PRESIDENT/TRUSTEES PERSPECTIVE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
GOVERNANCE INSTITUTES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on acquiring community college president and trustees perceptions on the effectiveness of governance institutes on advancing the student success agenda in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. The purpose of the study was to explore the question: How do governance institutes for student success manifest themselves within community colleges? In addition, this study sought to understand how, if at all, governing boards rework or prioritize by reviewing or analyzing board policy as a result of student success interventions. The research utilized a qualitative approach by conducting interviews with presidents and board chairs during the fall/winter of 2012-13. The following areas of inquiry were explored: how has board process and policy changed, what has been the impact on the work of the president, and what has been the impact on organizational culture. Community College presidents and board chairs that experienced governance institutes were invited to participate. Participants and select community colleges were identified based on three criteria: their participation in a Governance Institute on Student Success; their status as an Achieving the Dream College; their participation in Achieving the Dream initiative for at least three years. Results of the study indicated that Governance Institutes did indeed positively impact prioritization of the work of the board with regards to student success initiatives within the institutions examined. In addition, board process changed as a result of board chairs and presidents attending GISS; student success monitoring reports at regular board meetings became a common practice impacting board decision and policy-making.

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Community Colleges — History

Community Colleges are an American invention and are referred to as the democracy college because they emulate the nation that invented them; "they offer an open door to opportunity to all who would come, are innovative and agile in meeting economic and workplace needs, and provide value and service to individuals and communities" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2010). According to the American Association for Community Colleges, great challenges faced the United States in the early 20th century, including global economic competition. National and local leaders recognized that a more skilled workforce was critical to the country's continued economic strength. In recognizing this need, leaders called upon the country to dramatically increase college attendance. At that time, three-quarters of high school graduates were choosing not to further their education, in part because they were reluctant to leave home for a distant college; hence the creation of community colleges. Community Colleges started at the turn of the 20th century as transfer institutions, they were called junior colleges as many of the public ones started as extensions of local high schools. Junior Colleges provided a higher education opportunity for students that allowed them to remain close to home (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The very first community college in the country was established in 1901, in Joliet, Illinois. The Joliet Junior College was started by William Rainey Harper and is still in existence today. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman created the Commission on Higher Education which

released a much anticipated report entitled *Higher Education for American Democracy;* better known as the Truman Report. This report served as the catalyst for the expansion of community/junior colleges across the nation. The Truman report touted the need for expanded access to higher education as a result, the number of community colleges in this country quadrupled – from 330 in 1947 to 1,200 institutions today. The Truman Commission report served as the impetus for the open door mission of community colleges.

Community Colleges — Today

Today, community colleges are a vital part of the postsecondary education delivery system in the United States. They serve almost half of the undergraduate students in the country (Bragg & Townsend 2006), providing open access to postsecondary education, preparing students for transfer to 4-year institutions, providing workforce development and skills training, and offering noncredit programs ranging from English as a second language to skills retraining to community enrichment programs or cultural activities. Community colleges currently enroll 6.5 million students in 1,200 institutions across the country; one out of every two first time students entering college and somewhat less than one-half of all undergraduate student in the nation. By 2016, community colleges are expected to enroll 7.5 million students; most of which will be minority, lower income, and underprepared for work and further education (Alfred, 2012). Without community colleges, millions of students, and adult learners, would not be able to access the education they need to be prepared for further education for the workplace. According to Clark Kerr, the community college system is perhaps the greatest educational innovation of the 20th century.

"American Community Colleges are the nation's overlooked asset. As the United States confronts the challenges of globalization, two-year institutions are indispensable to the American Future. They are the Ellis Island of American higher education, the crossroads at which K-12 education meets colleges and universities, and the institutions that give many students the tools to navigate the modern world" (The College Board, 2008). In 2010, President Barack Obama stated at the White House Community College Summit:

> Community colleges are not just the key to the future of their students. They are one of the keys to the future of our economy, anyone with a desire to learn and grow can find opportunity at community colleges, including single parents, returning soldiers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Community colleges are the unsung heroes of the American education system.

Community College Trustees

In 2010, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) released the results of a two-year study entitled *The Citizen Trustee Project*. More than 6,000 trustees who govern American Community colleges were surveyed; this was the first ever longitudinal study of its kind. The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the individuals who serve as community college trustees; their motivations, perspectives, allegiances, satisfaction, professional and career backgrounds, and demographic characteristics. Results of the survey indicate that:

- Trustees are predominantly white (82%)
    - Of the remaining 18% of Trustees, 9% are African-American, 4% Hispanic, 2% Asian-Pacific Islander, and the remainder are American Indian, or mixed race, unknown, or other.

- The typical Trustee is 55 years of age or older – with one in five (16%) seventy-one years of age or older

    o Just under 25% of trustees are between the ages of 40 and 54

    o Less than five percent are39 years of age and under.

- Two thirds of all trustees are males.

- 93% of trustees hold a college degree

    o 40% hold a baccalaureate degree

    o 32% hold a masters degree

    o 21% hold a doctorate or professional degree

- Nearly 10% of all trustees graduated with an associate's degree from a community college.

- In terms of income, 57% of Trustees reported incomes between $50,000 and $149,000 annually.

    o 4% reported incomes of more than $500,000 annually.

- Trustees are politically active with 99% of all trustees registered to vote.

- Trustees self-reported their political party affiliation as: 44% Republican, 39% Democrat, and 16% Independent.

- Professionally, trustees reported that 32% work in business, 29% work in the education sector, and a little over 11% work in government.

Community College Presidents

Community college presidents are the sole employees of the community college board of trustees. Community college presidents find themselves serving in an environment where resources are limited, accountability is increasing, collective bargaining is becoming more contentious, and society is more litigious than ever before (Boggs, 2003). Community college presidents are finding that they need to balance internal and external needs, while continuously advancing the mission of the college and

ensuring the success of all students. That is a pretty tall order and one that requires support and guidance from the Board of Trustees. In an interview with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Peter Garcia, President of Los Medanos College, states that the role of the president in ensuring student success makes him both "perplexed and nervous." He further states that as president he has "an obligation to see that resources are flowing through an organization that is really committed to…students being successful."

Community College Boards – Purpose

Community college boards set the mission and policy that plan and guide the operation of the college. According to Brown (2012), It is the responsibility of the board to conduct their business "with impartiality; identify, recruit, hire, and retain (when necessary) the college president; ensure adequate leadership succession planning; assure the responsibility of setting the vision for the future; oversee finances and budget; assure accountability and assessment, community representation and input; and pursue continuous improvement and board training" (p. 39-40). Brown further notes that the role of community college trustees is essentially the same "regardless of whether trustees serve on statewide, district, or local governing boards" (p. 40).

Community College Student Success – National Initiatives

In 2009, President Barack Obama provided a vision to increase graduation rates for students across the nation and challenged higher education to double the number of college degrees nationwide by 2020. The Lumina Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation immediately began work on the student success agenda through Achieving the Dream with a call for access, success, and completion. In April, 2010, The

Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), in partnership with the Community College Leadership Program, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, embarked on a three-year initiative to design, develop, and implement the Governance Institute for Student Success (GISS). The Governance Institute for Student Success is a national initiative designed to provide a governance leadership model that will identify key policy decisions, actions, and levers for institutional transformation that trustees and presidents can utilize throughout the country to support innovation, accountability, and work to break the gridlock of developmental education and improve student success, equity, and completion. GISS provides training for community college board of trustees members in aspects of good governance combined with an evidence-informed student success agenda in policy making. Effective governance with a major emphasis on student success is critically important to the advancement of the national completion agenda.

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is a non-profit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States. These community professionals, business officials, public policy leaders, and leading citizens offer their time and talent to serve on the governing boards of this century's most innovative higher education institutions-community, junior, and technical colleges-and make decisions that affect more than 1,200 colleges and over 11 million students annually.

The Community College Leadership Program (CCLP) has an impressive national reputation for graduating the highest number of doctoral students to become community

college CEOs and senior administrators in the country. Its reach further extends through a significant array of nationally recognized initiatives, including its key role in Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, the California Leadership Alliance for Student Success (CLASS), Student Success Institutes, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Developmental Education Initiative, The Ford Foundation-funded Bridges to Opportunity, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, and the National Institute for Staff and Organization Development.

Together, ACCT and CCLP developed a process through which governing boards and CEOs can foster the institutional agenda and skills necessary to accelerate and achieve the needed increases in student attainment and completion by focusing specifically on effective governance policies. To date, the Governance Institute for Student Success has provided its transformational governance leadership training to community college presidents and trustees in the states of Ohio, Washington, and Texas.

Achieving the Dream (AtD), Inc. is a national non-profit organization, created in 2004 by the Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations that are dedicated to helping community college students, particularly low-income and students of color stay in school. AtD is an evidence-based and student-centered based program that is built on the values of equity and excellence. To date, AtD leads the "most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history." The AtD network consists of nearly 200 community colleges, 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams. AtD is working in 32 states and the District of Columbia, and helps improve the chances of 3.75 million community college students to realize greater economic opportunity and achieve their dreams.

Statement of the Problem

      The purpose of the study is to explore the question: How do governance institutes for student success manifest themselves within community colleges? In addition, this study seeks to understand how, if at all, governing boards rework or prioritize by reviewing or analyzing board policy as a result of student success interventions.

Research Questions

      The following areas of inquiry were explored:

- How has board process and policy changed?

- What has been the impact on the work of the president?

- What has been the impact on organizational culture?

Definition of Terms

1. Community College, College: A two-year public institution of higher education with the mission of the community college is to provide education for individuals, many of whom are adults, in its service region (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013).

2. Governing board members, Board of Trustees, Trustees, Board members, Board: For the purpose of this study, these terms will be used interchangeably. Each refers to the legally authorized, appointed or elected, body of a community college responsible to govern the institution and ensure the mission, goals, and academic success of students is aligned with the needs of the community (Association of Community College Trustees, 2013).

3. Trustee, Board member: An individual member of a community college governing board.

4. President, CEO, or chancellor— all refer to the Chief Executive Officer of the community college.

5. Student Success Initiatives: According to AtD (2013) student success initiatives involve an "institutional focus of efforts to improve the instruction, services, supports, and learning opportunities available to students who enroll in community colleges." Colleges track the following data (Achieving the Dream, 2013):

    - Successful completion of the courses students take;

    - Advancement from developmental to credit-bearing courses;

    - Enrollment in and successful completion of gatekeeper courses such as Math or English courses;

    - Retention – enrollment from one semester to the next (fall to winter, winter to fall);

    - Earned degrees and/or certificates.

6. Student Success: Students finish what they start (earn a degree, certificate, or achieve educational goals). According to McClenney & McClenney (2010),

    "Student Success appropriately has multiple definitions, but there is growing agreement that it includes higher levels of learning and improved rates of successful course completion (both basic skills/ developmental and college level), persistence from term to term, and completion of certificates/and or associates degrees, as well as transfer to baccalaureate institutions" (p.3).

7. Completion: Jones & Ewell (2009) indicate that the "Notion of college completers should be broadly defined to include certificates with workplace acceptance as well as associate and baccalaureate degrees" (p. 1).

8. Achieving the Dream (AtD): A multi-year initiative to help community college students succeed. Student Success initiatives are advanced through four carefully designed approaches: 1) guiding evidence-based institutional improvement, 2) influencing public policy, 3) generating knowledge, and 4) engaging the public (Achieving the Dream, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Mezirow (2009) states, "to make *'meaning'* means to make sense of an experience, we make an interpretation of it. When we subsequently use this interpretation to guide decision-making or actions making *'meaning'* becomes *'learning'*." The ultimate goal of this research was to provide meaning to the role of the board/president in contributing to student success. It is the hope of this researcher that trustees and presidents use the research to make sense of their work as it relates to student success in such a way that meaning truly becomes learning. Reflection is critical to the transformative learning process, and the plan is to present this research using many analogies that are easily understood and interpreted by both trustees and presidents; realizing that it is this interpretation that will ultimately lead to reflection.

In addition, transformative learning is outlined by Taylor, E.W. (1998) who states that there are three primary elements that structure the transformative approach to teaching; individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue. Taylor indicates that individual experience is the primary means by which transformative learning occurs.

Individual experience acknowledges that there will be a blend of what the learner brings (prior experiences) and also what the learner experiences within the "classroom" itself (p. 5). Learning settings are the places where emotional representation of an experience occurs for individuals and groups. These settings are the agent for the transformative learning process. As learners become immersed in an environment, they begin to create new experiences and reshape old experiences. Through the qualitative study, the research will be based on individual experiences; this is an area where it is believed the results of the work will be most beneficial to community college trustees and presidents in terms of transformational learning. Kritskaya & Dirkx (1999) state that "the medium of text can provide a catalyst for reflection, resulting in not only a greater understanding of the text but also greater personal insight (p.6)." It is the desire of the researcher that this dissertation serve as the catalyst for reflection that is critical to the transformative learning process that ultimately creates a culture of student success in community colleges.

Finally, the national focus on higher education and accountability served the impetus for the research. Mark Zandy spoke at the Association of Governing Boards 2011 National Conference. He opened his speech with this statement, "Institutions of higher education are absolutely vital to the nation's long term economic success." Gunder Myran (2009) asserts that Community Colleges are at a point in time when rapidly changing external and internal conditions have forcefully indicated that access to higher education is not enough; focus must be placed on retention and completion. Retention and completion will never be achieved if community college trustees and presidents are not focused on student success. The national push for accountability and improved

outcomes for community colleges is not going to waiver. Community College leaders

must be prepared to make the changes necessary to create a culture of student success. I

contend that with the training provided through Governance Institutes for Student

Success, community college boards and the presidents are better able to create a

partnership that significantly improves organizational culture and allows leaders to focus

on the success of their students. Through the research process, the hope is to point out

various learning outcomes from the governance institute for student success and how

those outcomes have manifested themselves within participating institutions.

This study explores the call to action at the administrative/board of trustee level of

community colleges across the country for the creation of policy around access, success,

and equity. This call to action has the potential to improve retention and completion rates

of students in community colleges across the country. The lack of Community College

student retention and completion has a significant impact on community. First, is the

negative economic impact on a community when students do not acquire the prerequisite

or necessary skills and credentials to enter the workforce; new employers will bypass

communities that lack an educated workforce. Second, community college graduates

typically remain in their communities after graduation; therefore, a higher graduation rate

at the community college level means there is a greater ratio of educated citizens, which

adds to the social well-being and fabric of the community. Third, the increased number

of community college graduates positively contributes to the national completion agenda

thus improving the global competitiveness of the entire country.

Participation in this research provides an opportunity for both presidents and

board chairs to voice their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of governance institutes as

they contributed to advancing the student success/completion agenda within their community college and state. Collectively, participant input has the potential to influence curricular and delivery enhancements of future governance institutes at the national level.

