university programs, and (3) leadership development through professional organizations (Piland & Wolf, 2003). In addition, colleges do not invest in developing leaders unless the time and resource investment is minimal; therefore, those institutions are not interested in developing leaders who may leave (Piland & Wolf).

Filling the Presidential Vacancies

The changes in the presidential role have resulted in fewer people wanting to become presidents (Basinger, 2002).To compound the shortage issue, intense competition to secure outstanding people drives presidential turnover (Basinger, 2002). In a 2001 AACC survey of two-year presidents, nearly 40% of current presidents indicated there was a possibility they would seek or accept another leadership position within the next five years, and of that group, 73% said they were interested in another two-year college presidency (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). However, 79% plan to retire within 10 years (Weisman & Vaughan).

Selecting the Presidents to Fill the Vacancies

Two-year college presidential succession is controlled by governing boards, which select replacements, establish new expectations, or reaffirm existing practices and policies (Kirkland & Ratcliffe, 1994). Selecting a new president is a pivotal event with significant potential for long-term impact on the college (Kirkland & Ratcliffe, 1994). The selection process and the successor may create insecurity among faculty and staff, yet on the other hand, the succession may produce harmony and rebuilding following the tenure of an unsatisfactory predecessor (Kirkland & Ratcliffe, 1994). A governing board may change CEOs to signal a shift in how it envisions the future of the college, and the new CEO is expected to conform to the board's vision (Kirkland & Ratcliffe, 1994).

Trustees set goals and then turn over operations to the president and staff (Yates &

Roach, 2000). When the board does not have an agreed upon list of objectives, a new

president will run into problems (Strout, 2005). Further, the AGB concluded that

presidential reviews should be carried our annually in order to identify weak presidents

sooner in order to either give them help or replace them and to identify strong presidents

sooner and encourage them to stay longer (Davis & Davis, 1999). Researchers assert that

without intervention, the reduction in size and quality of leadership pools will continue

(Piland & Wolf, 2003). There is no more important task with regard to leadership

development than identifying the competencies that comprise leadership (Tubbs &

Schultz, 2006).

Ninety percent of presidents were employed at a two-year college before

becoming president, and leadership development can be nurtured to increase the capacity

for becoming a president. Those steps are as follows: be employed at a community

college; move into a low-level administrative position; return to graduate school for a

doctorate in higher education; do not alienate the current president; continue to move

through the ranks on the academic side rather than through student affairs or

administrative services; apply for a presidency after becoming a vice president; interview

well with trustees and faculty members (Vaughan, 2004).

<div align="center">Development of a Coherent Knowledge Base</div>

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) accepted the

challenge to identify leadership competencies needed for 21st century presidents. Two-

year colleges celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2001. In that same year, the AACC

renewed its mission statement to respond to changes taking place in higher education,

primarily the impending vacancies of college presidencies resulting from a large number of retirements during the next decade (AACC, 2002). Therefore, the mission statement included leadership development as a strategic action area.

In March 2001, the AACC's CEO George Boggs convened a Leadership Summit for two-year college leaders—college presidents, AACC board members, members of leadership programs, and representatives of university doctoral programs—to come together to discuss the leadership crisis and address issues such as the leadership pipeline, diversity, leader skills and knowledge base, leadership programs, program delivery methods, and partnerships (AACC, 2002). Afterwards, the AACC board chair created the Leadership Task Force to follow on the work of the summit. This group created a statement of the problem—retirements and changes in two-year colleges have created an urgency for developing future leaders—and a resulting plan for action divided into three categories: recruitment of presidents and upper-level managers; preparation of presidents and upper-level managers; and support needed to sustain presidents and upper-level managers (AACC, 2002). From those endeavors, the AACC initiated some recommended activities, such as the creation of an online career center, a leadership program database, and a variety of preparation plans and support activities. The Leadership Task Force also identified the characteristics and professional skills that all leaders of community colleges should have and that should be addressed in any professional development program. The effective community college president characteristics were as follows: understanding and implementing the community college mission; effective advocacy; administrative skills; community development; and personal, interpersonal, and transformational skills (AACC, 2002).

Following those efforts, the Future Leaders Institute (FLI) was introduced in

2003. The AACC describes the FLI as "an innovative five-day leadership seminar

designed for mid-level community college administrators who are ready to move into a

higher level of leadership and who are currently in a position that is responsible for

multiple employees, including faculty, administrators and/or staff and probably have

titles such as Vice President, Dean, Associate Dean or Director" (AACC, 2004). In April

2003 the AACC presented the database of leadership programs, a Web-based inventory

of both university-based higher education administration programs and non-degree

professional programs which may or may not be university-based. In May 2003, the

AACC announced the awarding of a 1.9 million dollar grant from the W.K. Kellogg

Foundation that would fund a planning grant for AACC's program Leading Forward, a

major national initiative to address the shortage of community college leaders that would

use the Effective Community College Presidents document as its foundation (AACC,

2004).

The first Leading Forward Summit was held in November 2003. Through a series

of meetings with affiliated councils of the American Association of Community

Colleges; representatives of colleges, states and consortia that had their own leadership

programs; representatives of community colleges that had geographic and other special

challenges; and representatives of universities with higher education administration

graduate degree programs, the first phase of Leading Forward wanted to produce a

framework, endorsed by the various stakeholders mentioned above, that used an array of

strategies to develop new community college leaders (AACC, 2004). The representatives

at the meetings brainstormed about the knowledge, skills and values they consider

essential for effective community college leaders, shared their ideas about ways to develop new leaders, and suggested ways to make the national framework comprehensive and useful (AACC, 2004).

In August 2004 the AACC introduced the Leading Forward Web site, which detailed the work from the meetings and provided a qualitative analysis of the work of the summit. ACT (formerly American College Testing) synthesized the opinions of over 150 participants using the AACC's facilitated discussion format, which involved worksheets that contained predetermined questions (Vincent, 2004). The AACC spent September and October 2004 reviewing that analysis and collecting the leadership competency recommendations to develop a competency framework. Competency models are used to establish qualifications and improve leadership effectiveness (Emiliani, 2003).

By December 2004, the AACC had held a series of meetings refining the competencies and created an online survey that was then sent to all Leading Forward Summit participants: 36 representatives of 19 affiliated councils of the American Association of Community Colleges totaling; 19 representatives of colleges, states and consortia that have their own leadership programs; 31 representatives of community colleges that have geographic and other special challenges; 30 representatives of universities with higher education administration graduate degree programs; and 9 advisory board members (AACC, 2006). Each of the six core competencies—organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism—was given with a definition (see next section) and a series of illustrations of the competency. The survey's first question for each competency asked participants, "How essential is this competency to effective performance as a community

college leader?" The choices were "not at all," "minimally," "moderately," "very," and

"extremely." The second question of the survey asked, "How well does your leadership

program prepare its students to apply this competency?" and used the same ratings. Of

those 125 surveys, 95 were returned for a 76% response rate (AACC, 2006). Participants

approved the competencies as very or extremely essential to effective two-year college

leadership (AACC, 2006).

<div align="center">Identified Leadership Competencies</div>

In April 2005 the AACC announced that the Board of Directors unanimously

approved six competencies, referred to as the Competencies for Community College

Leaders. These competencies are: organizational strategy; resource management;

communication; collaboration; two-year college advocacy; and professionalism. The

competencies provided a framework, and the AACC encouraged research using the

competencies that will inform leadership programs and best practices (Ottenritter, 2006).

Further, one of the best practices of leadership development is having a clear

understanding of what leadership is and what effective leaders do, and these competency-

based models have the advantage of offering specific attributes and frameworks

(McDaniel, 2002). Once the competencies are identified, the leadership development

process can more effectively focus (Bueno & Tubbs, 2004). The issue of leadership

training for future two-year college presidents is of interest to current two-year college

presidents (Hammons & Miller, 2006).

Organizational Strategy

In reviewing the competencies, the AACC description of organizational strategy

asserts that an effective community college president strategically improves the quality of

the institution, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends (AACC, 2005). To complete these tasks, two-year college presidents must develop an environment that supports innovation (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Boggs, 2004). In addition, two-year college presidents must maintain and grow college resources and assets (Johnson, 2001; Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2003); Wenrich & Reid, 2003). Two-year college presidents must also use data-driven evidence and proven practices to solve problems, make decisions, and plan strategically (Hammons & Keller, 1990; McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 1999; Martin & Marion, 2005). Two-year college presidents must also assess, develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to continuously improve the quality of education and the long-term health of the organization (Amey &VanDerLinden, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Boggs, 2004).

One of the most important aspects of organizational functioning has always been the role of leaders and leadership (Amey, 2005). Therefore, a significant need exists to provide individuals with the leadership competencies that are essential to their responsibility to diagnose, change, and lead campus cultures because both effectiveness and quality can be managed and improved (Smart, 2003). Ultimately, the effectiveness of the leader and the organization is related to the leader's ability to respond appropriately to a wide range of situations (Smart, 2003). Organizational strategy involves three essential skills: decentralization of leadership authority and the rising importance of teams, an emphasis on conflict resolution, and the ability to facilitate individual and organizational learning (Wallin, 2003). Nonetheless, researchers usually focus on the relationship

between the effectiveness of colleges and universities and the managerial behaviors of campus leaders has been on four-year institutions, so the extent that findings are applicable in a two-year college is largely unknown (Smart, 2003). More research is needed in this area because of several factors: so many two-year colleges exist and enroll so many students; the institutions tend to be younger than the universities; and the institutions are still undergoing organizational change (Smart, 2003).

Resource Management

The next competency area is resource management. An effective two-year college president equitably sustains people, processes, information, physical, and financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the two-year college (AACC, 2005). To complete these tasks, two-year college presidents must ensure accountability in reporting (Boone, 1997; Sullivan, 2001; Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Duvall, 2003). Two-year college presidents must also manage conflict and change for the long-term viability of the organization (McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers, 1999; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Wallin, 2003; Duvall, 2003). In addition, two-year college presidents must also implement financial strategies to support programs, services, staff, and facilities (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Addy, 1995; Johnson, 2001; Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Boggs, 2004). Two-year college presidents must also develop and manage resource assessment, planning, budgeting, acquisition, and allocation processes, consistent with the college master plan (Johnson, 2001; Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Wallin, 2003; Boggs, 2004).

One function of leadership is to enhance the ability of the organization to meet objectives (Martin & Marion, 2005). However, decision makers still lack access to key

information necessary for informed decision making because the information frequently

exists but only a fraction of the data are captured, processed, stored, and available in an

organized manner (Guan, Nunez, & Welsh, 2002). In addition, institutional research

offices have not grown nearly so much as the demands for additional information would

warrant (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Thus understanding and applying methods of

enhancing knowledge processing will create an environment that not only identifies but

welcomes knowledge gaps, and the ability to identify these knowledge gaps is a key

leadership skill because higher education stakeholders are interested in accountability

(Martin & Marion, 2005).

Resource management is not only concerned with information. Leadership is also

an issue of matching organizational needs with human resource capabilities (Rowley &

Sherman, 2003). In 1997, new presidents reported that the financial health of the college

was the most disappointing aspect of the job, but by 1999 the main disappointments dealt

with personnel: difficult people, negative climates, and hostility toward the

administration (Kubala & Bailey, 2001). While the campus has some similarity to

professional service firms, one important difference is the autonomy of the faculty, which

presents the leader with a unique set of problems that can be more severe than those in

the professional organizations (Rowley & Sherman, 2003). Therefore, leaders should

develop a strategy for achieving inclusion through a commitment to diversity at all levels

of the workforce (McCuiston, Wooldridge, & Pierce, 2004).

Finally, resource management involves finances. As educational institutions face

accountability issues with government funding entities, alumni, and industry donors, the

administrations should operate more like private businesses and address capacity

planning issues such as management of assets and strategic planning (Johnson, 2001). In addition, presidents must consider fundraising as a responsibility and view the other roles and daily activities from a fundraising perspective (Wenrich & Reid, 2003).

Communication

Following resource management is the area of communication. Research suggests that the presence of a formal communication competency model is not common within organizations (Shaw, 2005). To create a formal competency, the AACC declared that an effective two-year college president uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community, promote the success of all students, and sustain the community college mission (AACC, 2005). To complete these tasks, two-year college presidents must share and support policies and strategies (Alfred & Rosevear, 2000; Duvall, 2003; Payne, 2005). Two-year college presidents must also articulate and champion shared mission, vision, and values internally and externally (Pielstick, 1998; Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Boggs, 2004). In addition, two-year college presidents must engage in active listening to understand, comprehend, analyze, and remember (Addy, 1995; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Boggs, 2004; Payne, 2005). Two-year college presidents must also convey ideas frequently and inclusively through media and verbal and nonverbal means (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Addy, 1995; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Duvall, 2003; Boggs, 2004; Payne, 2005; Tubbs & Schulz, 2006).

Leaders who do not communicate well are not really leading at all (Clutterbuck & Hirst, 2002). High levels of communication competence—the overall impression one has of a communicator who meets interaction goals at both an appropriate and an effective

level—are important to organizations (Payne, 2005). These effective communication competencies include demonstrating appropriate emotional intelligence, active listening, non-defensiveness, appropriate and skillful use of language and body language, effective interviewing, effective negotiation, rumor control, techno-etiquette, and presentation skills (Tubbs & Schulz, 2006). Though good communicators do not necessarily make good leaders, effective leaders are also effective communicators (Clutterbuck & Hirst, 2002).

Collaboration

Building from the communication competency is that of collaboration. An effective two-year college president develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, and mutually beneficial internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promote the success of all students, and sustain the two-year college mission (AACC, 2005). To complete these tasks, two-year college presidents must facilitate shared problem solving and decision making (Alfred & Rosevear, 2000; Wallin, 2003; Boggs, 2004). Two-year college presidents must work effectively and diplomatically with unique constituent groups (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In addition, two year college presidents must resolve conflict, manage change, and build and maintain productive relationships (Wallin, 2003; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Payne, 2005). To-year college presidents must also leverage networks and partnerships to advance mission, vision, and goal of the community college (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Boggs, 2004; Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005; McCall, 2005).

Two-year colleges work best when they work within their communities in relationships with agencies and the people they serve, so presidents need to become active and remain active in their communities (Lang & Kneisley, 2005). Also, an effective president is one who forges business and industry connections (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). An agenda for economic development must be made at the local level because the emphasis for some communities is on skills training for highly technical jobs, while for others the focus is on partnerships for business and industry training. In addition, two-year colleges must respond to the need to develop entrepreneurship in their communities to foster economic development (McCall, 2005).

Advocacy

In addition to collaborating to build the colleges, presidents must advocate for them. An effective two-year college president understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the two-year colleges (AACC, 2005). To complete these tasks, two-year college presidents must advocate the two-year college mission to all constituents (Pielstick, 1998; Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Boggs, 2004; Gould, 2005). Two-year college presidents must also value and promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and excellence (Addy, 1995; McCuiston, Wooldridge, & Pierce, 2004; Gould, 2005). In addition, two-year college presidents must demonstrate a passion for and commitment to open access and student access (Boggs, 2004; Milliron & de los Santos, 2004). Two-year college presidents must represent the two-year college in the local community, in the broader educational community, and in various levels of government (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Weisman & Vaughan, 2002;

Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Wallin, 2003; Boggs, 2004; Lang & Kneisley, 2005; Gould, 2005).

Presidents must enhance and protect the image of two-year colleges (Boggs, 2004). Because the colleges present themselves either as workforce trainers, four-year transfer schools, or adult basic education providers—and never all at the same time—the public has little appreciation for the impact of the colleges (Gould, 2005). In order to get much-needed support, presidents must talk about the colleges in terms of the opportunities they create for people, education the public about the problems colleges face and ask for help, remind the public of the role of the legislators and hold them accountable for failing to expand a system that helps so many, and stress the unique roles of the colleges instead of comparing them to four-year institutions because the two-year colleges are popular in their own right (Gould, 2005).

Professionalism

The final competency defined by AACC is that of professionalism. An effective two-year college president sets high standards for self and others, works continuously to improve self and surroundings, demonstrates accountability to and for the institution, and works for the long-term viability of the college and community (AACC, 2005). To complete these tasks, two-year college presidents must demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for the mission of two-year colleges (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Boggs, 2004; Gould, 2005). Two-year college presidents must also self-assess performance regularly using feedback, reflection, goal setting, and evaluation (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Phelan, 2005; Eddy, 2005). In addition, two-year college presidents must understand the impact of perceptions, world view, and emotions on self and others (Addy, 1995; Brown,

Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Briggs, 2004; Payne, 2005). Two-year college presidents must

also promote and maintain high standards for personal and organizational integrity,

honesty, and respect for people (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Duncan & Harlacher, 1991;

Pielstick, 1998; Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; March & Weiner, 2003; Briggs, 2004).

Professionalism could be defined as the espousal of a set of values or codes and is

observed in the way managers perceive and conduct their role (Briggs, 2004). Moreover,

presidents should understand that a primary administrative talent is not one of knowing

how to make a good decision, but of knowing how to manage impressions, making the

institution look good in the eyes of others and creating an illusion of direction and control

(March & Weiner, 2003).

<div align="center">Factors Influencing Competency Usage</div>

The AACC developed the Competencies for Community College Leaders.