Limitations

There are several limitations with this research study. First, there may be concern of the researcher's ability to set aside biases through the creation, collection, and analysis of data. Second, this study only analyzed two community colleges from each of the states participating in Governance Institutes of Student Success; therefore, result generalizability across all community colleges may not be possible. Yin (2009) indicates that this limitation also raises concerns about the ability for scientific generalization. Third, the study only analyzed perceptions of board chairs and presidents at each college. Therefore, there are limitations in not comparing the experience with all Trustees attending the Governance Institutes on Student Success. And finally, there is a degree of bias that the researcher brings to the study that may influence the process and results. As the Executive Deputy and Board Liaison at Grand Rapids Community College in Michigan, the researcher is personally familiar with the circumstances surrounding student success initiatives and the work of the president and the board. As such, I have attended state and national Trustee and Student Success conferences every year for the past eight years. The researcher has established relationships with many of the staff and leaders at ACCT and MCCA, community college presidents, and trustees; it is possible that I will be interviewing colleagues that I have worked with in the past. I also co-organized the Michigan trustee institute for student success, so I have a working relationship with individuals at the Michigan Center for Student Success and UT-Austin,

which serves as the agency that facilitates the student success institutes nationally. This first-hand knowledge and experience has the potential to improve the study by increasing the relevance of the process, the questions asked, and the results. Much more so than in quantitative processes, qualitative research is influenced by the interpretations of the data by the researcher themselves (Stake, 2010). However, there is also the possibility that the lens by which the researcher views the research topic will color the survey results. This is why a researcher with extensive experiences in the area of study must be sure to keep their own opinions and beliefs separate from those of the interviewees. Where quantitative researchers control for bias and propose impartial results, qualitative researchers expose their bias and express their personal views within the research report (Shope, 2010b).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the research problem, significance, and purpose of the study, research methodology, as well as, provided a glossary of terms relevant to the study. Chapter 2 consists of a literature review that provides a brief history of community colleges; organizational structure and governance; the role of Board of Trustees; the role of community college presidents; the national student success agenda; and finally access, success, and completion. Chapter 3 provides the methods section for the study, which includes: a definition of grounded theory research methodology including interviews as a qualitative method of inquiry, artifact and document analysis; an overview of the research site and participants, as well as a description of the data collection and analysis. Chapter 3 also discusses the role of the researcher. Chapter 4 provides post-prospectus

methodology including execution of the study. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and their importance as well as discusses applicability to departure research and theories.

Summary

In recent years community college presidents and board of trustees have seen the community college mission change from one that is strictly focused on access to one that is now focused on student success and completion. As a result of initiatives like Achieving the Dream and the Governance Institute for Student Success, community college leaders are beginning to see the importance of utilizing data to work collaboratively with faculty to create a culture of completion within their institutions while ensuring that the open door philosophy is preserved. This shift in focus places a significant amount of responsibility on community college presidents and boards to create policies that foster a culture of student success within their organizations. Presidents and board of trustees are wading into unchartered waters and national organizations like Achieving the Dream and Governance Institutes for Student Success are providing boards and presidents with the tools to push the student success and completion agenda within their institutions.

Never in the history of community colleges has there been a national focus and recognition of the important work of community colleges like there is today. These new challenges and opportunities come at a time when revenue sources are at an all-time low and community colleges across the country are seeing significant decreases in enrollment. This ever changing economic landscape increases the need for community college leaders to focus on ensuring that students finish what they start. The work of the president and the board is critically important to advancing the student success and completion agenda

as it is this highest level of leadership that has the charge of setting the mission, vision, and values of the institution. It is this important executive policy level work that will advance the mission of the community college.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The focus of this literature review will examine a number of areas: a brief history of community colleges; organizational structure and governance; the role of Board of Trustees; the role of community college presidents; the national student success agenda; and finally access, success, and completion.

Community College Definition

Community Colleges are multi-disciplinary, post-secondary institutions offering education and training from diverse entry points and leading to various tertiary levels (Walsh, 2005). Community Colleges are publically owned, non-profit entities specifically charged with educating all who come to them from their community. They are open access institutions that offer academic services to whoever applies as long as the individual may benefit from instruction (Beehler, 1993). According to The Carnegie Commission (1974), community colleges are:

> "the institution of choice to increase access for minority and low-income groups through the creation of a stratified approach to higher education that placed community colleges at the bottom rung of the academic ladder."

Community colleges have long been the first and only opportunity to access higher education for minority and low-income students. Dr. Mary Fifield (2006), president of Bunker Hill Community College, stated:

Community Colleges are a uniquely American invention. From their start as

junior colleges in the early 1900s, these two-year institutions signaled a dramatic

change that expanded educational opportunity from only the affluent to include

the poorest and most disadvantaged among us.

The overarching definition of community colleges remains open access. ACCT

asserts that the mission of community and technical colleges is to offer a high-quality,

low-cost education to all who seek it. Furthermore, ACCT believes that access is the

primary means toward student success; regardless of socioeconomic class, gender, race,

or any other classification (Brown & Polonio, Foreword, 2011).

Brief History of Community Colleges

In 1901, Joliet Junior College in Illinois opened its doors as the very first public

two year college in the United States of America. This college was opened by William

Rainey Harper of the University of Chicago, at the urging of David Starr Jordan of

Stanford University, as a liberal arts institution meant to serve as a transfer institution for

student's looking to attend a four-year university. The idea behind the junior college was

that they would serve as the mechanism that would relieve universities of the burden of

teaching first and second year higher education students. Joliet's success served as a

model for the nation and junior college's began to be introduced across the country as a

way to serve the higher education needs in local communities. William Rainey Harper,

considered by some to be the father of junior colleges, created the associates degree as an

academic credential for students completing their first two years of college. This

credential allowed students to successfully matriculate to a four-year college to continue

in their pursuit of a baccalaureate degree, or they could leave the junior college with a

credential proving they had adequate higher education to secure viable employment (Townsend & Bragg, 2006). In its earliest form, junior colleges were created simply with the mission of transfer.

As various social, economic, and political forces applied influence over junior colleges, vocational education emerged as a new mission (Brint & Karabel, 1989). During the Depression of the 1930s, community colleges began offering job-training programs as a way of easing widespread unemployment. After World War II, the conversion of military industries to consumer goods created new, skilled jobs. This economic transformation, along with the GI Bill, was the impetus for the need for more higher education options in America. In 1948, the Truman Commission suggested the creation of a network of public, community-based colleges to serve local needs; the democracy college. President Truman made a bold public statement supporting junior colleges as critical to expanding access to higher education for America's citizens (U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education, 1948). In the 1960s, community colleges became a national network; growing by more than 457 in that decade. Proliferation of community colleges was so extensive in the 1960s that at one point, community colleges were being built at a rate of one college campus per week (Cohen & Brower 2003). This growth was fueled by baby-boomers coming of age and needing higher education, social activism, and a booming economy. With this growth came the comprehensive community college mission. No longer were community colleges emphasizing strictly on transfer and liberal arts education, as was the case before the mid-century; in the 1950s, a workforce development focus was added to the mission and as Bogue (1956) predicted, by the 1960s continuing education and community service were added to the mission.

Ultimately, remedial and developmental education was added and today, the comprehensive community college mission consists of

- Open Access

- Transfer & liberal Arts

- Workforce Development

- Continuing Education & Community Service

- Remedial/Developmental Education.

The multiple mission feeds a national expectation that community colleges are to be all things to all people.

Cohen and Brawer (2003) have identified several dubious reasons for the development and growth of American community colleges including: ability to solve social problems associated with racial integration and unemployment; the increase in k-12 population and graduation rates; the demand from businesses for skilled workers; opportunity for community prestige; and relief for universities on the general education classes or lower level courses. Although there are many conceivable and cogent reasons for the development of the community college, the authors speculate the answer may be grounded in the origin of our nation and strong belief that, "individuals should have the opportunity to rise to their greatest potential" (pg. 11).

Community College Students

Community colleges currently serve 11 million students and 45% of the U.S. college population (U.S. Department of Education). Community colleges tend to educate the students with the greatest need. 81.4% of first time, in any college, community college students enroll with a plan to eventually get a bachelors degree, only 11.6%

achieve that milestone within six years. Among the low-income students that transfer from a community college to a four-year institution only 19% graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Today's community college student is not only academically disadvantaged but also socioeconomically disadvantaged. The chart below shows that from 1982 – 2006, the proportion of community college students from the lowest two socioeconomic quartiles grew, while community college students from the highest two socioeconomic quartiles shrank. Interestingly enough, in the years since 2007, tough economic times has increased the number of students from all economic sectors to community colleges, but low-income students have increased their use of community colleges at far faster rate than middle or high-income students (Sallie Mae, 2011). With the disproportionate increase in students of lower socioeconomic status, also comes a disproportionately large population of minority students; between 1994 and 2006, Black and Hispanic student representation grew from 21% to 33%, while the White student population went from 73% to 58% (The Century Foundation, 2013).
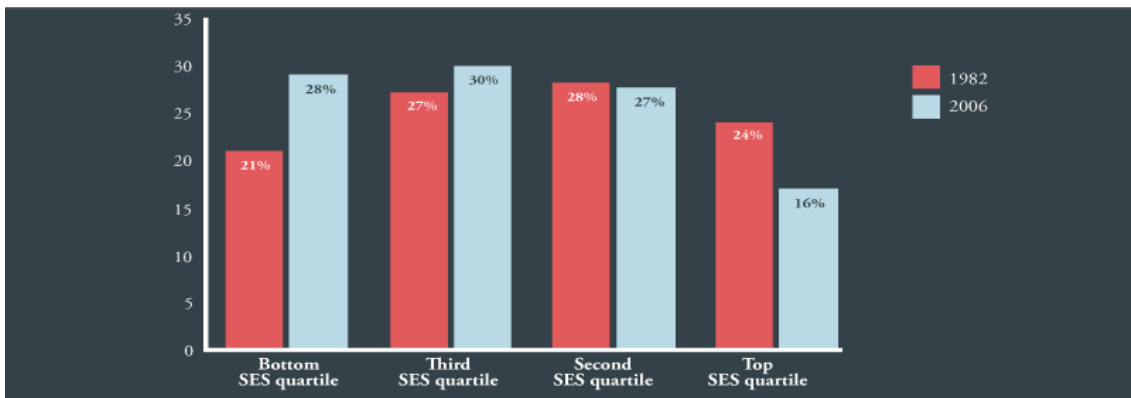
Figure 1: Proportion of Community College enrolled 1982-2006

The Center for Community College Student Engagement is a research and service initiative of the Community College Leadership Program in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin; their purpose is to provide important information about effective educational practice in community colleges. The center does extensive research around the entering community college student voice via the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE). Cumulatively, CCSSE reports to have surveyed almost two million students (representative of over six million students) from 900 different colleges in 50 states, Washington DC, Bermuda, Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia, the Northern Marianas, and the Marshall Islands (McClenney, 2013). At the 2013 Roueche Future Leaders Institute in Baltimore, Maryland (June 27, 2013), Dr. Kay McClenney reported the results of the 2013 SENSE survey around what entering community college students say about their goals:

- 79% want to obtain an associate degree

- 73% want to transfer to a four-year institution

- 59% want to complete a certificate program

- 90% report they are committed to doing whatever it takes to succeed in college

- 85% believe they are academically prepared to succeed.

The reality for these students is

- 75% of the students surveyed learned that they do not have the skills in reading, writing, and/or math that are required to succeed in college-level courses.

- 15% of the students surveyed done not complete a single credit in their first term

- 46% of the students surveyed drop out by the start of their second year, and

- Only 45% of the students surveyed have completed a certificate or degree, transferred, or is still enrolled after six years.

Community College Governance

Community College Governance is complex and it varies in nature. In 1998, the Education Commission of States (ECS) released a report that outlined the complexity and variation of community college governance by state. Specifically,

- Eight states utilized a state board to both coordinate and regulate their community colleges;

- Eighteen states utilized a coordinated board of their four-year and two-year universities and colleges to govern their community colleges;

- Nine state employed a coordinating board to oversee their local community colleges;

- Twelve states utilized a state board to govern their community colleges; and

- Eleven states had four-year universities overseeing two-year branch campuses or institutions.

When thinking about community college governance it is important to remember that community colleges were established as the democracy college, which inherently reflects the values embraced by the communities and states served by these colleges. States have the right, as outlined in the U.S. Constitution, to administer their own affairs, which does include higher education. Community Colleges are state institutions that are chartered, licensed, and regulated primarily within, and by, the states they serve. The Association of Community Colleges reports that an analysis of the current structure of community college governance in the fifty states reveals that one-third of the 6,000 trustees serving in the country are publicly elected, one-third are appointed locally, and one-third are appointed state-wide (Brown, 2012).

In a community college where Board of Trustees operates under policy governance, the President is the only employee of the Board of Trustees (Carver 2004). Community colleges offer two main pathways to students. The first pathway is preparation for higher education and the second pathway is workforce development skills for students wishing to enter the labor force (Walsh, 2005). Trustees are charged with the oversight of the education of people in their community. The Board is responsible for establishing and implementing policy, both fiscal and administrative, and to maintain an excellent education for all students in a safe, secure learning environment. Myran (2003) further states that policy development is the "avenue through which the board of trustees of an American public community college expresses its strategic intentions on behalf of the citizens of the college's service area" (p. 33).

As stated earlier, community college governance is complex. Myran (2003) attributes part of this complexity to the fact that community colleges are led by presidents that are experienced educators with proven leadership skills; these educational leaders report to, and are directed by, an elected or appointed board made up of citizens with little or no educational experience that are most interested in public service and have an appreciation for the value that the community colleges adds to their communities. Some may wonder how this model makes sense, professional educators directed by citizen board members; it makes sense because a community college is the democracy college, as such it is owned by the community; board members are elected, or appointed to represent their community; therefore, board members "own" the college.

The Role of the Board of Trustees

BoardSource lists the ten basic responsibilities of non-profit boards, which are very similar to Board of Trustees of Community Colleges, as

1. Determine Mission and Purpose

2. Select Chief Executive

3. Support and Evaluate the Chief Executive

4. Ensure Effective Planning

5. Monitor and Strengthen Programs and Services

6. Ensure adequate Financial Resources

7. Protect Assets and Provide Financial Oversight

8. Build a Competent Board

9. Ensure Legal and Ethical Integrity

10. Enhance the Organizations Public Standing

Vaughan & Weisman (1997) state,

> Community college trustees invest their time, energy, knowledge, experience, and
> talents in improving their community college, thereby improving the quality of
> life of countless communities across the nation, and of the nation itself.

As such, Myran (2003) indicates that the "board's first strategic role…is shaping the future of the college… (p.36). The board does this important work in retreat format. Retreats are board work sessions dedicated to address strategic direction. A board interested in improving student success might hold a student success retreat to explore policies and strategies designed to impart the assessment of student learning outcomes

and continuous academic improvement into the institutional culture. Through the use of

retreats, boards gain much needed insight on student success data that will ultimately

influence the future of the community college. Armed with the data, boards are able to

then work through the development of documents, under the guidance of the president,

that give shape and substance to policies designed to increase student success efforts and

create a culture of evidence within the institution. Myran (2003) further states that the

second strategic role of the community college board is to exercise their "ownership" of

the college by creating policy and related decisions that ensure the college operates in the

best interest of the community it serves. Myran outlines these responsibilities as

- Establish, with the advice of the president, policies to govern the affairs of the college

- Select the president when a vacancy exists; evaluate and give direction to the president

- Provide for the financial oversight of the college

- Act on a monthly financial report from the president

- Act on the annual budget as recommended by the president

- Provide for the annual audit of college funds

- Act on recommendations of the president regarding new facilities and the renovation of existing facilities

- Act on the recommendation of the president regarding the purchase and lease of real estate, or any other legal transaction regarding the sale or acquisition of property

- Act on the recommendations of the president regarding new instructional programs

- Act on the recommendations of the president regarding hiring of staff, compensation levels, and other personnel matters

- Authorize the granting of degrees and certificates

- Act on contracts between the college and organized labor groups (p. 37).