Nonetheless, effective leadership has both a content and a context, and presidents must

recognize the who and the how within the where of specific circumstances and

institutional cultures (Hines, 1992). All leadership occurs in some context (Bueno &

Tubbs, 2004). A new president coming from a business background, for example, may

make sense of the position of president quite differently (Eddy, 2005). New presidents

must develop an understanding of the institution's strengths, it possibilities, and its

problems before they can begin initiatives (Anderson, 2006).

Size

Geographic and college size differences add to experiences presidents draw upon

(Eddy, 2005). In study after study—whether the topic of concern is students, curriculum,

library holdings, or unit costs—institutional size, more than any other characteristic,

differentiates publicly supported institutions from one another (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Classifying colleges by size allows for comparisons that are descriptive, valid, readily

available, and easily understandable (Cohen, 2003). Instruction uses a higher percentage

of educational and general expenses in smaller institutions while larger institutions are

characterized by their higher percentage of part-time enrollments and the receipt of

greater proportions of their income from government grants (Cohen, 2003). In addition,

the organizational structure varies by institution size (Underwood & Hammons, 1999).

Underwood and Hammons labeled small institutions as enrollment under 2,500, mid-size

as enrollment of 2,501-5000, and large as enrollment over 5, 000. While the traditional

organizational model of a president with three to four vice-presidents was consistent

across institutions, small and mid-size institutions are organized by instructional divisions

while large institutions had both departments and divisions (Underwood & Hammons,

1999). One to five instructional units was common for small institutions while six to ten

was average for the mid-size and larger institutions (Underwood & Hammons, 1999).

Identifying the organizational structures helps prepare those seeking an administrative

career in two-year institutions because following trends and using available data

concerning administrative structures becomes useful to gain support for decisions to

approve or disapprove requests for new positions or configurations (Underwood &

Hammons, 1999).

Gender

More women are middle-level administrators than senior-level (VanDerLinden,

2004). However, few significant differences in the educational levels, professional

development activities, and mentoring activities of male and female administrators exist

at the presidency level (VanDerLinden, 2004). Fewer women obtain the doctorate degree and are thus not qualified for the presidency and other higher-level jobs (VanDerLinden, 2004). Women need more advantages to obtain positions of power, but they feel that they exercise their power to the same extent as men (Vianello,2004). Once in the position, no significant difference in effectiveness and gender exists (Thompson, 2000).

However, males are determined more qualified than females—regardless of professional title—in characteristics that equate to leadership potential (Dennis & Kunkel, 2004). Thus, women either adapt to a male leadership style (characterizes as a depersonalized communication style), conform to expectations of traditional standards and values, or resist and create a style based on relationships and create a context for that style to be accepted (Tedrow, 1999).

Leadership and management styles of men and women differ because men and women see the world differently, respond to it differently, and communicate about it differently (Addy, 1995). The difference between the sexes is greater in educational institutions (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Women leaders have an inclusive, team building leadership style of problem solving and decision making (Laff, 2007). Women are less remote, consult more, pay more attention to detail, and encourage new ideas (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Women leaders contribute these aspects: communication and cooperation; affiliation and attachment; and intimacy and nurture (Billing & Alvesson, 2000). Characteristics such as encouraging participation; sharing power and information; and enhancing others' self-worth, getting others excited about their work and energizing them are highlighted among women (Billing & Alvesson, 2000).

Length of Tenure

Length of time in office is also critical to the ability of presidents to be effective, but the larger and more complex the institutions, the shorter the average time in office for the presidents (Davis & Davis, 1999). Presidents need time to strengthen an institution, especially academically, but short term presidents do not have the necessary time to do so (Davis & Davis, 1999). Therefore, a president's tenure should be at least five years for that president to have been effective (Davis & Davis, 1999). On the other hand, institutions may be better off with shorter rather than longer presidential terms (Birnbaum, 1993). The improvement of the institution is more important than presidential survival (Birnbaum, 1993). In addition, if the board made a poor choice for president, a shorter tenure is better (Davis & Davis, 1999). Finally, a president may choose to change jobs for personal or professional gain (Davis & Davis, 1999).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

External, internal, and technology challenges or issues remained high or very high, and fiscal concerns continue as the dominant challenge facing two-year colleges (Cedja & Leist, 2006). (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). Highest-ranked internal issues were student retention, creation of new program delivery systems, student recruitment and marketing, fiscal management and resource allocation, and strategic planning (Amey & VanDerLinden).

Because of the changes and challenges to the two-year college presidency, a significant need exists to provide individuals with leadership skills that are essential to their responsibility to diagnose, change, and lead campus cultures because both effectiveness and quality can be managed and improved (Smart, 2003). The ability to

lead organizational change is a skill needed to face the changing nature of the two-year college presidency (Wallin, 2003).

The focus is on the position itself (Vaughan, 1988). The function of the presidency is to manage the institution, create the campus climate, and interpret and communicate the institution's mission (Vaughan, 1988). The president must be the institution's educational leader if these functions are to be effectively carried out (Vaughan, 1988).

With the call by the AACC for studying the competencies in context, the researcher has planned this study. The two-year college has progressed from being an extension of high school to being on the forefront of meeting the higher education needs of many Americans. The two-year college system has experienced challenges and changes that impact its leaders, and its leaders need preparation to meet those challenges. With the identification of leadership competencies and their evaluation by the leaders themselves, two-year college presidents will have a clearer understanding of leadership needed to meet those challenges.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Those who lead and will lead two-year colleges may benefit from a coherent knowledge base concerning the six leadership competencies considered important to current presidents: organizational strategy; resource management; communication; collaboration; two-year college advocacy; and professionalism. The American Association of Community Colleges (2005) developed the Competencies for Community College Leaders, a framework for best practices. An analysis of the importance of those competencies by sitting two-year college presidents was the focus of this study. An understanding of the differences in the relative ranking of the competencies by gender, length of tenure, and institution size may yield insight into the relative importance of the competencies.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do two-year college presidents rank American Association of Community College leadership competencies important to the presidents of the two-year institution?

2. To what extent do the rankings of the competencies differ by the institutional factor of size?

3. To what extent do the rankings of the competencies differ by the individual factors of gender and length of tenure?

Research Design

The study was a quantitative design, employing a survey for data collection. In 2005, a population of 1683 two-year institutions existed in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). The sample for this study were 425 sitting two-year college presidents from the sixteen states in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) service area, who were surveyed to determine their ranking of leadership competencies identified by the American Association of Community Colleges (2005).

The SREB is comprised of states with strong two-year college systems and good capacity for data collection in addition to some of the highest growth states in the nation (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2006). Created in 1948 by Southern states, SREB helps government and education leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, to improve the social and economic life of the region (SREB, 2006). SREB assists state leaders by directing attention to key education issues; collecting, compiling and analyzing comparable data; and conducting broad studies and initiating discussions that help states and institutions form long-range plans, actions and policy proposals (SREB, 2006). Covering areas in the Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, and Southwest, the member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Regardless of region, in 2001 the top three important external issues facing community colleges were state financial support for programs and teaching, linkages with business and industry, and meeting community needs, while internal issues were student retention, creation of new program delivery systems, and student recruitment (Amey &

VanDerLinden, 2002). Because the issues were consistent across their sample, the researchers considered them characteristic of postsecondary education (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). Thus using a regional, rather than a national sample, does not limit generalizability of the findings of a study of the two-year college presidents.

The ultimate goal of survey research is to learn about a large population by surveying a sample of the population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). For a population of 1,683, a sample of 425 is sufficient (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). With 170 respondents the sampling error is approximately 10% (Fowler, 2002). Surveys identify facts about the behaviors and situations of people that can be obtained only by asking a sample of people about themselves (Fowler, 2002). A researcher who surveys participants may then tabulate the responses and then draw inferences about the particular population from the responses of the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This study was designed to determine two-year college presidents' rankings of the competencies for two-year college presidents as developed by the American Association of Community Colleges.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

Two-year college presidents from 422 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) institutions were surveyed. The targeted participants were identified through the Southern Regional Education Board, which comprises 16 states. There are 425 two-year schools, as designated by their Carnegie Classification, represented in the sample selection. The sample for the study was sitting presidents from the 2005 Carnegie Classification of the undergraduate instructional program "associates," which are institutions that award associate's degrees but no bachelor's degrees. Participants were identified using the current Southern Regional Education Board membership list,

available at the SREB Web site, http://www.sreb.org and the Carnegie Classification of

Institutions of Higher Education available at

http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/

Instrumentation

A researcher-adapted survey was the instrument used for data collection. The 24-

item survey was a modification of the AACC survey, which used 41 items to illustrate the

six competencies of organizational strategy, resource management, communication,

collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism (AACC, 2004). Items selected for the

survey were based on a review of the literature in those six general areas (see Table 1).

The researcher had permission from the AACC to use the survey (Appendix A).

Table1

Survey Items Mapped to the Six Competencies of Two-Year College Presidents

Competency/ Survey Items	Item Topic	Research Literature
Organizational Strategy		
1	Develop an environment that supports innovation	Amey & VanDerLinden (2002); Boggs (2004)
7	Maintain and grow college resources and assets	Johnson (2001); Weisman & Vaughan (2002); Amey & VanDerLinden (2002); Cohen & Brawer (2003); Wenrich & Reid (2003)
13	Use data-driven evidence and proven practices to solve problems, make decisions, and plan strategically	Hammons & Keller (1990); McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers (1999); Martin & Marion (2005)
19	Assess, develop, implement and evaluate strategies to continuously improve the quality of education and the long-term health of the organization	Amey & VanDerLinden (2002); Johnson (2001); Boggs (2004)
Resource Management		
2	Ensure accountability in reporting	Boone (1997); Sullivan (2001); Amey & VanDerLinden (2002); Duvall (2003)
8	Manage conflict and change for the long-term viability of the organization	McFarlin, Crittenden, & Ebbers (1999); Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002); Wallin (2003); Duvall (2003)
14	Implement financial strategies to support programs, services, staff, and facilities	Hammons & Keller (1990); Addy (1995); Johnson (2001); Amey & VanDerLinden (2002); Boggs (2004)
20	Develop and manage resource assessment, planning, budgeting, acquisition, and allocation processes, consistent with the college master plan	Johnson (2001); Amey & VanDerLinden (2002); Wallin (2003); Boggs (2004);

Table 1 continued

Competency/ Survey Items	Item Topic	Research Literature
Communication		
3	Share and support policies and strategies	Alfred & Rosevear (2000); Duvall (2003); Payne (2005)
9	Articulate and champion shared mission, vision, and values internally and externally	Pielstick (1998); Weisman & Vaughan (2002); Boggs (2004)
15	Engage in active listening to understand, comprehend, analyze, and remember	Addy (1995); Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002); Boggs (2004); Payne (2005)
21	Convey ideas frequently and inclusively through media and verbal and nonverbal means	Hammons & Keller (1990); Addy (1995); Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002); Duvall (2003); Boggs (2004); Payne (2005); Tubbs & Schulz (2006)
Collaboration		
4	Facilitate shared problem solving and decision making	Alfred & Rosevear (2000); Wallin (2003); Boggs (2004)
10	Work effectively and diplomatically with unique constituent groups	Weisman & Vaughan (2002); Cohen & Brawer (2003)
16	Resolve conflict, manage change, and build and maintain productive relationships	Wallin (2003); Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002); Payne (2005)
22	Leverage networks and partnerships to advance mission, vision, and goal of the community college	Hammons & Keller (1990); Hockaday & Puyear (2000); Cohen & Brawer (2003); Boggs (2004); Fulton-Calkins & Milling (2005); McCall (2005)
Advocacy		
5	Advocate the two-year college mission to all constituents	Pielstick (1998); Weisman & Vaughan (2002); Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002); Boggs (2004); Gould (2005)
11	Value and promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and excellence	Addy (1995); McCuiston, Wooldridge, & Pierce (2004); Gould (2005)
17	Demonstrate a passion for and commitment to open access and student access	Boggs (2004); Milliron & de los Santos (2004)
23	Represent the two-year college in the local community, in the broader educational community, and in various levels of government	Hammons & Keller (1990); Weisman & Vaughan (2002); Cohen & Brawer (2003); Wallin (2003); Boggs (2004); Lang & Kneisley (2005); Gould (2005)

Table 1 continued

Competency/ Survey Items	Item Topic	Research Literature
Professionalism		
6	Demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for the mission of two-year colleges	Hammons & Keller (1990); Boggs (2004); Gould (2005)
12	Self-assess performance regularly using feedback, reflection, goal setting, and evaluation	Hammons & Keller (1990); Phelan (2005); Eddy (2005)
18	Understand the impact of perceptions, world view, and emotions on self and others	Addy (1995); Brown, Martinez, & Daniel (2002); Briggs (2004); Payne (2005)
24	Promote and maintain high standards for personal and organizational integrity, honesty, and respect for people	Hammons & Keller (1990); Duncan & Harlacher (1991); Pielstick (1998); Hockaday & Puyear (2000); March & Weiner (2003); Briggs (2004)

The respondents were reminded that while all the items in the survey may be important, the researcher sought a ranking of relative importance. Respondents were asked to provide a relatively equal distribution among the four quartiles, with 1 being the highest quarter of importance and 4 being the lowest quarter of importance. In addition, a demographic section was developed that asked for length of tenure, age, gender, ethnicity, highest degree obtained, previous position held, whether that position was at the current institution, and the location and size of the current institution. Identifying demographics allowed the researcher to investigate evaluations of context by gender, length of tenure, and institution size first to respond to research questions two and three and also to create a profile of current two-year college presidents.

A pilot test was conducted to determine if the survey items were understood and if the survey was designed in a manner to facilitate response. The researcher conducted a

pilot test because all questions should be tested to make sure they work for the populations, context, and goals of a study (Fowler, 2002). The sitting presidents of three two-year institutions completed the survey in the pilot study. The researcher mailed the pilot survey and solicited feedback about the instrument and followed up via e-mail. Information obtained through the pilot study was used to make changes to the layout to improve user-friendliness. The pilot study participants suggested that the quartile of highest importance be signified by a 1 rather than a 4. In addition, the participants informed the researcher formatting the survey on side-by-side pages would make it easier to complete. The participants also informed the researcher that the design of the study was interesting because it was not simply asking for the items to be ranked but ranked relative to each other.

The pilot test lent the survey face validity, the extent to which an instrument looks as if it is measuring what it is intended to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The pilot study participants suggested no improvements for the content of the instrument. To increase reliability, each respondent was asked the same set of questions (Fowler, 2002). Reliability refers to how much measurement error is present (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1996). Reliability coefficients vary between values of .00 and 1.00, with 1.00 indicating perfect reliability and .00 indicating no reliability (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1996). Cronbach's alpha for the overall survey is .89. Each of the six competencies demonstrates levels of reliability ranging from .56 to .68 (see table 2). These levels were lower because the subscales contained a small number of items (four).

Table 2

Reliability Analysis

Subscale	Number of Items	Item Alpha
Organizational Strategy	4	.59
Resource Management	4	.63
Communication	4	.68
Collaboration	4	.56
Advocacy	4	.62
Professionalism	4	.62
TOTAL SURVEY	24	.89

Data Collection

After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University (Appendix B), the researcher sent a copy of the survey with a cover letter asking for participation in the study and a self-addressed stamped return envelope (Appendix C). The researcher was careful with format because anything that makes a mail questionnaire look professional, personalized, or attractive will increase response rates (Fowler, 2002). Because the sample is composed of well-educated individuals, rather than the general population, the researcher believed getting a good response would be easier (Fowler, 2002). Two-year college presidents were asked to return the completed survey. The researcher chose mailing because it has several advantages: relatively low cost; can be accomplished with minimal staff and facilities; provides access to widely dispersed samples; and provides respondents time to give thoughtful answers (Fowler, 2002).

Data were obtained through a 2-page, 24 item survey (Appendix D). The initial mailing yielded 53 responses. Following the protocol for reducing nonresponse to mail surveys, ten days later the researcher sent a postcard to those who had not yet responded, reminding them of the study's importance and a need for a high response rate (Fowler, 2002). That mailing yielded 45 responses. As more responses were desired, the researcher e-mailed the two-year college presidents in the sample (Appendix E). The e-mail yielded 72 responses. The researcher received a total of 170 surveys, which resulted in a 40% return rate.

The typical response rate for a mail survey is 25-40% (Newton & Rudistam, 1999). However, no agreed-upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate exists

(Fowler, 2002). People who are interested in the subject matter or the research are more likely to return mail questionnaires than those who are less interested (Fowler, 2002). Therefore, mail surveys with low response rates may be biased significantly in ways that are related directly to the purpose of the research (Fowler, 2002). Moreover, in a survey, if 50% of those responding gave a particular answer, the true value if everyone in a sample responded could range from 20%-80% for a study with a 40% response rate, as this one had (Fowler, 2002). Thus when response rates are low, potential exists for error (Fowler, 2002). However, researchers lack the information to reliably predict when and how much nonresponse rates will or will not survey estimates (Fowler, 2002).

Data Analysis

The researcher created a profile of the respondents for comparison to the data regarding the national profiles of two-year college presidents using the demographic questions asked in part 2 of the survey. The 24 items in part 1 of the survey allowed the researcher to obtain the rankings for six leadership competencies: organizational strategy; resource management; communication; collaboration; advocacy; and professionalism.

Nonparametric statistics should be used for measures that yield rank scores (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Nonparametric statistics should also be used when the distribution deviates from a comparable normal distribution (Field, 2005). Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk tests, the researcher found that the sample distribution differed significantly from a normal distribution.