The Board of Trustees serves as stewards of the public interest. Boards are accountable to the community for the performance and welfare of the Community College they govern. Boards ensure that the Community College has the leadership necessary to meet community needs and standards. George Potter notes that "a trustee must be willing to freely donate many hundreds of hours per year in serving the educational and social needs of his constituents with little or no compensation to himself" (1986).

Effective Boards are more than simply another layer of administration within the Community College; they consist of people who come together to work in a cohesive group to articulate and represent the public interest, establish a community college climate for learning and personal growth, and to monitor the effectiveness of the institution. Board of Trustees do not work for the college, instead, they work through the college by establishing standards for the work of the college through the policies they set. Through its policy-setting role, the board creates the context in which the president makes decisions on the day-to-day operation of the college (Myran, 2003, p. 33). The Board's most significant and powerful contribution to the Community College is their connection to the communities that they represent. Boards ensure that community is the focus of the Community College. According to Smith (2000), strong effective boards help to create strong and effective community colleges and they do this by

- acting as a unit
- representing the common good
- setting policy direction
- employing, supporting, and evaluating the President

- defining policy standards for college operations

- monitoring institutional performance

- creating a positive climate

- supporting and advocating for the interests of the college

- leading as a thoughtful educated team.

Smith (2000) further states that effective boards set and maintain standards for the conduct of their business. They do this by evaluating process, outcomes, and ethics of their own actions; taking corrective action as appropriate. It is this monitoring process that assists effective boards in improving student equity, success, and completion; "wise boards foster a climate that supports monitoring of institutional effectiveness" (Smith, 2000, p. 158). Carver (2006) states that all board functions must be rigorously evaluated against the standard of purpose. A powerful model would have the board not only establish a mission in terms of an outcome but also procedurally enforce that mission as the central organizing focus (p. 30). "…By monitoring and assessing progress toward the mission and goals, the board focuses staff attention on achieving outcomes" (Smith, 2000, p. 158).

According to Ingram (1997), collectively, the governing board at each community college may, or may not, see their responsibilities as including, but not limited to

- Clarify its mission and purpose;

- Appoint, support, and monitor the chief executives performance;

- Access board performance, through self-study;

- Participate in strategic planning;

- Review educational and public service programs;

- Ensure adequate resources;

- Ensure good management;

- Preserve institutional independence, within the confines of the system;

- Relate campus to community and community to campus; and

- Serve as a court of appeal.

According to Dika and Janosik (2003), trustees play a major role in ensuring quality and effectiveness in higher education. However, research on the selection, training, and effectiveness of boards of trustees is limited. Boards of trustees have become more than just guardians of the institutions; today they are more active in addressing the issue of student success. In order to be effective board members, trustees must possess demonstrated leadership skills, must have the ability to contribute and support the mission and needs of the institution, must have a commitment to the institution, must have personal integrity, must have a good knowledge of higher education, and must be familiar with the problems of higher education. In addition to the effective characteristics outlined, the board must employ a president to operationalize the mission and vision of the institution. The ability to operationalize the mission and vision of the institution, and to further the student success agenda, can best be facilitated through an effective board/president relationship and through professional development of the Board of Trustees. McClenney (2004) reiterates that

Mission prioritization will help colleges fulfill their important promises to students and local communities to provide and promote access, improve student

achievement, focus on student learning, embrace accountability, and close

achievement gaps between haves and have-nots.

Current literature points to important role of community college trustees as the

link between the community college and the public as trustees lead efforts and advocate

for increased student success. Byron and Kay McClenney (2010) indicate that the Board

of Trustees have critical roles in strengthening student success that begins with the hiring

and support of the president and extends through the priorities it creates for the

institution. It is critical that the Board communicates priorities, monitors progress, asks

questions about student success data, evaluates the performance of the president and

creates institutional policy conditions that are specifically intended to promote student

success (p.4).

As Trustees monitor work around student success, a shift in culture must occur.

Dr. Byron McClenney (2010) pointed out to Board of Trustee members at the first ever

Michigan Trustee Institute on Student Success, that as the Board works to understand

student outcome data and create a culture of student success there may be "pushback and

suspicion about whether the Board will overstep its boundaries, which can present

obstacles as the Board engages in systemic change efforts." The Board must work with

the President to determine boundaries and it is ultimately the President's role to "manage

the process; keeping Board members and faculty on the same page while moving

everyone toward the ultimate goal of improving student success. McClenney & Mathis

(2011) point out that

> Board actions and behaviors are critical in creating a climate that is conducive to
>
> closing achievement gaps, ensuring academic quality, and improving student

outcomes (p. 31). Leaders may find it tempting to old practices such as using enrollment as a proxy for success…closing achievement gaps, and retaining a laser-like focus on improving student outcomes will require conviction…visible support by the board, for the CEO to successfully implement this critical and ambitious agenda (p. 33).

Below (1987) indicates that leadership is defined as the process an individual uses to determine direction, influence over a group, and course of progress towards a specific goal or institutional mission. As the leadership at the very top of the community college organizational structure, Board of Trustees determine the direction of the college through their influence and policy-decision making powers. Eddy (2010) points out that as college leaders work to prioritize initiatives, such as student success, they must learn to "navigate internal and external demands…prioritize some institution goals over others" (p.4).

As the board works to determine the direction of the college, they are also influencing organizational culture. Organizational culture is not something that can be easily captured in words, but is something that is intuitively recognized within an organization. The culture of a community college is shaped and fashioned from those leading the organization from the very top; therefore, the board has a strong influence on the organizational culture.

As trustees begin the process of monitoring and understanding student success data on a routine basis, they begin to influence organization culture; continuous and consistent monitoring of student success data at the board level will inspire long-lasting changes. Kay McClenney (2012), addressed trustees at ACCT's Third Annual

Symposium on Completion, "There's no more powerful lever for change than data that paints a picture of our community college students and tells the truth about which groups are disproportionately falling through the cracks." Higgs (2003) indicates that effective leadership is critical to change management within an organization; community college trustees must be focused on student success data if they are to create a change in organizational culture. As a change agent, trustees will find it necessary to change some institutional policies and procedures. To create a culture of student success, the board may find it necessary to adapt organizational structure, funding, or incentives. Clear alignment of all institutional student success priorities increases the opportunities for community colleges to successfully influence their vision and mission. Additionally, it is important that resources for student success are aligned with the educational mission and ultimately all college resources: every decision to allocate resources should be driven by the student success mission. Therefore, trustees must focus on student needs and should place those needs at core of the college's student success vision (K.M. McClenney, 2004; O'Banion, 1997; Rouche & Baker, 1987).

Change in culture is never easy and the board should resist the urge to take shortcuts; change of any kind requires considerable and significant time, energy, and effort. As the board works to change culture, it is important for trustees embark on the process of making organizational changes as necessary to ensure the success of the under-prepared community college student; this must be the clear priority for the college (Achieving the Dream, 2012). So, as the board works to enhance academic achievement and develop a culture of student success, the most important step is to develop an organizational culture focused on reaching student success goals.

Myran (2005) states, "The ultimate strategic goal of the board of trustees focuses

on ensuring that a community college operates in the best interests of the students,

businesses, and communities in the service area. Carver & Mayhew (1997) further state

the board does not do the community college's work; instead the board insures that the

work of the community college is done (p. 25).

The Role of Community College President

The American Association of Community Colleges (2005) has collaborated

extensively with its many constituencies to identify and endorse a set of competencies for

community college leaders:

- Organizational Strategy

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

- Resource Management

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

- Communication

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

- Collaboration

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

- Community College Advocacy

    o An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.

- Professionalism

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

These leadership competencies are essential skills required of a community college leader as he/she works to move the student success and completion agenda forward.

According to Mike Beehler (1993), the Community College President must act as the role of leader without a clear delineation between the college and the community; the president must be able to lead the college as both educator and community leader. The constituency of the college is both local and statewide. The president is in the position of being the connection between the internal and external forces of the college.

Community College Presidents must be strategic thinkers. Gunder Myran (1983) believes that strategic leaders,

> ...place more emphasis on integrating the community responsive thrusts and initiatives of the various college divisions and programs into a cohesive institutional mosaic. They have begun to devote more time and energy to strategy formulation and implementation; that is, to charting out definite courses of action that will shape the fundamental character and direction for the college (p. 3).

Robert McCabe (1984) states that the president needs to be an "ideological leader" (p.14). An ideological leader is one that analyzes the environment in terms of forces and issues and then acts in an ideological perspective. McCabe further states, presidents must be educational leaders, with a political focus, that gain the leadership of the community in

support of the institution, and ultimately effectively organize all aspects of this leadership role (pp 8-16).

Today's highly complex system of higher education is requiring community college presidents to acquire skills far beyond the traditional skill set that was once enough to ensure a president's role as academic leader. According to Brown (2012) new skills necessary for success include

> strategic planning, resource management, strategy formulation, navigating new technologies – to support campus operations and services while also adapting to rapidly changing student learning styles – understanding the impact of regulations and reporting requirements, accountability and outcomes assessment, and other skills focusing on specialized knowledge and its application (pp 85-86).

Brown further states that if the twenty-first-century community college president is to effectively navigate community colleges in the future he/she must "be able to articulate that future while remaining realistic about what can be achieved, and at what pace" (p. 88). It is very clear that community college presidents must completely understand what is achievable, and even more importantly, must be able to educate and inform their Board of Trustees about resources and alignment with the mission of the institution and the relationship to the community. Eddy (2010) indicates that "community college leadership requires a delicate balancing act" (p. 4); today's community college president must traverse multiple demands from constituents and community, ambiguous funding streams, increased demand for accountability, and an ever changing student demographic. Brown notes that, "It is particularly important for presidents to understand that leadership

in never effective in a vacuum – leaders are those who inspire others to embrace the vision and make it their own in ways that ensure success and forward progress" (p. 88).

The 1988 groundbreaking report, *Building Communities: A vision for a New Century,* further reinforces a direct and powerful vision about the community college presidency:

Building communities requires creative leaders, and the president is key. The president must move the college beyond day- to-day operations. He or she must call upon the community of learning to affirm tradition, respond to challenges, and create inspiring visions for the future. To do this the president must be collaborative, bring together various constituencies, build consensus, and encourage others within the college community to lead as well (p.41).

It has been said that leadership is "simply holding the goals of the institution in one hand and the people of the institution in the other and somehow bringing the two together in a common good" (Hockaday, 2010). The role of the President is to understand and implement the vision for the institution. Presidents study the factors that are shaping the future and how those factors impact the institution as it works to fulfill its mission. Without vision, a president is nothing more than an administrator doing the day-to-day tasks of running the institution.

Community college presidents work to link external and internal governance so that the college receives consistent direction. The Community College President develops the vision and direction for the college and must also share that vision with the Board. The President needs to facilitate the education of Trustees about their role and the issues facing the college. The President is the conduit between the Board and the institution and

Boards hold the president accountable for communicating the needs of the institution. Presidents must understand that most board members serve because they have specific interests, and determining those interests is critical to the success of the Board and the success of the President. Presidents cannot ignore the specific interests, needs, and idiosyncrasies of each elected Trustee. Presidents will also have specific, as well as, broad based interests and it is imperative that a president gains the board's confidence and acceptance of those interests. This ensures that the Board is working collaboratively with the President rather than being counter-productive to the organizational mission.

All of the current literature around community college presidents indicates that change is essential for community colleges to achieve the institutional transformation that must occur if the access, success, and completion agenda is to advance. In the report, *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future,* it is noted that presidents need to transform the community college design; "reshaping the community college of today to the meet the needs of tomorrow…community college leaders need to see change as their friend, embrace it, and, then, indeed, lead it" (p.17).

Board/President Relationship

The beginning of a good board/president relationship starts with the selection of the president. Hiring the president is considered to be the most important charge of the board; the president is the board's sole employee and is charged by the board to implement the policies approved by the governing board. Smith (2000) indicates that the CEO is the primary agent of the board and is the single most influential person in creating an outstanding organization; therefore, supporting the president is the board's most

important responsibility. Pfeffer (1994) states that success starts with hiring excellent leadership.

According to Smith (2000), the Board-President relationship "is complex and somewhat paradoxical in nature" (p. 67). The relationship is hierarchical in that the Board works for the public and the President works for the Board. But, the Board depends on the President to provide essential leadership and guidance. Boards rely on Presidents to help them understand and focus on critical issues, and Boards are responsible to Presidents to be effective stewards of community resources and the college mission. Ultimately, the Board-President relationship is inter-reliant and will not work if both the Board and President aren't committed to ensuring the success of the relationship. The Board-President relationship is a partnership that requires teamwork and nurturing. To further understand the relationship there must be a clear delineation of Board and President roles. Myran (2003) indicates clear delineation around the policy development role of the board and the policy implementation role of the president is critical to a successful Board-President relationship (p. 34). He further states that the president must nurture many relationships that are considered vital to the success of the college; the most important of these is the president's relationship with the board (p. 35).

MacTaggart (2011) places a strong emphasis on the central relationship between boards and presidents indicating that the key word in this conversation is partnership. He indicates

> That the board and president partnership is central to preventing what he calls "creeping mediocrity" into the governance structure of the institution. Carver (2004) used a policy governance model to describe the relationship that the board

of trustees ought to have with the president of a non-profit organization such as a community college. He believed that "the board exists to be accountable that its organization works. The board is where all authority resides until some is given away to others" (p. 1).

Carver's policy governance model requires that boards become more competent servant-leaders who are able to effectively govern the institution on behalf of its owners whether these are shareholders, taxpayers, or others. As such Carver postulated that the board has one employee, the chief executive officer. Carver recognized that it is through the success of the board/president relationship that the mission and vision of the institution is realized. Myran (2003) agrees that the board/president relationship is extremely complex and that it is often the president that is relied upon to mentor new trustees and to have open and honest conversations with the board chair regarding the functioning of the board (p. 35). The president also plays the primary role in recommending policies to the board; and the board must give the president the freedom to implement the board approved policies and to provide strategic direction of the institution without unnecessary interference from the board. Mutual trust and dialogue are critical to the health and success of the board/president relationship. Myran (2003) identifies the following shared expectations that can nature the board/president relationship; board members have the right to expect that the president will

- Treat all board members equally
- Ensure that there will be no surprises
- Keep the board informed of new developments and emerging problems
- Support the board's decisions
- Recognize the achievements and contributions of board members

- Represent individual board members in a positive and supportive way to the public

- Give candid but private assessments of the board's functioning

- Work with the board chair as the primary communication link between the board and the president, while also ensuring that all board members are kept informed of emerging matters

- Maintain neutrality in board elections (p. 35).

Similarly, the president has a right to expect that the board will:

- Be sympathetic to and show understanding of the difficulty and complexity of carrying out the presidential leadership role amid the sometimes conflicting expectations of students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

- Support the president in implementing board policy regardless of the outcome of the board vote.

- Seek the president's recommendation on policy matters before action is taken.

- Inform the president of questions or concerns received from students, faculty, staff, or citizens so that prompt action can be taken, rather than having individual board members attempt to resolve such problems.

- Insist that employees use established staff-board communication channels (p. 35).