Beginning with the null hypothesis that the six competencies were equal, performing the Friedman two-way analysis of variance by ranks determined if the null hypothesis was true or false. Each participant ranked survey items on a 1-4 scale. Each

item referenced a competency, with four items per competency. The rows represented the participants, and the columns represented the competencies. Using the Freidman two-way analysis of variance by ranks led the researcher to reject the hypothesis that the competencies were equal; thus the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed ranks test as the *post hoc* to determine where the differences were located.

To determine if institutional or individual factors affected those rankings, the researcher used the Mann-Whitney test and the Kruskall-Wallis test to detect group differences in the rankings. Groups included gender, institution size by Carnegie classification, and length of tenure.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to determine the extent two-year college presidents rank American Association of Community Colleges leadership competencies important to the presidents of the two-year institution. The study also sought to determine if those rankings varied by institutional and individual factors. Using an abbreviated version of the American Association of Community Colleges survey, 422 two-year college presidents were surveyed in an effort to provide an overview of the ranking of those competencies and whether those rankings were influenced by the institutional factor of size and the individual factors of gender and length of tenure. The researcher received 170 surveys in return. Data analysis yielded responses to the research questions, and those findings were reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent college presidents rank AACC leadership competencies important to the presidency of the two-year institution. In this chapter, the researcher reported and analyzed the findings of the study. The researcher first provided a summary of the research procedures. In order to better understand the findings of the research questions, the researcher next provided a demographic a profile of the respondents. The researcher then provided the findings of the research questions and a summary of the findings of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do two-year college presidents rank American Association of Community College leadership competencies important to the presidents of the two-year institution?

2. To what extent do the rankings of the competencies differ by the institutional factor of size?

3. To what extent do the rankings of the competencies differ by the individual factors of gender and length of tenure?

Research Procedures

Using a 2004 American Association of Community Colleges survey, the researcher adapted the 41 items based upon a review of related literature to determine four items that identified each of the six competencies of leadership. The 24 items

represented the six leadership competencies of organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. The survey also contained a demographic section that asked for length of tenure, age, ethnicity, highest degree obtained, previous position held, whether that position was at the current institution, and the location and size of the current institution.

The survey was administered to the 422 two-year college presidents in the 16-state Southern Regional Educational Board by mail. Of those presidents, 170 responded, providing a 40% return rate. All 170 surveys were used in analyzing the data.

Responses to the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Base 10.1, 2000). Nonparametric statistical analyses were performed on the quantitative data.

<center>Demographic Profile of the Respondents</center>

The demographic portion of the survey asked eight questions which required presidents to provide responses regarding their length of tenure, age, gender, ethnicity, highest degree obtained, previous position held, whether that position was at the current institution, and the location and size of the current institution.

The respondents' demographic information is similar to that of the national profile. Nationwide, the median age of two-year college presidents in 2001 was 56 years (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). In this study, the median age of the respondents was 60. Nearly 86% surveyed in 2001 were white/Caucasian (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). Of the 170 respondents in this study, 145 (85.3%) identified themselves as White or Caucasian, 14 (8.2%) identified as African-American, 4 (2.4%) identified as Hispanic,

1 (.059 %) identified as Asian, 1 (059%) identified as Native-American, and 5 (2.94%) did not identify an ethnicity.

The percentage of presidents who were female increased from 11% to 28 % in the last decade of the 20th century (Weisman & Vaughan). In this study, the majority of the presidents, 128 (75%) were male, while 42 (25%) were female. Nationally, male presidents have spent seven years on the job, while women have spent four (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). While the longest serving president in this study had been in office 38 years and the shortest tenure was one month, the median length of tenure was 8.5 years.

In the national study, before becoming president, 37% of respondents were provost, 25% were president of another two-year college, and 15% were senior academic affairs officers other than provost (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). The majority of respondents in this study, 90 (52.9%), had been vice presidents. President was identified by 32 (18.8%) respondents, while Dean was identified by 22 (12.9%). Other positions identified included 8 (4.7%) as provost, 7 (4.1%) as director, 3 (1.8%) as assistant dean, 2 (1.2%) as principal and one each (3.6 percent total) for the following: military general, CEO, registrar, system office, superintendent, and faculty. In addition, though 2 (1.2% respondents left the question blank, 50 (29.4%) of respondents reported that this position had been at their current institution, while 118 (69.4%) reported that the position had been elsewhere.

In terms of educational level of current presidents, nationally 46% held a Ph. D., and 42% held an Ed. D. in 2001; in 1984 only 76% of two-year college presidents held a doctorate (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). In this study, 62 (36.5%) held a Ph.D. while

84 (49.4%) of respondents held an Ed. D. However, 9 (5.3%) of respondents stated they held a doctorate without identifying the degree. Of the remaining respondents, 3 (1.8%) held an Education Specialist, 11 (6.5%) held a Masters, and 1 (.06%) held a Bachelors.

The respondents of this study had three choices for school location: urban, suburban and rural. Urban was identified by 38 (22.4%) respondents, suburban was identified by 47 (27.6%), rural was identified by 84 (49.4%), and 1 (.06%) respondent left the question blank. Using available Carnegie data for 988 two-year schools, the researcher found that nationally 594 (60%) are rural, 210 (21%) are suburban, and 184 (19%) are urban (Carnegie, 2006).

The last demographic question asked respondents for school size by full-time equivalent enrollment. The researcher then placed those numbers into the following Carnegie categories: *VS2: Very small two-year* (fewer than 500), *S2: Small two-year.* (500–1,999), *M2: Medium two-year* (2,000–4,999), *L2: Large two-year* (5,000–9,999), and *VL2: Very large two-year* (10,000 ore more). Using these categories, the researcher found that 7 (4.1%) were identified as very small, 40 (23%) were identified as small, 76 (44.7%) were identified as medium, 29 (17%) were identified as large, 16 (9.4%) were identified as very large, and 2 (1.8%) were not identified.

In summary, the researcher found that the majority of the two-year college presidents in the SREB service area are white men with a doctoral degree who had been a vice president at another institution but were now located in a rural area at a medium-sized school. By gender, 25% of the two-year college presidents were women, compared to the 28% national average.

Findings

The purpose of the study was to determine to what extent college presidents rank AACC leadership competencies important to the presidency of the two-year institution. After sending surveys to 422 two-year college presidents and receiving responses from 170, the researcher analyzed the rankings and answered the research questions.

Research Question 1: Two-year College Presidents' Ranking of the American Association of Community College Leadership Competencies

The 24 items in the survey allowed the researcher to obtain the rankings for six leadership competencies: organizational strategy; resource management; communication; collaboration; advocacy; and professionalism. Survey items 1, 7, 13, and 19 represented knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the organizational strategy competency. Survey items 2, 8, 14, and 20 represented knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the resource management competency. Survey items 3, 9, 15, and 21 represented knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the communication competency. Survey items 4, 10, 16, and 22 represented knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the collaboration competency. Survey items 5, 11, 17, and 23 represented knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the advocacy competency. Survey items 6, 12, 18, and 24 represented knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the professionalism competency. The respondents were informed that while all the items may be important, the researcher sought a ranking of relative importance and asked the respondents to provide a relatively equal distribution among the quartiles. Respondents ranked each item from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest quartile of importance, 2 being the second quartile of importance, 3 being the third quartile of importance, and 4 being the lowest quartile of importance.

The four items were totaled by competency for each respondent. Beginning with the null hypothesis that the six competencies were equal, performing the Friedman two-way analysis of variance by ranks determined if the null hypothesis was true or false. Using the Freidman two-way analysis of variance by ranks led the researcher to reject the hypothesis that the competencies were equal. The Asymptotic significance was .000; thus the differences in the rankings were statistically significant, $p<.05$. The mean ranks were 2.60 for organizational strategy, 3.21 for resource management, 4.76 for communication, 3.58 for collaboration, 2.86 for advocacy, and 3.99 for professionalism. Table 3 represents the rankings of the AACC leadership competencies.

Table 3

Ranking of the AACC Leadership Competencies Using Friedman

	Mean Rank
Organizational Strategy	2.60
Resource Management	3.21
Communication	4.76
Collaboration	3.58
Advocacy	2.86
Professionalism	3.99

Test Statistics	
N	170
Chi-Square	169.614
Df	5
Asymptotic Significance	.000*

*$p<.05$

Once the researcher determined that a difference existed in the rankings of the competencies, the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed ranks test to determine where the differences were located. Significance was accepted for the pairs of competencies only if they were significant below $p<.05$ divided by the number of tests (15 tests), or .003. Table 4 represents the relationship between organizational strategy and resource management, communication, collaboration, and professionalism.

Table 4

Post Hoc Comparisons of the Rankings of the Leadership Competencies

		1	2	3	4	5	6
	Test Stats	Org. Strat.	Res. Mgt.	Comm.	Collab.	Advoc.	Prof.
1 Organizational Strategy	Z		-3.401	-8.794	-5.178	-1.428	-3.401
	Asymptotic Significance		.001*	.000*	.000*	.153	.001*
2 Resource Management	Z			-.7.063	-2.309	-1.535	-4.321
	Asymptotic Significance			.000*	.021	.125	.000*
3 Communication	Z				-6.432	-8.581	-4.438
	Asymptotic Significance				.000*	.000*	.000*
4 Collaboration	Z					-3.840	-2.487
	Asymptotic Significance					.000*	.013
5 Advocacy	Z						-6.174
	Asymptotic Significance						.000*
6 Professionalism							

*p<.003

The researcher used Wilcoxon's signed ranks test first to compare organizational strategy to resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. Doing so revealed a significant difference in the ranking of organizational strategy compared to resource management (.001), communication (.000), collaboration (.000), and professionalism (.001). The test showed no significant difference between the rankings of organizational strategy and advocacy (.153). Organizational strategy was ranked relatively more important than four of the five remaining competencies.

Next, resource management was compared to the communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. A significant difference existed in the ranking of resource management compared to both communication (.000) and professionalism (.000). The test showed no significant difference between the rankings of resource management and collaboration (.021) or resource management and advocacy (.125). Resource management ranked relatively more important than communication and professionalism.

Comparing communication to collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism showed a significant difference in the rankings of communication and collaboration (.000), advocacy (.000), and professionalism (.000). Communication ranked relatively more important than all three of those competencies.

Collaboration was then compared to advocacy and professionalism. While a significant difference existed between the rankings of collaboration and advocacy (.000), the test showed no significant difference in the rankings of collaboration and professionalism (.013). Collaboration ranked relatively more important than advocacy.

The last test remaining was that of advocacy and professionalism. The result showed a significant difference in the rankings of advocacy and professionalism. Advocacy ranked relatively more important than professionalism.

The analysis of the data indicates that the leadership competency of organizational strategy was relatively more important than four of the five other competencies: resource management, communication, collaboration, and professionalism. The AACC description of organizational strategy asserts that an effective community college president strategically improves the quality of the institution, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends (AACC, 2005). Communication was ranked relatively more important than three other competencies: collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. Resource management was ranked relatively more important than two other competencies communication and professionalism. Collaboration was ranked relatively more important than just one other competency: advocacy; advocacy was ranked relatively more important than just one other competency: professionalism.

Research Question 2: Two-Year College Presidents' Ranking of the Competencies by Institution Size

Data were collected regarding the full-time equivalent of each respondent's institution. The Carnegie classifications of very small (0-499), small (500-1999), medium (2000-4999), large (5000-9999), and very large (over 10,000) were used to group the institutions. The respondents reporting the following institution sizes: 0-499 (N=7), 500-1999 (N=41), 2000-4999 (N=75), 5000-9999 (N=29), and over 10,000 (N=16). To test

for difference between these groups, the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis test because of the non-normal distribution of data and the ranked data (Field, 2005). Using $p<.05$, the researcher found no significant difference in the ranking of the competencies by institution size, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Ranking of the Competencies by Institution Size Using Kruskal-Wallis

	Org. Strat.	Res. Mgt.	Comm.	Collab.	Advcy	Prof.
Chi-Square	1.837	1.933	.386	.823	2.351	.713
df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymptotic Significance	.766	.748	.984	.935	.671	.950

Research Question 3: Two-Year College Presidents' Ranking of the Competencies by

Gender

To test for a difference of ranking by gender, the researcher used Mann-Whitney, which is the non-parametric equivalent of the independent *t*-test (Field, 2005). Using *p*<.05, the researcher found significant difference in the rankings of both organizational strategy (.013) and communication (.015) but not in resource management (.065), collaboration (.131), advocacy (.076), or professionalism (.123). The competencies of organizational strategy and communication were ranked as relatively more important than the other leadership competencies by female two-year presidents (N=28) than by their male counterparts (N=142). These findings are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Ranking of the Competencies by Gender Using Mann-Whitney

	Org. Strat	Res. Mgt.	Comm.	Collab.	Advcy	Prof.
Mann-Whitney *U*	2009.5	2181.5	2016.5	2273	2201	2264
Z	-2.484	-1.843	-2.438	-1.510	-1.776	-1.542
Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed)	.013*	.065	.015*	.131	.076	.123

p<.05

Research Question 3: Two-Year College Presidents' Ranking of the Competencies by

Length of Tenure

Data were collected regarding the length of tenure as president for each

respondent. The researcher then used these categories for the number of years reported:

0-3 (N=37), 4-10 (N=60), and over 10 (N=73). These categories allowed the researcher to

examine differences among new presidents, settled presidents, and long-term presidents.

To test for difference between these groups, the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis test

because of the non-normal distribution of data and the ranked data (Field, 2005). Using

p<.05, the researcher found a significant difference in the ranking of resource

management by length of tenure, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Ranking of the Competencies by Length of Tenure Using Kruskal-Wallis

	Org. Strat.	Res. Mgt.	Comm.	Collab.	Advcy	Prof.
Chi-Square	3.476	6.589	2.965	.859	2.215	3.596
df	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymptotic Significance	.176	.037*	.227	.651	.330	.166

p<.05

To determine where the differences were located, the researcher used Mann-Whitney as the *post hoc* test. With a *Bonferroni* correction for the number of tests, $p<.017$. Group 1 represents the tenure of 0-3 years; group 2 represents the tenure of 4-10 years, and Group 3 represents the tenure of over 10 years. The researcher found that presidents who had been in office 4-10 years ranked resource management as relatively more important than did presidents who had been in office 0-3 years or over 10 years. This relationship is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Post Hoc Comparison of Competencies' Rankings by Length of Tenure

	Org. Strat.	Res. Mgt.	Comm.	Collab.	Advcy.	Prof.
Group 1-Group 2	-1.798 .072	-1.539 .124	-1.065 .287	-.558 .577	-1.589 .112	-1.861 .063
Group 1-Group 3	-1.501 .133	-.656 .512	-.331 .741	-.207 .836	-.936 .349	-1.465 .143
Group 2-Group 3	-.454 .650	-2.517 .012*	-1.693 .090	-.913 .361	-.525 .599	-.528 .597

$p<.017$

Summary

The data collected and analyzed in this chapter were studied to determine the two-year college presidents' rankings of the American Association of Community Colleges leadership competencies. Further, the researcher wanted to know if a difference existed in the ranking of the competencies and if those differences were influenced by the institutional factor of size or the individual factors of gender and length of tenure.

The findings indicated that a difference did exist in the ranking of the leadership competencies. Organizational strategy was ranked relatively more important than resource management, communication, collaboration, and professionalism. No significant difference existed between the rankings of organizational strategy and advocacy. Communication was ranked relatively more important than collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. Resource management was ranked relatively more important than communication and professionalism. Collaboration was ranked relatively more important than advocacy; advocacy was ranked relatively more important than professionalism.

Institution size did not affect the ranking of the competencies. However, a significant difference existed in the rankings of the competencies by gender for organizational strategy and communication, with females valuing those competencies more than their male counterparts. No significant difference by gender in the rankings of resource management, collaboration, advocacy, or professionalism existed. Finally, a significant difference existed in the ranking of resource management by length of tenure. Presidents who had been in office 4-10 years ranked resource management as relatively more important than organizational strategy, collaboration, communication, advocacy, or professionalism. No significant difference by length of tenure in the rankings of

organizational strategy, collaboration, communication, advocacy, or professionalism

existed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this study, the researcher determined the extent two-year college presidents rank American Association of Community Colleges leadership competencies important to the presidents of the two-year institution. The researcher used the research questions and the related literature to adapt an American Association of Community Colleges survey that included 24 items representing the six leadership competencies of organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. A survey was mailed January 2007 to the 422 two-year college presidents in the Southern Regional Educational Board service area. The researcher received 170 responses, for a response rate of 40%.

After the surveys were returned, the information collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Base 10.1, 2000). The data collected provided information concerning the importance of the leadership competencies and a demographic profile of the presidents.

Information from the surveys was analyzed to determine if a difference existed in the rankings of the leadership competencies and if those differences were influenced by the institutional factor of size and the individual factors of gender and length of tenure. Findings were reported in chapter four. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the findings and presented conclusions and recommendations

Research Findings

The 170 respondents to the survey were two-year college presidents from the sixteen state SREB service area, a majority of whom were white men with a doctoral degree who had been a vice president at another institution but were now located in a rural area at a medium-sized school.

1. In the rankings of the six leadership competencies, organizational strategy was relatively more important than resource management, communication, collaboration and professionalism. No significance difference existed between organizational strategy and advocacy.

2. Institution size did not influence the rankings of the competencies.

3. A gender difference existed in the rankings of organizational strategy and communication, with female presidents ranking these relatively more important than their male counterparts.