In this age of accountability, Brown (2012) states that "community college leaders must assume responsibility for the outcomes –positive or negative- generated by their institutions" (p. 113). Community College Presidents and Board of Trustees must find ways to increase student success rates across the broad spectrum of the student populations they serve. The measurement and analyzing of institutional programs and services must be intentional; goals and performance measures must nurture change and must be attainable. Accountability demands focused on student success are always at the top of mind for community college leaders. Students do have a role in their own success, however, Offstein, Moore, and Shulock (2010) point out that

Although students surely must be held accountable for doing their part to prepare

for and succeed in college, most institutional leaders know that their colleges

could work a lot better for today's students (p. 2).

Board and presidents struggle on a daily basis to address the countless demands

on the limited resources at the community college. Caiden (1988) stated "long ago, when

people wished to discern the shape of things to come, they looked to the stars; today, they

look at the budget." The board and the president work together to determine how to

distribute resources through budget planning. The budget is the management tool that

outlines the governing board's intention and action plans; it is the financial expression of

priorities. Alignment of the budget to the strategic goals of the college necessitates good

communication between the governing board and the president around the needs of the

institution.

With regards to student success, McClenney & Mathis (2011) indicate that

presidents must share student success data with boards on a regular basis. "By requiring

student success reports on a regular basis; a board can monitor progress and foster a

climate in which the use of data to inform decision-making becomes a routine way of

doing business" (p. 18). Diana Oblinger (2012), president and CEO of EDUCAUSE,

addressed trustees at ACCT's Third Annual Symposium on Completion, "Analytics and

data are critical to you and your students being able to see the black box that is higher

education…trustees need to learn how to use data as a flashlight, not a hammer." Data

informed decision-making, based on student success, will create a culture of evidence and

inquiry that will permeate the institution; ultimately impacting the determination of

priorities, allocating, or re-allocating resources, and increased awareness around how all

students are doing with regards to achieving their educational goals. Haycock (2006) further reinforces the importance of data driven decision-making "…if we don't get the numbers our on the table and talk about them, we're never going to close the gap once and for all" (p. 6). Myran (2003) indicates that The American Council on Education published a monograph in the past few years that outlines behaviors of boards and presidents that are successful with dealing with change. Those leaders

- Approached change collaboratively

- Were intentional in their actions

- Were reflective about their change endeavors

- Learned from their actions and adjusted their plans (p. 126).

It is important to note changing a community college culture takes time, persistence, and resilience. Smith (2007) concurs stating,

> Challenges including defining student success, comparing institutions, accommodating expectations of many college stakeholders, conducting evaluation research, and addressing staff and student resistance to accountability (p. 157).

Student Success Agenda – National Organization

Much of this literature review has been influenced by the student success initiatives that are being driven at the national level through the various national organizations affiliated with community colleges. McClenney & Mathis (2011) state that over the "past decade, there have been heightened calls for increased accountability, equity in educational attainment, and success for all students by accreditation agencies, legislatures, educational and policy organizations, parents, and the public-at-large" (p.1).

Achieving the Dream was launched in 2003, as the Lumina Foundation for Education Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count (AtD). This multi-year national initiative was designed specifically to help community colleges enable more students to succeed. The program is designed to change the colleges' internal culture and practices that impact student success while also taking into account external factors that shape institutional behavior: including public policy, research, and public agenda. Quint, et al (2010), states that AtD emboldens community colleges to embark on a rigorous process of self-examination that allows for the development of concrete goals and priorities for institutional reform that is grounded in an analysis of their student outcomes data (p.1). According to William D. Law, Jr. (2004), President Tallahassee Community College, Achieving the Dream is a national student success initiative designed with the goal of increasing success for the growing number of students for whom community colleges are the point of entry into higher education, particularly low-income students and students of color. Law further states, the goals of Achieving the Dream are ambitious; after four years, it is expected that ATD colleges will show improved success rates for low- income students and students of color, and that those success rates will continue to increase over time. As a result, it is hoped that an increased percentage of low-income students and students of color will:

- Successfully complete the courses they take,

- Advance from remedial to credit-bearing courses,

- Enroll in, and successfully complete, gateway courses,

- Re-enroll, or persist, from one semester to the next,

- Earn degrees and certificates.

Achieving the Dream funders and partners believe that data analysis is critical for institutional decision-making. Therefore, data analysis regarding student outcomes is used to identify areas that need improvement, create the institutional resolve for change, and assess the impact of the changes on students. Working with Achieving the Dream, college teams utilizes the model below to develop a "culture of evidence," using data to organize broad involvement, to guide and assess their actions, and to shape policies and practices that support students' successful academic and career achievement.

4 Principles
- ► Committed leadership
- ► Using evidence to improve programs & services
- ► Broad engagement
- ► Systemic institutional improvement

5 Steps

STEP 1 — Commit to change.
STEP 2 — Use data to prioritize actions.
STEP 3 — Engage stakeholders.
STEP 4 — Implement, evaluate, improve.
STEP 5 — Establish a culture of continuous improvement.

1 Goal: Student success.
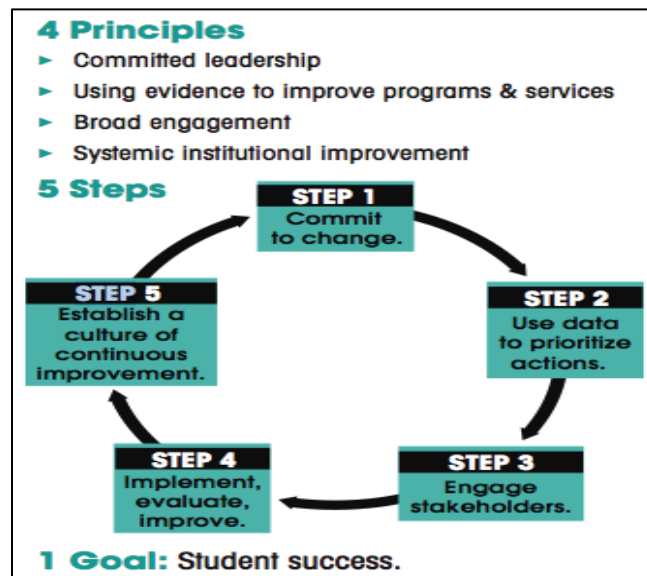
Figure 2: Achieving the Dream Principles & Process

Each college approaches the work differently, but Achieving the Dream's five-step process provides practical guidelines for keeping the focus where it belongs and building momentum over time. Throughout the process, Achieving the Dream coaches offer customized support and help each college's core team implement data-informed programs and policies that build long-term, institution-wide commitment to student success. Achieving the Dream expects to foster change within institutions and state

policy. In addition, AtD seeks to increase knowledge about policies, programs, structures, and services that increase student success. AtD recognizes the importance of increasing public support for raising postsecondary attainment levels.

In 2008, the Association of American Colleges & Universities and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation stated:

We face some formidable challenges. Other nations have surpassed the United States in terms of percentages of their population achieving postsecondary degrees. Our levels of attainment have remained static, primarily because college access and degree completion rates are still sharply stratified by income and ethnicity.

…In order to meet these challenges, we in the higher education community must continually seek, and find, better ways reach our common goal of helping all the students we serve realize their full potential (p. 1).

The United States once was a world leader in the number of young people receiving an associate's degree or higher; today, the United States has fallen to 14th among developed nations for the 25-34 age group (Century Foundation, 2013). O'Banion (2013) states that student success is critically important today because "we are falling behind where it really counts, in the 25-34 age group."

	TODAY		1996
1	KOREA	1	KOREA
2	JAPAN	2	UNITED STATES
3	CANADA	3	NETHERLANDS
4	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	4	CANADA
5	IRELAND	5	NORWAY
6	NORWAY	6	SPAIN
7	NEW ZEALAND	7	AUSTRALIA
8	UNITED KINGDOM	8	DENMARK
9	AUSTRALIA	9	GREECE
10	LUXEMBOURG	10	NEW ZEALAND
11	ISRAEL	11	UNITED KINGDOM
12	BELGIUM	12	BELGIUM
13	FRANCE	13	IRELAND
14	UNITED STATES	14	ITALY
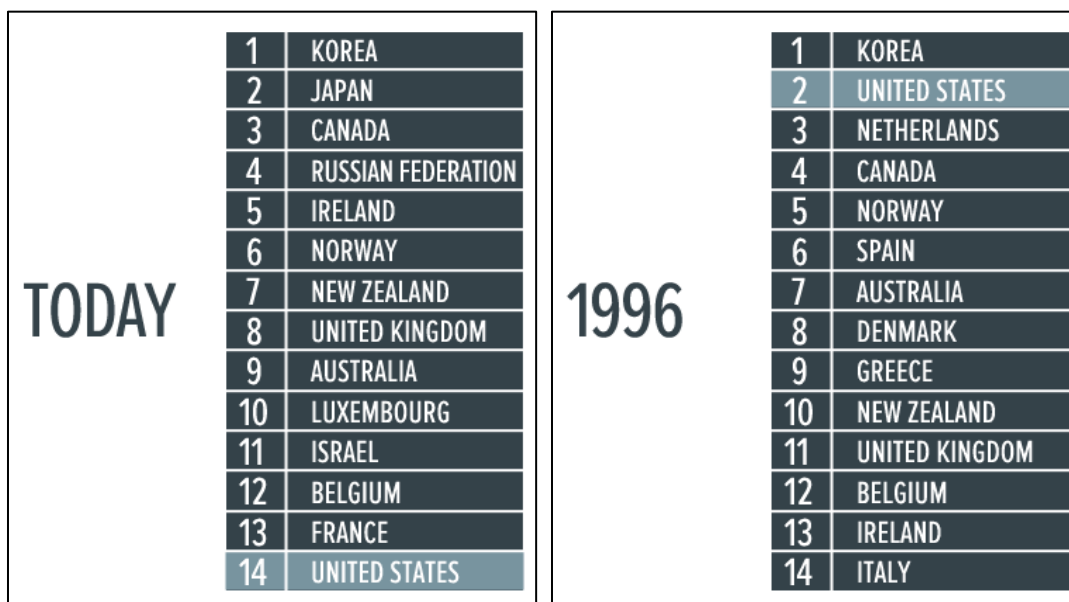
Figure 3: Century Foundation – Young people received associates degree or higher – Nation Ranking List 1996 & Today

In 2009, President Barack Obama provided a vision to increase graduation rates for students across the nation and challenged higher education to double the number of college degrees nationwide by 2020. In order to achieve this national goal, institutions of higher education in this country will need to award eight million new degrees, five million of which, according to the President of the United States, will come from community colleges (The Century Foundation, 2013).

In response to this call to action from the White House, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, the Lumina Foundation for Education, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation established Complete College America; a not-for-profit organization. Complete College America was designed to "significantly increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential of

value and to close achievement gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations"
(Complete College America, 2011). Their website states:

> The organization was founded for the sole purpose of dramatically increasing the
> nation's college completion rate through state policy change, and to build
> consensus for change among state leaders, higher education, and the national
> education policy community.

> …We've made progress in giving students from all backgrounds access to
> college- but we haven't finished the important job of helping them achieve a
> degree (2011).

The Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) was launched in 2009. The
VFA is managed by the American Association of Community Colleges and funded by the
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education with the
charge "to create national metrics gauging how well two-year institutions serve their
students and fulfill their assorted missions" (Moltz, 2011). This work is significant as it
was the first time "Leadership in the sector is defining the most appropriate metrics for
gauging how well our institutions perform in serving a variety of students and purposes"
(American Association of Community Colleges, 2011(a)). The significance is
compounded as the metrics also include college readiness, progress, and outcomes and
success measures.

On April 20, 2010, at the AACC National Convention, the *Democracy's
Colleges: Call to Action* was signed.

In an unprecedented and unified action, American Association of Community Colleges, Association of Community College Trustees, League for Innovation in Community Colleges, The Center for Community College Student Engagement, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and the National Institute for Staff & Organizational Development pledged publically their statement of commitment to increase student completion rates by 50% over the next decade (AACC 2010).

In April, 2010, The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), in partnership with the Community College Leadership Program, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, embarked on a three-year initiative to design, develop, and implement the Governance Institute for Student Success.

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is a non-profit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States. These community professionals, business officials, public policy leaders, and leading citizens offer their time and talent to serve on the governing boards of this century's most innovative higher education institutions-community, junior, and technical colleges-and make decisions that affect more than 1,200 colleges and over 11 million students annually.

The Community College Leadership Program (CCLP) has an impressive national reputation for graduating the highest number of doctoral students to become community college CEO's and senior administrators in the country. Its reach further extends through a significant array of nationally recognized initiatives, including its key role in Achieving

the Dream: Community Colleges Count, the California Leadership Alliance for Student Success (CLASS), Student Success Institutes, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Developmental Education Initiative, The Ford Foundation-funded Bridges to Opportunity, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, and the National Institute for Staff and Organization Development. Together, ACCT and CCLP developed a process through which governing boards and CEOs can foster the institutional agenda and skills necessary to accelerate and achieve the needed increases in student attainment and completion by focusing specifically on effective governance policies. To date, the Governance Institute for Student Success has provided its transformational governance leadership training to community college presidents and trustees in the states of Ohio, Washington, and Texas.

In October 2010, the completion agenda was once again at the national political forefront with the first ever White House Summit on Community Colleges. Dr. Jill Biden (2011) stated in the summit report that the 2010 Summit "was just the beginning of our national conversation to share the best practices to improve student outcomes at community colleges across the country" (p. 5). The National Governor's Association (NGA) continued the completion conversation with its 2010-2011 NGA Chair's Initiative, *Complete to Compete.* This initiative called upon states to address policies and develop common performance measures to improve educational and degree attainment. Gregoire (2010-2011), NGA Chair, indicated that:

> Increasing college completion will require a new approach to leadership and
> creative ideas. While a number of states are already taking steps to boost college

completion, increased gubernatorial leadership and participation are crucial to achieve meaningful progress.

In 2011, the state of Michigan entered the national student success conversation. The Michigan Trustee Institute for Student Success was sponsored by the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA) – Center for Student Success, funded by The Kresge Foundation, in cooperation with the Community College Leadership Program (CCLP), College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin and Achieving the Dream, Inc. The Michigan Trustee Institute for Student Success was designed to replicate the Governance Institute for Student Success. As such, the University of Texas at Austin was contracted to provide the content and expertise for the event. This first institute, held in September 2011, was a pilot with the presidents and trustees at the colleges participating in Achieving the Dream in Michigan. A major goal of the institute was for board members to have a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to, or inhibit, student success and how the board can best support college practices and policies in this regard. As the researcher, I believe that a national agenda focused on student success and accountability specifically targeted at boards and presidents points to the need for a better understanding of the roles of the board and president as it relates to mission and vision. O'Banion (2009) warns, "There is a rising tide of frustration with boards as they, or certain of their members, do not place the common good as their highest priority" (p. 10). He further clarifies,

Most trustees volunteer for service on a community college board because they have a profound commitment to serving students; when they can discuss, review,

and share their values around education in a public forum, they can rally around larger issues and take pride in their contributions. Rogue trustees do not thrive in this environment (p. 87).

McClenney & Mathis (2011), indicate that their observations reinforce the continuing need for board and president development around their appropriate roles and responsibilities as they learn how to navigate the student success agenda in their specific roles (p. 14). Consequently, this is an area that is ready for more support and professional development opportunities.

Access, Student Success, and Completion Agenda

National studies (Grubb, 1999; US Department of Education, 1996, 2003) prove that developmental education constitutes a substantial portion of the community college curriculum in this country. Many college students would be unable to meet their goals without this extremely important intervention. To effectively create a student success agenda that leads to completion, presidents and boards must commit to preserving the access mission of community colleges. It would be quite easy for community colleges to achieve the student success and completion agendas if they simply closed off enrollment to the population of students that they know are in need of developmental education; this can never be an option for community colleges. "A college's commitment to making good on the promise of the open door can spur many changes, but the transformation must begin with the collective decision to live the idea of open doors and academic excellence" (Roueche, Ely, & Roueche, 2001, p. 106). Rouche et al (2001) further state:

Today, open access is threatened as a direct result of demands for accountability and increased focus on developmental education. Some proponents of access fear

that the growing demands for accountability and quality might limit – or worse still – close the door of opportunity to many students.

As Cohen & Brawer (2003) suggests for most community college students "the choice is not between community college and the senior residential institution; it is between the local college and nothing (p. 53).

Terry O'Banion (2013), President Emeritus of the League for Innovation in the Community College and a Senior League Fellow, indicates:

The purpose of the Access Agenda is to make it easy for student to enroll in college. The purpose of the Student Success Agenda is to assist students in meeting their individual education and career goals. The Completion Agenda is a part of the Student Success Agenda with a more targeted goal of doubling the number of students in the next decade who complete a certificate or associate's degree or who transfer and complete their credential at another college or university (p.1).

For as long as Community Colleges have been in existence, their primary focus has always been access; opening the door to higher education for those students who never dreamed they could attend college. Kay McClenney (June, 2013) states that ten years ago, community colleges operated under a "culture of anecdote." Today, in this world and in this economy, access is no longer good enough; access must be coupled with success and completion. Scrivener & Coghlan (2011) reported in an MDRC policy brief entitled, *Opening Doors to Student Access: A synthesis of findings from an evaluation at six community colleges*, that "only one-third of all students who enter community college with the intent to earn a degree or certificate actually meet this goal

within six years (p.12). With a national focus on student success, community colleges are changing their focus from simply access to student success and completion; multiple missions has made defining student success at the community college very complex and complicated. In the past, community colleges leaders defined student access and student success as interchangeable; as enrollment increased access became the institutional metric used by community colleges to demonstrate success of students. The North Carolina Completion by Design Team addressed the entwined philosophies of access and success: "As a cadre, the colleges recognize one of the biggest challenges we will face is to change the focus from access to success by creating a culture of completion (North Carolina Cadre, 2012, n.p.)." As community colleges switch gears and begin to focus on student success; it is critically important for community college leaders to remain committed to the historical mission of access. The California Community College Task Force on Student Success made a distinct case regarding the issue of access in its recent report:

> As the Task Force deliberated over strategies to improve student success rates in the community colleges, they were unanimous and resolute in their belief that improvements in college success rates should not come at the expense of access. …the goal of equitable access – and the commitment to help all students achieve success – is a driving force behind the recommendations contained in this report (2012, p. 9).

In the report, *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future,* it is noted that "the United States for the first time is seeing that younger generations actually will be less educated than their elders" (p. vii). Access to higher

education is critical; but only when the access agenda is coupled with the success and completion agenda. Jones and Ewell (2009), report that "at the moment, 60-70% of the students who enroll in community colleges arrive on campus with at least one academic deficiency" (p.12).

Some key elements to bringing access, success, and completion together include monitoring student data, using student data to inform decision-making, and adjusting academic programming as necessary based on data-driven decisions. Given the economic and political climate in the United States and the world, Carey (2007) states that "our economic future depends on how well they [community colleges] serve our students." The entire country is looking to community colleges to fill the educational gap in the workforce. Trustees have significant "skin in the game" when in comes to the student success agenda simply because they were elected, or appointed, to represent the needs of the communities they serve. It is through these decisions that trustees are accountable to the communities they serve; as it is through these efforts trustees are responsible for the success of all students served by the college. Achieving these accountability standards around student success will always be a challenge, simply because community colleges are often referred to as "the Ellis Island of higher education" (Roueche & Baker, 1987, p. 3; Vaughan, 1983). Dr. Kay McClenney (2004) states

> Community colleges have inarguably the toughest jobs in American higher
> education. These are open-admissions institutions. They serve a
> disproportionately high number of poor students and students of color. Many of
> their students are the ones who were least well served by their previous public
> school education and therefore more likely to have academic challenges as well as

fiscal ones. Community college students are three to four more times likely than students in four-year colleges to reflect factors that put them at risk of not completing their education…It is a truth that provides important context for understanding institutional performance and accountability…The urgent priority for these institutions is to be involved in shaping accountability systems so that they are appropriate to the community college missions and students.

Presidents and Boards are being asked to rethink fundamentally what it means to go to college. Student success is a leadership issue. McClenney (2013) states, "every college is designed to produce precisely the results they are currently getting." Student success is a bi-product of the collaborative work of the board and the president. Board members that 1) make data-informed decisions in the best interest of students, and 2) regularly monitor student success interventions work with the president to create a culture of student success within their institutions, which ultimately results in improving the completion agenda. Regular monitoring and analyzing data around student academic outcomes ensures that trustees and presidents track student success. In addition to consistent monitoring, trustees need to ensure that all assessment data results are used in the data-driven, decision-making process with regards to academic and student service programs; this ensures equity.

Summary

Community colleges are critically important to the economic future of the United States. Community colleges were created to serve the higher education needs of local communities. Access has long been the historic mission of community colleges and as such, must be preserved to ensure entrance into higher education for generations to come.

Access is critically important to the community college mission, but it can no longer be viewed as an indicator of success for community colleges. The access agenda, coupled with the student success and completion agendas will serve as the accountability measure for community colleges of the future.

Governing boards, whether elected or appointed, have authority and responsibility for their institutions and are accountable for the success of students to the community they serve. It is essential that trustees have the ability to manage student success efforts, as well as, the ability to communicate the importance of student success to stakeholders. The work of the Board, as it relates to student success initiatives, must be guided by the president; a successful board/president relationship is critical to ensuring that the access, success, and completion agendas are aligned and positively impacting the success of all students serviced by the college.

Board members set the policies that guide the institution in charting a course to achieve its mission. Therefore, policies set by the board must be student-centered as these policies will guide the decisions of the president as he/she works with faculty and staff to design and implement academic and student service programming as well as student success interventions.

In addition to setting policy, Board of Trustees must consistently monitor student success initiatives by regularly requesting and reviewing reports around success measures such as retention and graduation rates; this monitoring process ensures that timely student interventions can be implemented. This consistent monitoring and analyzing of data around student academic outcomes ensures trustees that student success is a priority at the college.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine community college presidents' and trustees' perceptions on the effectiveness of governance institutes on advancing the student success/completion agenda in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. In addition, this study sought to understand how board process and policy changed, as well as what was the impact on the work of the president and the organizational culture, as a result of attending the Governance Institutes for Student Success.

The study employed a qualitative approach to collecting data through interviews with presidents and board chairs as well as a document review of board meeting minutes, which provided data on student success efforts at each institution. The rationale for this qualitative study as well as the research setting, population, methodology, data collection, and analysis that were utilized are presented in this chapter.

Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach to research was selected for this study because a "central characteristic of qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam, 2009, p. 22). Grounded theory was selected as the qualitative research method because it was important to build "a substantive theory about the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Grounded theory is an appropriate

choice for studying presidents and community college board chairs due to the various roles and responsibilities each has on the governing board.

Qualitative researchers are not interested in the surface opinions of the people they study as others are in survey research; and they are not interested in cause and effect as in experimental research; instead qualitative researchers want to understand how people do things in their natural setting, looking to make sense of a phenomena in terms of the meaning it brings to their lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). In essence, qualitative researchers are looking to "understand how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). By examining how trustees and presidents understand and monitor student success practices in relation to the training received at the Governance Institutes for Student Success, this study sought to explain how presidents and trustees made sense of student success and how that experience brought meaning to their institutions. Therefore, Merriam (2009) concurs that questions about how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences are appropriate for qualitative research, specifically when the researcher is looking to understand process.

There is limited research on the effect presidents and trustees have on student success in their institutions; most higher education literature is focused on the demographics and responsibilities of presidents and trustees rather than an examination of their actions or behaviors. It is important to understand the actions and behaviors of presidents and trustees as it relates to student success, especially given that there is a gap in the research. According to Glaser (1992), qualitative research provides the elaborate, most germane and problematic details of phenomenon.

Research Design

Grounded Theory Research

Grounded theory is defined as an approach for developing theory that is "grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory was first articulated by a pair of American sociologists, Barney Glasser and Anselm Strauss in 1967. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990), grounded theory was Glaser and Strauss' reaction to the failure of quantitative sociology to encapsulate humans actively engaged in shaping their environment. Grounded theory involves developing theories in a way that is connected to the data collection and analysis process.

When thinking in terms of the relationship between the research question and research method, grounded theory begins with a very vague initial question and permits the theory to materialize from the data. Merriam (2002) states that grounded theory research underscores discovery with description and verification as secondary concerns; therefore, this research method utilizes a set of procedures to develop an inductively grounded theory around a phenomenon. It is important to remember that this research approach is not about identifying and testing hypotheses; instead, grounded theory uses inductive methods of interpreting data. Through the research process, information is gathered and questions are formed that draw out categories that lead to patterns. Data gathered for a grounded theory study involves the researcher moving in and out of the data collection and analysis process. This constant comparative method of analyzing data involves the back and forth movement between data collection and analysis; it is sometimes called an 'iteration.' Grounded theory research involves multiple iterations, which according to Merriam (2002), derives conceptual elements of the theory. Uncovered patterns then form the theory that explains a phenomenon (Croswell, 1994:

Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers utilizing grounded theory build substantive theory

that is contained and deals with real-world conditions (Merriam, 2002, p. 7).

Interpretative Case Study Research

Merriam (2002) explains that a case study is an in-depth study of a few people,

events or organizations; an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social

unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community in a natural setting (p. 8).

According to Schramm (1971), "the essence of a case study… is that it tries to illuminate

a decision or set of decisions; why they were taken, how they were implemented, and

with what result" (as cited by Yin with emphasis added, 2009, p. 17). Case study

research allowed for those who had experience with the issue to make comment on their

perceptions. Yin (2009) states that there are four applications to utilize case studies as

evaluative research:

1. To explain the presumed casual links in real-life interventions that is too
    complex for the survey or experimental strategies.

2. To describe an intervention and real-life context in which it occurred.

3. To illustrate certain topics within an evaluation, in descriptive mode.

4. To enlighten those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no
    clear, single set of outcomes.

In utilizing a case study method for this research project, the researcher was afforded the

opportunity to analyze student success interventions and policies; explore how trustees

and presidents monitor, observe, and analyze data; and examine whether presidents and

trustees' decision-making and policy-making agendas focused on student success.

The researcher employed interpretivism/constructivism analysis for this study.

According to Merriam (2009) interpretive research assumes that reality is socially

constructed "there is no single, observable reality…rather there are multiple, realities, or

interpretations, of a single event" (p. 8). She further states that researchers "do not 'find' knowledge, they construct it" (p.9). Creswell (2007) explains:

In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences.… These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views…Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but form through interaction with others…through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (pp. 20-21).

In utilizing this analysis style, the researcher sought to interpret and understand to what extent presidents and trustees took what they learned at the Governance Institutes for Student Success and applied to their institution in terms of monitoring and analyzing student success. In addition, the study examined how trustees altered their policymaking agenda to prioritize student success.

Yin (2009) identified at least six sources of evidence in case studies:

1. Documents

2. Archival records

3. Interviews

4. Direct observation

5. Participant-observation

6. Physical artifacts.

Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality. Understanding that one of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality

is holistic, multidimensional, and ever changing. Maxwell (2005) says that one can never really capture reality. He states that "validity is a goal rather than a product: it is never something that can be proven or taken for granted." Triangulation is an internal validation strategy incorporated into this study. Triangulation is defined to be validity … in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Triangulation of the data ensures each data source supported the evidence from other sources and was suitable for making inferences about events. Further, triangulation increases internal validity and reliability of the study (Merriam, 2009). The following is a visual depiction of the data methods utilized in this studies triangulation process.
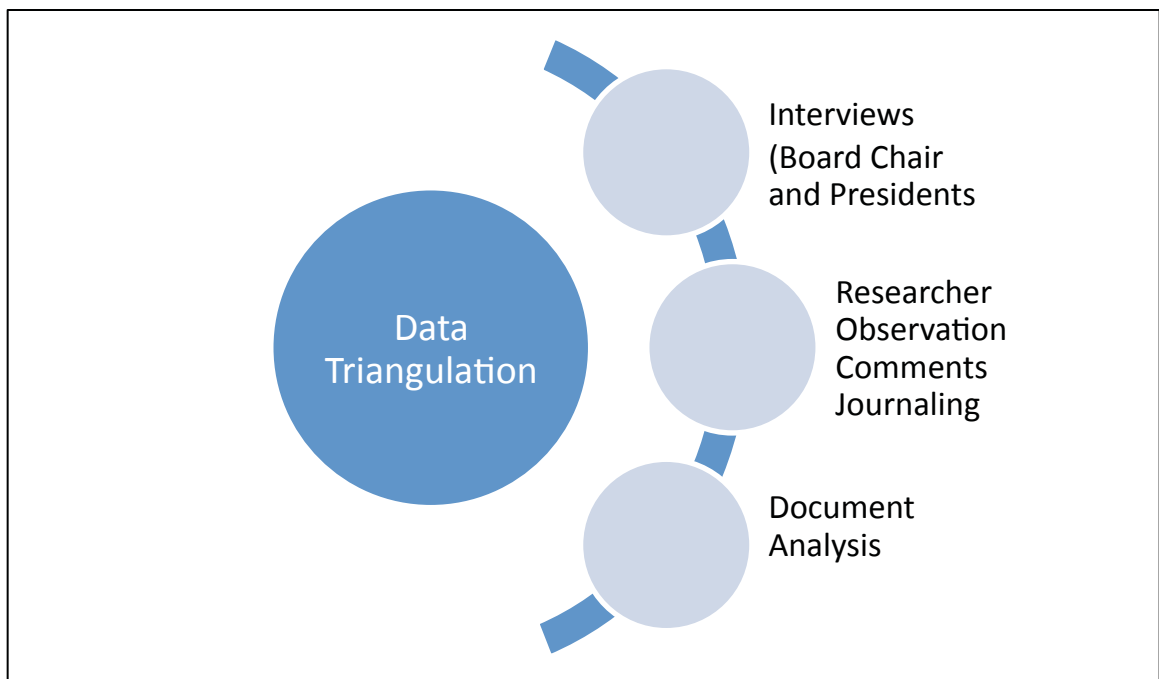

Figure 4: Data Triangulation

For this study, triangulation of data included interviews and review of board meeting minutes. Marshall and Rossman (2006) indicate that reviewing documents is an unobtrusive technique of depicting the values and beliefs of research participants. In

reviewing documents, the researcher developed an understanding of the decision-making and policy-making practices of presidents and trustees.

Interview Method

Kvale (1996) defines qualitative research methods, including interviews, as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations." The researcher chose interviews as an appropriate research method for this study because 1) the presence of the interviewer ensured that the president and board chair were answering the questions and not a staff member, 2) clarification of questions were offered to presidents and trustees, if needed, throughout the interview, and 3) follow-up questions were utilized to clarify president and trustee responses as needed.