4. Those having a presidential tenure of 4-10 years ranked resource management as relatively more important than the other competencies than did their counterparts with tenures of 0-3 years or over 10 years.

Discussion of Research Findings

The researcher gathered data from two-year college presidents in the sixteen-state Southern Regional Educational Board regarding their rankings of the American Association of Community Colleges leadership competencies. The following discussion is presented relative to the findings of the study and the review of related concerning the six leadership competencies: organizational strategy; resource management; communication; collaboration; advocacy; and professionalism.

The first research question asked to what extent two-year college presidents ranked the American Association of Community Colleges' leadership competencies of organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism as important to the two-year college presidency. The researcher found that two-year college presidents ranked organizational strategy as more important than resource management, communication, collaboration, and professionalism.

This finding reinforces the belief that the function of the presidency is to manage the institution, create the campus climate, and interpret and communicate the institution's mission (Vaughan, 1988). This finding also gives weight to the idea that the ability to lead organizational change is a skill needed to face the changing nature of the two-year college presidency (Wallin, 2003). The two-year college president believes the most important function of the leader is working internally to develop and environment that supports innovation; maintain and grow college resources and assets; use data-driven evidence and proven practices to solve problems, make decisions, and plan strategically; and assess, develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to continuously improve the quality of education and the long-term health of the organization.

The AACC (2005) description of organizational strategy asserted that an effective community college president strategically improves the quality of the organization, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission based on the knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends. By ranking organizational strategy as relatively more important as a function of leadership, two-year college presidents disregard old assumptions about leadership. This finding indicates an understanding of what leadership

must entail: the right organization is the one that fits the task, and one does not manage people but instead leads them. The focus is on the position itself (Vaughan, 1988).

Because of the changes and challenges to the two-year college presidency, a significant need exists to provide individuals with leadership skills that are essential to their responsibility to diagnose, change, and lead campus cultures because both effectiveness and quality can be managed and improved (Smart, 2003). The role of leaders and leadership has always been one of the most important aspects of organizational functioning (Amey, 2005). Two-year college presidents rank organizational strategy as relatively more important than resource management, communication, collaboration, and professionalism. Therefore, current presidents focus on internal needs of their institutions to lead.

The role of today's two-year college presidents is difficult due to inadequate resources (Pierce & Pedersen, 1997). External, internal, and technology challenges or issues remained high or very high, and fiscal concerns continue as the dominant challenge facing two-year colleges (Cedja & Leist, 2006). The colleges must struggle to find relevance in a global economy, face both competition and the move toward privatization, handle the challenges of distance education, provide competency-based programs, watch as their mission boundaries are blurred, and confront new funding challenges (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000). There is a move to shift from local funding bases to competing for state allocations (Hammons & Miller, 2006). There is also a move to engage in more fundraising than every before (Hammons & Miller, 2006).

Given the political nature of funding and support and competition for students, it was surprising that advocacy was not ranked as relatively more important that some of

the other competencies. An effective two-year college president understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the two-year colleges (AACC, 2005). In order to get much-needed support, presidents must talk about the colleges in terms of the opportunities they create for people, education the public about the problems colleges face and ask for help, remind the public of the role of the legislators and hold them accountable for failing to expand a system that helps so many, and stress the unique roles of the colleges instead of comparing them to four-year institutions because the two-year colleges are popular in their own right (Gould, 2005). Presidents must enhance and protect the image of two-year colleges (Boggs, 2004).

The second question of the study was if the institutional factor of size influenced the rankings of the leadership competencies. The researcher found that institution size had no significant influence on the ranking of the competencies. All leadership occurs in some context (Bueno & Tubbs, 2004). Institution size, more than any other factor, differentiates publicly supported institutions from one another (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). This is because classifying colleges by size allows for easily understandable comparisons (Cohen, 2003). Geographic and college size differences also add to experiences presidents draw upon (Eddy, 2005). However, all six competency areas were equally important to the respondents in this study. This finding indicates that these competency areas are fundamental to the two-year college presidency, regardless of the size of the institution. Although size may matter in areas of curriculum, mission, and resources, leadership focus does not vary across all institutions. Organizational quality matters to all presidents, regardless of their institution size.

The third question of the study was if the individual factors of gender and length of tenure influenced the rankings of the leadership competencies. The researcher found that gender did influence the rankings of organizational strategy and communication, but had no significant influence on the rankings of resource management, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism.

Females ranked organizational strategy and communication relatively higher than their male counterparts. The similarities of the rankings of resource management, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism may follow from the fact women feel that they exercise their power to the same extent as men (Vianello, 2004). Nonetheless, differences in the rankings of communication and organizational strategy may be accounted for since the leadership and management styles of men and women differ because men and women see the world differently, respond to it differently, and communicate about it differently (Addy, 1995).

The AACC declared that an effective two-year president must use clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community (AACC, 2005). The two-year college president needs effective listening and feedback skills; effective writing skills; developing and communicating a vision; conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation skills; understanding of the two-year college mission; understanding of interpersonal communication; effective public speaking skills are needed (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002). By ranking communication as relatively more important, female presidents believe that leaders' communication is essential to leading. They are also embracing a necessary skill set.

Length of tenure did have an influence on the ranking of the leadership competencies. The length of tenure of the respondents varied from one month to 38 years. The researcher found that presidents who have been in office 4-10 years ranked resource management as relatively more important than organizational strategy, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism than did their peers who had been in office 0-3 years or over 10 years. This finding indicates that while new presidents have been focusing energy on all the competencies, and long-term presidents have things on an even keel, midterm presidents are focused on using information, matching organizational needs with human resource capabilities, and managing finances. New presidents may need a period of 1-3 years to understand the needs of the organization and prioritize resource management once those needs have been established.

Conclusions

The researcher has concluded the following from this study:

1. Two-year college presidents believe the organizational strategy competency, which involves improving the quality of the institution, protecting the long-term health of the institution, promoting the success of all students, and sustaining the community college mission, is the most essential competency for leading two-year colleges in the 21st century.

2. Although the size of the size of the two-year college may influence its mission, leadership is essentially the same.

3. Female two-year college presidents have clearly identified communication skills as important for leadership.

4. Two-year college presidents need tenure of four to ten years to strengthen and sustain the institution's people, processes, information, and assets.

Implications

This study offers insight provided by current two-year college presidents that may prove beneficial for those preparing for the presidency of a two-year institution. As the American Association of Community College leadership competencies have recently been identified, the researcher identified the ranking of the competencies by sitting presidents. Future two-year college presidents may find it beneficial to study the professional literature regarding organizational leadership competencies in higher education, specifically two-year institutions.

Training and leadership development in the leadership competencies organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism may prepare aspiring leaders. Organizational strategy is relatively more important than resource management, communication, collaboration, advocacy, and professionalism. Therefore, those preparing for a two-year college presidency should develop their ability to improve the quality of the organization, protect the long-term health of the organization, promote the success of all students, and sustain the community college mission based on the knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends.

Future presidents are in the leadership pipeline and need guidance regarding the leadership competencies. Those who teach leadership development, whether formally or in-house, may find the information beneficial for their curricula. The American Association of Community Colleges, the professional organization of two-year

institutions, is also very interested in leadership development for anticipated vacancies as part of their Leading Forward project. The competencies have been identified and ranked relatively, thus providing a focal point for the training and development of future leaders. The competency framework may be used to develop a performance-based assessment, whether for formal or informal use by governing boards, presidents, or those seeking a presidency.

Because the competency framework is a self-assessment tool, the study is significant to the researcher as well. Analyzing data on the importance of AACC leadership competencies yielded information that could be beneficial to other administrative positions within the two-year institution, which are often entry-level positions to the presidency. An understanding of the leadership competencies will be helpful as the researcher seeks promotion to an administrative position. In addition, the researcher learned that organizational strategy is the best place to focus preparation efforts.

The study provides policy considerations as well. Two-year colleges that need leadership in resource management need to sustain leadership over a ten-year period since resource management becomes more important during the 4-10 year tenure of a president. Further, as leadership competency usage is constant regardless of institution size, governing bodies should not create policies that assume leadership duties differ among the institutions.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, the researcher offers the following consideration for future research:

1. This study should be replicated in other service areas beyond the Southern Regional Educational Board to obtain a national perspective of the current presidency.

2. The study should be repeated over time to observe how the leadership focus varies over time.

3. Further investigation needs to be done on how the competencies are being used by institutions of higher education, non-degreed leadership programs, and staff development trainers.