Interviewing the presidents and trustees allowed the researcher to capture and describe the perceptions on the effectiveness of governance institutes on advancing the student success/completion agenda, as well as, how has board process and policy changed, what has been the impact on the work of the president, what has been the impact on organizational culture. As a result of the interview process, the researcher was able to understand each president and trustees' thoughts about perceptions regarding student success and to shed light on how those thoughts and perceptions impacted policy-making decisions around the student success agenda. It was extremely important to study that trustees and presidents were able to express their thoughts in their own words; articulating what was personally important to them. The interviews were structured to make the presidents and trustees feel comfortable, increasing their ability to provide candid responses to the interview questions. As part of this study, when interesting or

unexpected themes emerged during the interview process, the researcher explored those to some extent.

For this study, the researcher utilized the semi-structured interview technique. Kvale (1996) indicates that the use of this technique allows a researcher to follow an interview script while having the flexibility to explore in-depth president and trustee responses with follow-up questions and discussion in an effort to explore related themes as they emerged. Interviews allow for an in-depth, detailed understanding of the presidents and trustees experiences. Interview questions used for this study include:

Board Chair Interview Questions
1. How does your institution define student success?

2. When prioritizing the work of the Board, where does student success fall?

3. How did the governance institute impact the way you do your work?

4. Did Board priorities change as a result the governance institute?

5. Has the Board changed strategic direction as a result of the governance institute?

6. Tell me about partnerships that the college fosters that contribute to student success– what is the role of the board in cultivating these partnerships?

7. What is the role of the board in student success? What is the Board Chair's role in student success?

8. Does the board have a role in creating a culture of student success?

9. If yes, how can the board create a culture of student success?

10. Has this role changed since attending the governance institute?

11. Tell me about board policies that contribute to student success?

12. Was there a change in board policies as a result of the governance institute?

13. How does the board monitor student success?

14. Is the monitoring process data driven?

15. How would you describe the impact of the governance institute as it relates to the board's work?

16. Do you have any other thoughts on the governance institute that you would like to share?

President Interview Questions

1. How does your institution define student success?

2. When prioritizing your work, where does student success fall?

3. How did the governance institute impact the way you do your work?

4. Did Board priorities change as a result the governance institute?

5. Has the Board changed strategic direction as a result of the governance institute?

6. How has the board/president relationship been impacted by the governance institute?

7. What is the role of the board in student success? What is the President's role in student success?

8. Does the board have a role in creating a culture of student success?

9. If yes, what is the role of the board in creating a culture of student success?

10. Has this role changed since attending the governance institute?

11. Tell me about board policies that contribute to student success?

12. Was there a change in board policies as a result of the governance institute?

13. How does the board monitor student success?

14. Is the monitoring process data driven?

15. How would you describe the impact of the governance institute as it relates to the president's work?

16. Do you have any other thoughts on the governance institute that you would like to share?

Governance Institute Key Organizer Interview Questions

1. How does the governance institute define student success?

2. How do you determine the success of a governance institute?

3. What were the key AHA moments that resulted from the institute?

4. How open were board members to the materials presented at the governance institute?

5. Is there an expectation that the Boards will change the strategic direction of their institution as a result of the governance institute?

6. How would you describe the purpose of the governance institute?

7. What does the governance institute see as the role of the board in student success? What about the President's role in student success?

8. What does the governance institute see as the role of the board in creating a culture of student success?

9. What board policies does the governance institute believe contribute to student success?

10. How does the governance institute determine success of an institute?

11. Do you have any other thoughts on the governance institute that you would like to share?

Description of Subjects

The participants in this study were Board of Trustee Chairs and Presidents from three Michigan community colleges, one Ohio community college, one Washington community college, and two Texas community colleges. The community college president and board chair was selected as the focus of the study because these are the individuals that set the agenda of the governing board meetings and preside over all board meetings.

Selection of Subjects

Presidents and Board chairs from community colleges that participated in the Governance Institutes for Student Success, status as an achieving the dream college, and

have been participants in the Achieving the Dream initiative for at least three years were invited to participate in this study. Colleges selected for this study include

- Michigan
    - Lansing Community College
    - Muskegon Community College
    - Grand Rapids Community College
- Ohio
    - North Central State College
- Washington
    - Gray's Harbor College
- Texas
    - College of Mainland
    - El Paso Community College

In addition, key institute organizers were interviewed to gain background information and a better understanding of institute nuances.

Instrument

Board Meeting Minutes

The researcher used board meeting minutes from the subject institutions to validate student success interventions that impacted policy-making and decision-making decisions within the institutions studied. This document review was useful in building inferences around events and timelines.

Interviews

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Guba and Lincoln (1981) state that in qualitative research, the interviewer is the instrument. Therefore, as the instrument, data collection was dependent on the researcher's fortitude, character traits, and interviewing skills.

Setting

For the purpose of this study, different settings were used for each type of data collection. According to Prichard and Trowler (2003) qualitative methods are appropriate in situations where the researcher has the ability to see the world through the lens of the participant. Hence, board meeting minutes were examined on-line via the college's website and interviews were conducted either in person or by telephone at the president and trustee's institution, or at a location of their choice, so that participants did not have to travel.

Data Collection Procedures

Informed Consent Form

Presidents and Board Chairs were contacted to participate in the study. Once they indicated interest in participating, an informed consent form was sent via electronic mail to all participants prior to beginning our first session; participants were asked to review and sign. Participants were informed that the community colleges in this case study will be identified and thus will not remain anonymous; however, interview subjects will be

identified by their title and their comments will screened for any sensitive concerns or topics. The researcher will make every effort to avoid linking specific responses to each administrator or subject.

Board Meeting Minutes

For the purpose of this study, board meeting minutes were gathered and studied. The board meeting minutes were gathered from each college: collected from the time frame of February 2011 – March 2013. Review of the documents from this period ensures the analysis of board minutes six months before the institutions attended the Governance Institute for Student Success and six months after they completed the institute. To follow is a schedule of dates for Governance Institutes for Student Success for each state:

- Michigan – September 2011

- Ohio – April 2012

- Washington – October 2012

- Texas – July 2011

In all, the researcher examined 12 months of board meeting minutes for each participating institution. For the purpose of this study, board meeting minutes were examined to determine how boards monitor student success and to gather information regarding policy-making focused specifically on student success. The researcher was specifically looking to see what impact the governance institutes had on the work of the board and the president in regular board meetings. The study examined board meeting minutes to determine a pattern for student success policy-making, prioritization, and monitoring.

Interviews

Interviews were scheduled with each board chair and president at participating colleges. The nature and purpose of the study was explained at the session. During the session, participants were interviewed using a semi-structured, open-ended style consisting of a list of core questions. Interviewees were encouraged to proceed at their own conversational pace and each participant was interviewed individually and separately. Each interview was taped and the interviewer also recorded responses in written notes. The tapes and written notes were coded and will be retained in a secure place for future analysis if necessary.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Board Meeting Minutes

The researcher analyzed board meeting minutes for policy patterns and decision-making processes related to student success. In addition, documents were reviewed to determine to what extent board members received briefings of student success progress from college departments; particular attention was paid to the time-line of these decisions as related to attendance at the Governance Institute for Student Success. Board meeting minutes revealed information related to how the board and the president prioritize student success within their institution. Text from the minutes was sorted by emergent themes and then assigned categories. The main themes emerged from the data were identified and coded. Categories were then refined into major and minor groups; these groups were then analyzed by comparing and contrasting patterns of responses.

Interviews

Data from participant interviews were recorded utilizing written notes and audiotapes. The researcher analyzed data to answer each specific purpose of the study. Every tape was transcribed with key passages underscored. The frequency of key words and thoughts revealed similarities in patterns of responses. Text was sorted into evolving themes and categories were assigned to passages. Main themes that emerged from the data were identified and coded. Categories were refined into major and minor groups; groups were then analyzed by comparing and contrasting patterns of responses.

Summary

Chapter 3 addressed the methodology used to examine community college presidents' and trustees' perceptions on the effectiveness of governance institutes on advancing the student success/completion agenda in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. In addition, the methodology used sought to understand how board process and policy changed, as well as what was the impact on the work of the president and the organizational culture, as a result of attending the Governance Institutes for Student Success. An overview of the qualitative methodology has been specified in addition to the description of the research design used for this study.

Chapter four will provide a post-prospectus methodology including the execution of the study, organization of the data analysis, and the descriptive characteristics of respondents.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Governance Institutes for Student Success started in 2010 and little is known regarding the community college president and trustees perceptions on the effectiveness of governance institutes on advancing the student success and completion agenda. The results of this study were attained using qualitative methods of data collection through interviews and archival document review of board meeting minutes. Utilizing qualitative research methods, the researcher was able to create a comprehensive analysis of community college president and trustee perceptions because of the triangulation of interviews and the extensive archival document review.

The researcher utilized a qualitative research method of grounded theory; as it is a comparative research method that increases our knowledge on how each of us interacts in our own environment. Researchers utilizing grounded theory build substantive theory, which is contained and deals with real-world conditions (Merriam, 2002, p. 7). In other words, qualitative research explains how people construct social meaning from their interactions with the world. Grounded theory was specifically selected for this study because of the various roles, responsibilities, and real world implications of the presidents and trustees work in relation to students, faculty, staff, and community.

Qualitative interviewing captured how presidents and trustees understand and monitor student success strategies, as well as how presidents and trustees develop a student success policy-making agenda. Through the study, the researcher was able to

capture how governing boards and presidents implemented student success initiatives as result of the Governance Institute on Student Success (GISS), as well as how they develop their policy-making agenda around student success. The research reviewed similarities and differences of each president and board chair's experiences, as well as personal thoughts about student success initiatives and their perceptions on the impact of GISS to their work around student success in their institutions. This study describes the significance of GISS and student success initiatives in their own words. Due to the nature of the positions, confidentiality could not be guaranteed and the board chair and president comments are solely attributed to their individual experiences.

Board chairs and presidents were interviewed using a semi-structured, open-ended style interview process that consisted of a list of core questions (Appendix A) to collect the data used for the study. Interview questions were designed around student success initiatives and policies that may or may not have been a result of attending GISS. Using interviews for this research allowed for an in-depth and detailed understanding of each president and board chair's experience.

Data Analysis

Interviews and board meeting minutes were used in combination to help draw conclusions about the actions and behaviors of board chairs and presidents from their perspective of their role and responsibility with regards to student success; including their perception of the role of GISS with regards to organizational impact and creation of a student success culture. Data from board chair and president interviews were recorded utilizing audio tapes and written notes to summarize their experiences in their own words.

The researcher analyzed board meeting minutes to determine to what extent Presidents and Boards receive and monitor student success data. In addition, board minutes exposed how governing boards changed their policies with regard to student success. Key passages were highlighted and frequencies of key word patterns and policy development patterns were documented to uncover similarities in the data. Text was then organized into emergent themes and categories were assigned. Main themes rising from the data were then identified and coded.

Research Question One Data Analysis

The first research question examined to what extent board policy and process changed as a result of having attending the Governance Institute on Student Success. When asked how the institute changed the work of the board one of the newest board chairs interviewed stated:

> I was just coming onto the board so I was kind of surprised that student success wasn't always a big deal and that it had to now be an external organization that is going around the country saying, hey, student success is important. To me, it was just perfect timing and really kind of an opportunity for our board to really focus, many ways in kind of a simplistic way, on kids [students] and their success level.

Data analysis found that in all instances, board process did change as a result of attending the institute. However, there was no evidence demonstrating board policy changes. Internal procedures and operational policies proved to be the driving influencers for board process change. For some boards and presidents, the Carver Policy Governance model served as an external mechanism that impacted board process and board policy. In

all instances, the institutions operating under Carver Policy Governance had a student success policy in place before attending the Governance Institute on Student Success.

Internal Procedures

All board chairs reported an increase in understanding of student success initiatives as a result of communication from the president and administrative staff. The internal procedures appeared to impact the board's decision-making process. Student Success monitoring reports regarding focused on student and academic support services, student learning outcomes and assessment, as well as reports that provide an overview of learning processes that highlight engaging learning experiences and support for student learners were also found to impact the decision making process of board members. Hence, it could be contributed to open dialogue amongst the board and between the board and president; as well as the in-depth monitoring and analysis of student success data resulted in the creation of a culture of student success within their institution.

Board/President Relationship

Presidents overwhelmingly described the board/president relationship as being a contributing factor to prioritizing student success initiatives. Board chairs indicated that the board/president relationship is stronger as a result of attending the Governance Institute on Student Success simply because the board was able to see student success as a partnership between the board and the president. Open dialogue and common goals have created a collaborative relationship and boards understand their role in advancing student success initiatives as a result of the institute. One president stated:

Before the institute, the board was involved in certain areas [personal interest] more than they should have been…the institute caused the board to focus on areas that are more helpful to me.

Cooperation is critical to the board/president relationship and one board chair explains the basis for a cooperative partnership:

The board/president relationship is a partnership and when it comes to student success, the board and the administration must effectively work in the same direction. The board must let the administration do what they do to implement board policies and achieve goals around student success initiatives.

Boards that clearly understand their role in advancing student success within the institution are critical to institutional success. A board chair states that the board works to

Model and try to live up to our understanding of what are the roles as board members and establishing the policies and the framework in which our administrative team can operate under. That is a huge culture shift from most ways most boards operate. We give the parameters under which we want our CEO to operate and allow him to work under those parameters and then we are spending our time monitoring the things that the president gives us as the reasonable expectation of how each of those are going to be met. It has completely changed how our board is operating. I think it has created a real collaborative culture with our board members where we are not interfering with the day to day operation of the college yet I think we set forth is our expectation from our president on what we want our institution to look like and I think we represent our institution a lot better.

The majority of presidents interviewed reported that board chairs did have a clear understanding of their role in student success as a result of attending GISS. As one president explained, "the institute was clear that student success is the first priority; boards must understand their role and align board strategies and goals with that of the president." However, another president indicated that, "some of the information presented as work of the board at the institute clearly is not the board's work." This point was reiterated by his board chair, "some of the things we heard at the institute…is that really our role?" A perspective shared from the board chair of a policy governance board indicates that the board/president relationship is now much more unified:

> Not that we didn't have a good board previously but we are all pretty together on what needs to happen. I attribute that to really good board training and you know that just doesn't happen overnight.

Data confirms, as stated above by a board chair, the Governance Institute on Student Success contributed to "really good board training."

It was clear in the end, board chairs and presidents agreed it is the college president in collaboration with administration, faculty, and staff that creates, monitors, and reports on the details of student success initiatives. The president then works collaboratively with the board to openly communicate student success initiative results in the form of board monitoring reports, which then contributes to an increase in the board's working knowledge that is necessary to understand and support the deployment of college resources to continually improve the success of all students within the college.

Board Monitoring Reports

The most significant board process change for institutions attending GISS was the implementation of data-driven student success monitoring reports. Monitoring of student success initiatives is a fundamental step as it enables college leadership to track student success progress towards achievement of goals and helps to create a culture of student success within the organization. Board monitoring reports provide the mechanism for boards, along with internal and external constituents, to understand student success initiatives within the organization. Student success is monitored through the lens of a clearly defined set of outcomes for student learning in academic departments of the college. A review of board meeting minutes for each of the institutions revealed that board monitoring reports on student success began immediately following participation in GISS. Two board chairs interviewed indicated that the first change in process took the form of a student success board retreat, followed up by student success monitoring reports at regular monthly meetings.

For some of the board chairs interviewed, data-driven student success monitoring reports were something brand new. For many, the institute served as the very first time they had ever reviewed or monitored student success data for their institution. This added a new level of complexity to the role of the president as it relates to student success. As one president stated, "The board must understand data and student success metrics and they must understand the need to shift from access to success. It is the role of the president to ensure that the board understands." Again, communication and collaboration is critical. For other presidents, student success initiatives had been discussed prior to the institute; "We had been working on student success initiatives before the institute…the institute was last cog in wheel to make it happen."

Board monitoring reports must be data-driven if they are to be effective indicators of success with regards to student success initiatives. 100% of board chairs and presidents interviewed indicate that their student success board monitoring report process is data-driven. All but one institution reports that student success is monitored on a monthly basis at a regular board meeting; one institution reports that student success monitoring reports are reviewed by the board on a quarterly basis. The college's that indicated they operate under the Carver Policy Governance structure have student success tied directly to the evaluation of the president. The two policy governance board chairs interviewed indicated that there was no change in board policies as a result of attending GISS, but they do feel that their student success policy has been much more defined as a result of the institute. All board chairs and presidents interviewed agree that there was no change in board policy as a result of attending the institute. However, all board chairs and presidents agreed that the data-driven board monitoring report process currently in place within their institutions was a direct result of having attended GISS.

Research Question Two Data Analysis

The second research question addresses the impact on the work of the president as a result of having attending the Governance Institute on Student Success. When presidents were asked to describe the impact of the governance institute as it relates to the president's work, the researcher received responses such as

"There really has been no change. But is has allowed me to be an advocate for student success and the completion agenda much more efficiently."

"Makes the work easier when everyone is on the same page."

"Extremely beneficial to have the board and the president on the same page."

> "Putting the institute in the category of one of the influencing factors, it has definitely had an influence…using common terminology around student success agenda has been a central focus of my work."

Interestingly enough, presidents report that there was a greater focus placed on student success as a top priority of the institution by the board as a result of attending GISS; the researcher determined that this greater focus on student success was indeed a change in the work of the President. Through a review of board meeting minutes and college websites, it was very evident to the researcher that the work of the president was different with regards to communicating student success initiatives to the board. Every institution surveyed indicated that student success was added as a regular board agenda item; document review by the researcher confirmed this change in process. A change in process as significant as adding student success as a standing agenda item at every board meeting does point to a significant change in the way the president does his/her work. So, even though president's unanimously stated there was no change in the way they did their work, further document review and data analysis indicates that change was significant as it relates to communicating and reporting student success initiatives within the institution.

Because the work of the board does also impact the work of the president, board chairs were asked to describe the impact of the governance institute as it relates to their work. Board chair responses include:

> "It was a great nudge or great eye opener that [the work of the board] has to be driven by student success."

"Focus on student success is top priority, but focus on access must remain…enrollment equals funding…less than 2% of the funding for our entire system is based on student achievement. The rest is based on enrollment."

"Focused our attention and set out very specific obligations, roles, and responsibilities for board, administration, & faculty."

"As a Carver board, policies were already developed. GISS helped us develop metrics around those policies."

Funding is an external mechanism that was found to influence board chair and president decision-making. Funding very much impacts the work of community college presidents and given the finite resources available to community colleges; presidents and boards will have to make tough decisions that directly influence the work that must be done with regards to student success initiatives. One board chair made this comment regarding funding and student success, "To do the things you want to do, to encourage and promote student success, those things don't pay for themselves." In response to the board chair comment, the president indicated,

> We are looking at really transforming a lot of things in terms of our contact with students…entry services…continuity of support…all fit well within the framework with wrap around services for students to help them be successful.

Another board chair commented that "student success and fiscal sustainability are the top two priorities of the board." He further states:

> One of the board's responsibilities is to look long term and clearly you need resources in order to create opportunities for student success. If you don't have the resources then your ability to deal with student success is going to be

depleted. You really can't do the kind of job you want to do without the financial resources so they intertwine.

This statement has a significant impact on the work of the president. As such, insight from the presidents includes:

"Is student success more important than balancing the budget? Probably not, but it is equal."

"Every conversation we should be having about any new money we want to spend, any reallocation of money, should all go through the student success filter."

"It is the board's responsibility to help us, based on recommendations from myself and my staff to develop the priorities with regards to fiscal responsibility…efforts are aligned on student success…utilize our very tight resources in an effort to increase student success."

"Boards must understand why the focus has shifted from access to completion…funding priorities will likely shift."

The board chairs recognition that there will be a need to re-prioritizing budgets to align them with student success initiatives does indicate that a significant change has, or will, change with regards to the work of the president.

In addition to funding, all community college presidents and board chairs interviewed represent Achieving the Dream (AtD) colleges. The work of AtD is focused around helping more students, particularly low- income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. This work is being done in collaboration, as well as in addition to, the student success initiatives that were

introduced at GISS. As such, AtD is also considered to be an external mechanism that was found to influence board chair and president decision-making. In particular, when presidents were asked how their institution defines student success, two presidents indicated that their institution use a very standard definition of student success, similar to Achieving the Dream:

> "Fall to spring retention, fall to fall persistence, student success within courses as A-C grades."

> "One of our measures is how quickly the student gets through our developmental sequence of classes…we also measure the achievement of our first 15 hours of college credit…and we measure the first 30 hours of college credit."

Additional institutional definitions of student success from presidents included the following:

> "Student success is defined as student completion of whatever the student goal is. What that means to some it may be just mean courses, to some it may be a certificate of some sort, to some it may be a degree, whether it is an internal degree because they are going to be working someplace or a transfer degree because they are going into a four-year institution."

> "In terms of the institutional definition of student success…I am not actually sure if we have that defined as a college. I can tell you what I think we think it is…students accomplish what they come here to do. Student success could mean for a continuing Ed student that they take one course and they get what they need. More typically, and more of our focus, has been on our degree-seeking students

and completion of their requirements for their degrees… it has also been a focus

on basic skill students and their transition from basic skills to college level work."

"Students achieve their educational goals."

"We define student success according to the dashboard."

When asked how their institution defines student success, board chairs had this to say:

"The Board has 11 indicators of student success."

"We are looking at success as access and then completion."

"National organizations [AtD] are defining success for us."

The work of the president with regards to student success initiatives is impacted by the

work of AtD initiatives that are already taking place on their campuses. Presidents and

board chairs all indicated that student success is a top priority. To further emphasize the

impact of student success initiative and AtD, one board chair indicated the need to

combine the student success initiative work with that of AtD:

In the last year we have formulated a college success team that brought all those

things together, the strategic planning, the student success and all of those things.

We had the student achievement initiative that was a committee. We had

something else that was a committee relative to "Achieving the Dream" and all

these things. We just thought these are really all tied together and about college

success and student success is a huge part of that. We made it all part of the

college success team.

With regards to the work of the president and communicating student success initiatives

to the board, including work in AtD, one president stated, "We've done a lot of work on

student success; we haven't done a good job of sharing that work with the board." It is evident from the research that board chair attendance at the GISS raised awareness of the board around student success initiatives while simultaneously raising the awareness of presidents around the need to improve communication with the board around student success initiatives taking place on their community college campuses. To further emphasize this point, the researcher noted that some presidents and one chair addressed college dashboards in their conversations around the definition of student success. Through analysis of board meeting minutes for policy patterns and decision-making processes related to student success, the researcher was able to determine that at least two community college presidents have incorporated student success dashboards linked to their strategic plans as part of their reporting process to the board. In both instances, the dashboards were created as part of the AtD work, but had never been publicly presented as part of the board student success monitoring reports until after the president and board chair attended GISS. One of the presidents had this to say about dashboards, "Governance and dashboard is new in my time here, it does change how we do our work…the board now talks about student success as a priority, and it didn't when I came here five years ago."

Based on president responses to the interview questions, student success initiatives are part of the day-to-day work of every president, but this work has not necessarily been communicated to the board. Analysis of board meeting minutes before attendance at GISS, and after attendance at GISS, for all colleges examined, indicates that the work of community college presidents with regards to communicating student success initiatives via board monitoring reports at public monthly board meeting has changed, as

well as improved, significantly. All colleges have added student success to their monthly board agendas; with an exception of one, which has added a quarterly student success report to their board agenda. As the researcher reviewed the curriculum and format of the GISS, it was determined that public board conversations around student success at community colleges are critical to advancing the achievement of student success initiatives in community colleges. The results of the research analysis indicates that 100% of the presidents and board chairs interviewed are reviewing and discussing student success initiatives publicly thorough the use of data-driven board monitoring reports. This kind of reporting had not happened before attending GISS.

Research Question Three Data Analysis

The third research question addresses the impact on organizational culture as a result of the president and board chair having attending the Governance Institute on Student Success. Review of the data indicates that by attending GISS, presidents and board chairs were able to take what they learned and begin to create a culture of student success within their community college.

Organizational culture is a phenomenon that some have difficulty describing in terms of fact. Often organizational culture is described in terms of a feeling or sense of community; for example, people will sometimes describe their organizational culture in terms of the family unit. For the purpose of this study, organizational culture refers to the priority of work and initiatives dedicated to student success enterprises within the community colleges analyzed. Specifically, were presidents and board chairs able to create a culture of student success as a result of attending the Governance Institute of Student Success? Data analysis indicates that it is through the work of the president and

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the board, the very top level of leadership within the community college environment, that a culture of student success is created and fostered.

The researcher asked a series of interview questions related to student success priorities to determine if board chair and president student success priorities changed as a result of attending GISS. The majority of board chair responses indicated that indeed priorities did change:

"Yes, I think it did because it allowed us to focus on student success with a clear voice and not spend so much time in other stuff. I think it is a big deal."

"I think so. Again, what it allowed us to do was put out there for our community and our college what our expectations were in regards to the institution. We don't dip down below that level so I think that really was a change in policy. What we have seen in regards to the institution is now everybody has a common set of expectations and understands what they need to work toward to meet those policies. We counted and I think there is something like 300 people in our institution that have had a piece of coming up with solutions and working towards meeting the metrics of the individual goals and establishment. We never had that kind of involvement before."

"The Institute was the stimulus, we were kind of heading toward student success initiatives and we hear a lot about it at the national meetings so it wasn't brand new to us. I think what the Institute did is it focused our attention. It set out very specific obligations, roles, and responsibilities for the board, for the administration, and for the faculty. I took that to our board and said, these are our

responsibilities and we have to take ownership of these. I think that structure that they put around the institute was very helpful to move us forward."

It is important to note that one board chair was not convinced that a change in priorities occurred as a result of attending the institute, "I can't say that the Governance Institute was the catalyst for that change."

Presidents were able to echo the board chair's observations regarding a change in priorities as a result of attending GISS. President statements supporting this change include:

"Student success is top priority, if you have any discussion about any issue and it can have some sort of tangential relationship with student success, it is talked about so that would be different. Again, the board asks about the impact on student success. Yeah, I think the Governance Institute helped moved these conversations along."

"Student success was not seen in the way that they saw it after Don [board chair] attended the Institute. Strategic direction of the board changed to the extent that they are now more focused on student success than anything else that we do here on campus."

"What it has changed is the focus within and with regards to student success."

"The Governance Institute in my mind was sort of a reinforcement of that whole focus on student success and student achievement. It certainly didn't subtract from it and I think may have contributed to it but we were sort of already on the track heading in that direction anyway."

The researcher was able to confirm that board priorities did change with regards to the way student success was discussed and included as a board agenda item at either monthly or quarterly meetings; review of board meeting minutes confirmed this change occurred after president and board chair attendance at GISS. As the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, the president is charged with the day-to-day operations of the college; successful operational policies advance the mission of the college. The role of the board is to create the vision and mission for the college. It is through the work of the president that operational policies are deployed and it is through his/her leadership that the mission of the college is advanced. The president and the board create the culture of the institution through the communication of the mission and the execution of the operational policies. When presidents were asked if the board has a role in creating a culture of student success responses included:

> "The board does not really get into the operation aspect. According to the policy governance model, the way the board decides on the ends is to establish the policies for the college to operate under, [the ends create the culture]. Then the president's job is basically to fulfill the ends policies using the means that are ethical, legal, and prudent within using reasonable interpretation of these ends policies to fulfill them. That is what the President's job becomes and that is what the board's job is, not to do operational, but to establish the policies and parameters in which the president operates and the college operates."

> "The role of the board is to affirm, to be an advocate, to remind all of us that student success and for the President, continued emphasis, same as the board, that

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both the board and I include it and reference it and talk about it. Culture is slow to change, but we have a culture of student success here now."

"Absolutely because they need to whenever I bring something to them, they need to ask those questions. If I have not laid it out clearly enough to them, then they need to ask those questions. How is this tied to our agenda on student success? How is this going to help the most students the quickest? The boutique interventions are great but if you only make a difference for 25 people, well, okay, you have made a difference for 25 people but we want to make a difference for 2500 people. So, they need to be looking at that as being the culture also. We have to think about how we make this large scale rather than just the boutique program."

"I think they do. They support that at every board meeting by their language and their actions."

"Absolutely. I think that they have to setup a vision for student success and then it is my responsibility as the president to make their vision come to fruition. Develop a plan to ensure that we are moving in that direction and then it's the board's responsibility to call me to task on reporting on the progress of that plan."

Board chairs were of the same thought as the presidents and affirmed the board's role in creating a culture of student success. Comments from board chairs included:

"Either directly or indirectly, the board has impact on culture and should demand I believe two things, one, accountability and two, trust in the system."

"Absolutely, and I think we have done that from the Mission Statement to the [student success] prioritization."

"It is not going to happen any other way."

It is important to note that one board chair communicated an opposing view and was not sure the board had a role in creating student success,

> I am struggling with the board's role in creating the culture of student success because I think that the management team here at the college already does a really good job in looking at creating a culture of student success so I don't think that the board needs to create one. I think one already exists and we certainly help promote and foster that culture and the idea of "Achieving the Dream" process really is about fostering and looking at the culture of student success.

Overall, the research indicates that the board does have a role in creating a culture of student success. This role is to establish the mission and vision of the college that includes student success as a top priority; the next step is to monitor progress of student success initiatives and to ensure that funding priorities are tied to student success, which ultimately advances the mission of the institution. Research also indicates that GISS positively impacted the board's awareness of the importance of creating a culture of student success as stated by one of the president participants:

> I could not have done it myself so it was essential for the board to create a culture of student success otherwise it would have just been me that would have been [promoting this culture]; presidents come and go. The board created what should be a long-standing commitment to student success, rather than just one president's initiative. The Governance Institute cemented all of it with the Chair and gave

him a confidence that this is the right thing to do and other colleges were on the same path. There was a public affirmation of that.

The research further emphasizes the importance of a collaborative board/president relationship to the creation of a culture of student success. The president is charged with, and held accountable for, the operational aspect of advancing the college mission. The presidents interviewed understand the importance of their work with regards to student success initiatives and maintaining a culture of student success. One president stated, "The President's role is one, to help the board understand that, but two, it is to help the college and the community to understand that [student success] is the focus." The president and board work collaboratively to create a culture of student success; this culture is communicated through the actions and language used by the board and president.