4. The competency framework should be used a professional development tool.

Dissemination

The AACC supported this study and encouraged using the competency framework for further inquiry for leadership development. The AACC also asked to be informed about any feedback received regarding the competencies. Several respondents in the study also asked to see the results, including technical college presidents in Georgia. In addition, the chairman of the Executive Committee for the AACC President's Academy stated her interest in seeing the results of the study. Practitioners, colleges, and those seeking a presidency can use the information to prepare for the future. The researcher plans to share the results with the profession through the professional literature.

Concluding Thoughts

About four years ago, this researcher decided to pursue a doctorate in educational administration in order to be better prepared for administration in the two-year college. The researcher questioned the knowledge, skills, and dispositions one should possess to be an effective leader. Were there some skills that were more important than others? What would a Board of Directors seek in looking for an administrator? What would a governing board or state agency look for in a president?

When the American Association of Community Colleges developed the framework of leadership competencies, the researcher believed that sitting two-year college presidents could provide insight into the competencies. Their insight would be valuable to anyone considering administration in a two-year institution. At the conclusion of this study, the researcher understands how the leadership competencies are viewed and used by practitioners.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO USE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

SURVEY

Taylor, Michele

From:	COURTNEY LARSON [clarson@aacc.nche.edu]
Sent:	Tuesday, July 18, 2006 4:01 PM
To:	Taylor, Michele
Subject:	Re: AACC Web Site Comment: Doctoral Use of theCompetencies forCommunity College Leaders, part 2

Attachments: CompetenciesData.xls

CompetenciesData.
xls (21 KB)

Michele-

Thank you for your interest in the Competencies for Community College leaders. I have included a link below that will take you directly to the survey instrument. This link will only be live for a limited time so please print or cut and paste into another document. You are welcome to use our instrument as we encourage the testing of our competencies in the field and are very interested in the response. With that said we generally request a one-page description that explains the purpose of your study, why you've chosen to use our instrument, and how you plan to use it and the results. We only ask that AACC is referenced appropriately within your work, and that you keep us abreast of your results and any feedback you may receive on the competencies.

Link: http://websurveyor.net/wsb.dll/13424/CCLeaderCompetencies.htm

Recently, I have been in communication with another doctoral student about our data. To that end I am letting you know now that in terms of statistical findings, little in-depth analysis on the competencies were done since we met with overwhelming approval of the competencies (nearly 100% of respondents indicated each of the 6 were either "very" or "extremely" essential) with little variance between groups and individuals. On the other items, we did not pursue any significant analysis and therefore, we do not have any data to report. I have attached below what I sent to him as a summary of our survey results.

The results were based on all survey respondents which included members of our Affiliated Councils (36), Grow Your Own leadership program summit participants (19), Underserved Areas summit participants (31) University program summit participants (30) and our advisory board (9). The advisory panel was surveyed as a separate final group. I hope this is useful.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of furthur assistance.

Sincerely,

Courtney

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

Georgia Southern University	
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs	
Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-681-5465	Administrative Annex
	P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719 Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Michelle Taylor

CC: Barbara Mallory

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
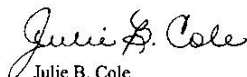(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: 1/4/2007

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

---

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H07125**, and titled **"Two-Year College Presidents' Evaluation of the Importance of American Association of Community College Leadership Competencies Significant to the Two-Year College Presidency"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study,** within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior to** initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Julie B. Cole

Julie B. Cole
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Two-year College Presidents' Ranking of the Importance of American Association of Community College Leadership Competencies Significant to the Two-Year College Presidency

Dear Two-Year College President:

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding leadership competencies important to the two-year college presidency. The American Association of Community Colleges recently identified the leadership competencies needed by two-year college presidents. I would appreciate your sharing your knowledge and experience with me, Michele Taylor, as I conduct research to complete my doctorate in Educational Administration at Georgia Southern University.

The purpose of this research is to determine to what extent college presidents rank identified leadership competencies important to the presidency of the two-year institution. Participation in this research will include completion of the enclosed survey. This study does not involve greater than minimal risk. No identifying information that might jeopardize confidentiality will be collected.

You possess knowledge, skills, and experiences that can be shared with those who aspire to understand the extent identified leadership competencies are important to the presidency. The insight you provide may prove beneficial to those preparing for the presidency. To fill the impending leadership vacancies due to anticipated retirements, future presidents can benefit by understanding the competencies in context in order to prepare for two-year college leadership. The AACC competencies have been recently identified, and I believe that your ranking of the competencies may inform the professional literature and the population of future two-year college presidents. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete.

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report the researcher might publish, no information that will make it possible to identify a subject will be included. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

If you have any questions, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Barbara Mallory, whose information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-486-7758.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants must be 18 or older. You may end your participation by not returning the survey. Completion and return of the survey implies that you agree to participate and that your data may be used in this research. Thank you for your time and participation.

Title of Project: Two-year College Presidents' Evaluation of the Importance of American Association of

Community College Leadership Competencies Significant to the Two-Year College Presidency

Principal Investigator: Michele Taylor, 501 Needle Lane, Statesboro, GA 30458
912-687-0489   sandra_m_taylor@georgiasouthern.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Barbara Mallory, PO Box 8131, Georgia Southern University,
Statesboro, GA 30460   912-871-1428 bmallory@georgiasouthern.edu

_____   _____
Investigator Signature   Date

APPENDIX D

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE PRESIDENTS' RANKING OF THE AMERICAN

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES' LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Two-Year College Presidents' Ranking of the Importance of Leadership Competencies

The purpose of this study is to determine two-year college presidents' evaluation of competencies identified as important to the presidency. While all the items may be important, this study seeks a ranking of relative importance. Therefore, please read all 24 items first and then try to provide a relatively equal distribution among the quartiles as you respond. Please take a few moments to respond to this survey, and thank you in advance for your effort.

Part I: Using the scale below, please rank by quartile the relative importance of each item.

1- Highest quarter   2-Second quarter   3- Third quarter   4-Lowest quarter

Rank the importance of the item as it relates to the presidency of the two-year institution.

1. Develop an environment that supports innovation 1 2 3 4

2. Ensure accountability in reporting 1 2 3 4

3. Share and support policies and strategies 1 2 3 4

4. Facilitate shared problem solving and decision making 1 2 3 4

5. Advocate the two-year college mission to all constituents 1 2 3 4

6. Demonstrate enthusiasm and advocate to protect the image of the of the institution 1 2 3 4

7. Maintain and grow college resources and assets 1 2 3 4

8. Manage conflict and change for the long-term viability of the organization 1 2 3 4

9. Articulate shared mission, vision, and values internally and externally through speaking and skillful use of body language 1 2 3 4

10. Work effectively and diplomatically with unique constituent groups 1 2 3 4

11. Value and promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and excellence 1 2 3 4

12. Self-assess performance regularly using feedback, reflection, goal setting, and evaluation 1 2 3 4

13. Use data-driven evidence and proven practices to solve problems, make decisions, and plan strategically 1 2 3 4

14. Implement financial strategies to support programs, services, staff, and facilities 1 2 3 4

15. Engage in active listening to understand, comprehend, analyze, and remember 1 2 3 4

16. Resolve conflict, manage change, and build and maintain productive relationships	1	2	3	4
17. Demonstrate a passion for and commitment to open access and student access	1	2	3	4
18. Understand the impact of perceptions, world view, and emotions on self and others	1	2	3	4
19. Assess, develop, implement and evaluate strategies to continuously improve the quality of learning and the long-term health of the organization	1	2	3	4
20. Develop and manage resource assessment, planning, budgeting, acquisition, and allocation processes consistent with the college master plan	1	2	3	4
21. Convey ideas frequently and inclusively through writing	1	2	3	4
22. Leverage networks and partnerships to advance mission, vision, and goal of the community college	1	2	3	4
23. Represent the two-year college in the local community, in the broader educational community, and in various levels of government	1	2	3	4
24. Promote and maintain high standards for personal and organizational integrity, honesty, and respect for people	1	2	3	4

Part II: Please provide the following information by checking or adding requested information:

1. Years as president: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Gender: _____male   _____female

4. Ethnicity: _____

5. Highest degree: _____

6. Previous position: _____

7. Was that position held at your current institution? _____yes   _____no

8. Location: _____ urban   _____suburban   _____rural

9. Institution size (full-time enrollment): _____

Please return the survey in the enclosed addressed stamped envelope. Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW UP E-MAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Greetings,

Will you lend your expertise in order to prepare future community and technical college presidents?

The American Association of Community Colleges has prepared its "Competencies for Community College Leaders," deemed the best of the best practices. As a president, you are the expert when it comes to using them in context.

I've mailed you a survey asking you to rank these competencies by relative importance and hope you will share your insight. As I finish my doctorate, I hope to move into administration. I am currently at Ogeechee Technical College in Statesboro, GA, where I've been on the faculty for ten years.

Your knowledge can help prepare others for the challenges of the presidency. If you have completed the survey, thank you. If you have not, will you please do so and mail it to me by February 9?

Thank you for your time,

Michele Taylor