Summary

The first research question examined to what extent board policy and process changed as a result of having attending the Governance Institute on Student Success. In this study, data analysis found that in all instances, board process did change as a result of attending the institute but board policy did not change. Internal procedures and operational policies proved to be the driving influencers for board process change. Board chairs and presidents agreed that the board/president relationship was strengthened as a result of attending GISS, simply because the board and the president were now working towards the same goal of student success. The findings also suggest that the mutual understanding between the board and the president that the top priority of the college is

student success has improved communication. As a result, the focus of the board and the president is truly aligned. Board chairs better understood their role as a result of attending the institute and presidents better understood the need to communicate to the board on a regular basis regarding student success initiatives. An extensive review of board meeting minutes at the colleges studied confirmed that monthly, or quarterly (one college), student success board monitoring reports began taking place within a few months of attending the institute. Student success was added as a standing formal agenda item at all colleges examined for the purpose of this research. In addition, 100% of board chairs and presidents interviewed indicate that their student success board monitoring report process is data-driven. The monthly, or quarterly, monitoring by the board on student success initiatives at all colleges in this study has been sustained to date.

The second research question examined the impact on the work of the president as a result of having attending the Governance Institute on Student Success. Data analysis indicates that the work of the president did not necessarily change as a result of attending GISS; instead, there was a greater focus placed on student success as a top priority of the institution. Presidents and board chairs agree, and comments support, that the work is easier when the president and board on the same page. Based on president responses to the interview questions, student success initiatives are part of the day-to-day work of every president. Presidents and board chairs recognize that the focus on student success as a top priority within their institutions will impact their decision-making process with regards to board policies and budget priorities. Given the finite resources available to community colleges; presidents and boards will have to make tough decisions that influence the work that must be done with regards to student success initiatives.

The third, and final, research question addresses the impact on organizational culture as a result of the president and board chair having attending the Governance Institute on Student Success. Data analysis indicates that it is through the work of the president and the board, the very top level of leadership within the community college environment, that a culture of student success is created and promoted. Review of the data presented indicates that by attending GISS, presidents and board chairs were able to take what they learned at the institute and begin to create a culture of student success within their community college.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation investigated community college president and trustees' perceptions on the effectiveness of governance institutes on advancing the student success/completion agenda in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. The intent of the study was to identify how governance institutes for student success manifest themselves within community colleges, as well as, seek to understand how, if at all, governing boards rework or prioritize by reviewing or analyzing board policy as a result of student success interventions. The following areas of inquiry were explored: how has board process and policy changed, what has been the impact on the work of the president, what has been the impact on organizational culture. This study explores the call to action at the administrative/board of trustee level of community colleges across the country for the creation of policy around access, success, and equity. The research within the study took a qualitative approach using the research method of grounded theory. Community College Presidents and Board Chairs who have had experience with governance institutes were interviewed. Board meeting minutes were examined to determine how boards monitor student success and to gather information regarding policy-making focused specifically on student success. In addition, key institute organizers were interviewed to gain background information and a better understanding of institute nuances.

The Governance Institute for Student Success is a national initiative designed to provide a governance leadership model that will identify key policy decisions and actions for institutional transformation that trustees and presidents can utilize throughout the country to support innovation, accountability, and work to break the gridlock of developmental education and improve student success, equity, and completion. GISS is the only training program of its kind in the country and effective governance with a major emphasis on student success is critically important to the advancement of the national completion agenda. Therefore, it is important to understand the effectiveness of the program as perceived by the presidents and board chairs that have attended the institute.

Presidents and boards are the very top level of administration within their community college. As such, they have final authority with regard to the success of the students within in their institution. Trustees are accountable to their communities for the success of their students and presidents are accountable to the board for the effectiveness of student success initiatives. Board chairs and presidents attending GISS reported that they had a much better focus on student success, and their role as it relates to student success, as a result of attending the institute. Presidents and board chairs in this study stated that communication and collaboration were critical to the success of the board/president relationship. Presidents stated that a successful board/president relationship was critical to advancing student success initiatives within the institution. Presidents and board chairs agree that on-going discussion and data-driven monitoring reports on student success initiatives are essential to creating a culture of student success within the institution. The study was able to confirm that for those colleges examined, student success is the number one priority for both the president and the board. There was

also confirmation that data-driven student success monitoring reports coupled with open communication between the board and the president informs the policy-making and decision-making process at the board level. It is important to note that one college in particular was not as convinced that the work they were doing around student success initiatives could be directly attributed to attending GISS; after a thorough review of board meeting minutes there is evidence to suggest that GISS had a positive impact on regular reporting of student success data at board meetings at that college.

It is interesting to note that presidents and board chairs, at all colleges examined; indicated that there was no change in board policies as a result of attending the Governance Institute for Student Success. It is important to note that two colleges interviewed operated under the Carver Policy Governance Model and as such, they did have student success policies in place before attending GISS. Further probing by the researcher regarding board policy development suggests that board chairs and presidents may have been somewhat preoccupied with reviewing their student success data at the institute and may have not focused as much attention on the policy portion of the training. For many board chairs the institute was the first time they had ever reviewed or monitored the data, this was true specifically for the board chairs interviewed in the state of Michigan, so for these board chairs there was an immediacy to understanding the data rather than an immediacy to focus on the institute training as it related to board policy. As a result, presidents are finding it necessary to educate their board on student success data. Several presidents indicated that they now find themselves taking the time to explain the data to the board so that they understand what needs to happen as a result of the data; the study shows that this conversation has created an open channel of communication and

encouraged collaboration between the board and the president. Presidents also stated that the institute was helpful to them as they worked through the data because GISS effectively communicated to the board that this is a national dilemma and one that all community colleges are working to address.

Response to the Research Questions

Following are the answers to the research questions as presented in chapter one:

1. How has board process and policy changed?

   The study shows that board process has changed significantly at all institutions analyzed as a result of attending GISS. Data-Driven student success board monitoring reports were presented on an on-going basis at public board meetings within two - six months of attending the institute. A review of board meeting minutes prior to GISS confirmed these reports had not taken place before the institute and were a direct result of the institute training. 100% of all colleges reviewed reported no change in board policy as a result of attending GISS. It is important to note, for many of the colleges examined, board monitoring reports on student success is a fairly new process and as a result, policy development regarding student success initiatives is also new.

2. What has been the impact on the work of the president?

   Presidents reported that the institute did not necessarily impact their work directly, but it did help to ensure that the board and the president were on the same page in terms of student success. Presidents indicated that having the board focused on student success as the top priority will increase their effectiveness in advancing the college mission.

3. What has been the impact on organizational culture?

Through a common student success language, and public monitoring of student success board reports at monthly meetings, presidents and board chairs indicated that boards are creating an organizational culture of student success. Analysis reveals that ongoing student success discussions at regular board meetings are happening at 100% of the colleges analyzed; presidents and board chairs report that these conversations contribute significantly to the organizational culture.

Limitations

As stated earlier, there were several limitations that must be recognized within this research study. First, there may be concern of the researcher's ability to set aside biases through the creation, collection, and analysis of data. Second, this study only analyzed two - three community colleges from each of the states participating in Governance Institutes of Student Success; therefore, result generalizability across all community colleges may not be possible. Third, the study only analyzed perceptions of board chairs and presidents at each college. Therefore, there are limitations in not comparing the experience with all trustees attending the Governance Institutes on Student Success. Incorporating all trustees that attended GISS would have allowed for a higher degree of validity. And finally, as a community college employee working directly with the president and board of trustees, there is a degree of bias that the researcher brings to the study that may influence the process and results.

Recommendations

The findings in this study answered the research questions as presented. However, the results did reveal possibilities for future research. A review of the limitations of this

study may be a place to begin when considering future recommendations. A study that incorporates and analyzes perceptions of all trustees that participate in GISS may lead to more pertinent findings.

Further research may need to be done with regards to GISS's ability to positively impact the board policy-making process. In this specific study, 100% of the presidents and board chairs interviewed indicated that there was no change in board policy as result of attending the institute. There were just two colleges that indicated having a student success policy and those college boards were operating under the Carver Policy Governance Model. In addition to considering policy implications, there is work that can be done around the Carver Policy Governance Model and the impact of this particular governance structure as it relates to student success initiatives. This research might show that colleges with differing governance structures also differ in the way they advance the student success mission and completion agenda.

With regards to understanding an organizational culture of student success, a study that incorporates faculty and staff perception of organizational culture along with the perceptions of the board and president would be an interesting research project that has the potential to positively impact the work of the board and the president and simultaneously advance student success initiatives within community colleges. In this study, the board chairs and presidents unanimously agree that a culture a student success is being created as a result of the board and president attending GISS. It would be very interesting to hear from those closest to the work to see if this top down approach to student success is important in creating an organizational culture focused on student success.

Additional research in this area could include an in-depth study of the sustainability of the student success movement within the institutions that have attended GISS, particularly over an extended period of time. What happens after three years have passed since the board and president attended GISS; is student success still a top priority? What happens when a new president is hired – does student success remain the number one priority of the institution? Or, what happens as board members change – is there sufficient training and momentum around the board's commitment to student success to continue to advance student success initiatives within community colleges?

Additional research around student success outcomes as outlined by the Governance Institute for Student Success would prove to be an interesting study. Are the outcomes outlined in the GISS curriculum truly the outcomes that community college presidents and boards should be focused on? Does the current work that boards and presidents are doing truly improve student success initiatives as supported by outcomes outlined by GISS? And finally, is the money that is currently being funneled from the philanthropic community to fund the work of the Governance Institutes for Student Success a good use of philanthropic dollars?

Conclusion

The national conversation currently taking place around the completion agenda is a conversation that is focused on community colleges as one of the answers to the higher education crisis in the United States. The United States once was a world leader in the number of young people receiving an associate's degree or higher; today, the United States has fallen to 14th among developed nations for the 25-34 age group (Century

Foundation, 2013). There is an educational crisis in this country. In 2012, a report was released entitled *Reclaiming the American Dream*; this report stated,

> The American Dream is at risk…Community colleges can help reclaim that dream. But stepping up to the challenge will require dramatic redesign of these institutions, their missions, and, most critically, their students' educational experiences.

Community colleges are on the national stage and community college leaders are being asked to increase completion rates of community college credentials (certificates and associate degrees) by 50% by the year 2020; all while preserving access, enhancing quality, and eliminating attainment gaps associated with income, race, ethnicity, and gender. One way of the primary ways community college leaders will be able to achieve this goal is to increase student success initiatives within their institutions as a way to advance the national completion agenda. The most effective way for community college leaders to improve student success is to create a culture of student success that allows for a redesign of the current educational experience for students. Presidents and trustees create a culture of student success by working collaboratively with faculty and staff to monitor data-driven student success initiatives on a regular basis. This data is used to advance student success initiatives, prioritize resources to achieve student success goals, and impact decision and policy-making processes of the board of trustees. The Governance Institute for Student Success has made a positive impact on student success initiatives by providing a governance leadership model focused on student success specifically designed for community colleges trustees and presidents.

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APPENDIX

A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Board Chair Interview Questions

1. How does your institution define student success?

2. When prioritizing the work of the Board, where does student success fall?

3. How did the governance institute impact the way you do your work?

4. Did Board priorities change as a result the governance institute?

5. Has the Board changed strategic direction as a result of the governance institute?

6. Tell me about partnerships that the college fosters that contribute to student success– what is the role of the board in cultivating these partnerships?

7. What is the role of the board in student success? What is the Board Chair's role in student success?

8. Does the board have a role in creating a culture of student success?

9. If yes, how can the board create a culture of student success?

10. Has this role changed since attending the governance institute?

11. Tell me about board policies that contribute to student success?

12. Was there a change in board policies as a result of the governance institute?

13. How does the board monitor student success?

14. Is the monitoring process data driven?

15. How would you describe the impact of the governance institute as it relates to the board's work?

16. Do you have any other thoughts on the governance institute that you would like to share?

President Interview Questions

1. How does your institution define student success?

2. When prioritizing your work, where does student success fall?

3. How did the governance institute impact the way you do your work?

4. Did Board priorities change as a result the governance institute?

5. Has the Board changed strategic direction as a result of the governance institute?

6. How has the board/president relationship been impacted by the governance institute?

7. What is the role of the board in student success? What is the President's role in student success?

8. Does the board have a role in creating a culture of student success?

9. If yes, what is the role of the board in creating a culture of student success?

10. Has this role changed since attending the governance institute?

11. Tell me about board policies that contribute to student success?

12. Was there a change in board policies as a result of the governance institute?

13. How does the board monitor student success?

14. Is the monitoring process data driven?

15. How would you describe the impact of the governance institute as it relates to the president's work?

16. Do you have any other thoughts on the governance institute that you would like to share?

Governance Institute Key Organizer Interview Questions

1. How does the governance institute define student success?

2. How do you determine the success of a governance institute?

3. What were the key AHA moments that resulted from the institute?

4. How open were board members to the materials presented at the governance institute?

5. Is there an expectation that the Boards will change the strategic direction of their institution as a result of the governance institute?

6. How would you describe the purpose of the governance institute?

7. What does the governance institute see as the role of the board in student success? What about the President's role in student success?

8. What does the governance institute see as the role of the board in creating a culture of student success?

9. What board policies does the governance institute believe contribute to student success?

10. How does the governance institute determine success of an institute?

11. Do you have any other thoughts on the governance institute that you would like to share?

APPENDIX

B: INFORMED CONSENT

1. **Title**

   President/Trustees Perspective on the Effectiveness of Governance Institutes for
   Student Success.

2. **Conducted By:**

   Kathryn K. Mullins
   Doctoral Candidate
   Ferris State University
   Doctorate of Community College Leadership Program

3. **Purpose:**

   The purpose of the study is to explore the question: What are the nuances of how
   governance institutes for student success has manifested itself within community
   colleges? In addition, this study seeks to understand how, if at all, governing boards
   rework or prioritize by reviewing or analyzing board policy as a result of student
   success interventions.

   The following areas of inquiry will be explored:
   - How has board process and policy changed?
   - What has been the impact on the work of the president?
   - What has been the impact on organizational culture?

4. **If you agree to be in the study, we will ask you to do the following:**

   Participate in an interview with the researcher to be scheduled at your institution or
   via teleconference.

5. **Time:**

   Interviews will require approximately 60-90 minutes per person. Note that as a
   voluntary participant, you can refuse to answer any question and you may
   discontinue the interview at any time without consequence.

6. **Risks and Benefits:**

   The risks associated with this study are no greater than everyday life. The
   community colleges in this case study will be identified and thus the institution and
   the participants will not remain anonymous.

   The potential benefits of the study are to understand the roles, actions, and behaviors
   of community college governing boards.

7. **Confidentiality**

Interviews will be audio or videotaped. Tapes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. Tapes will be kept in a secure place (e.g. locked up in a file cabinet in the researcher's home). Tapes will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator and her associates unless prior written consent is obtained. In addition, tapes will be retained in a secure place for future analysis.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept private. Authorized persons from Ferris State University, and members of the Institutional Review Board, have the legal right to review the research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject unless written approval is obtained from the individual interview and survey participants to include quotes attributable to the individual(s). (Please see signature lines below)

8. Compensation:

No compensation will be provided.

9. Contacts & Questions

If you have any questions about the study please ask. If you have questions later or want additional information, please call: Kathryn K. Mullins, 616-843-1587, kmullins@grcc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ferris State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (231) 591-2553.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about my voluntary participation in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____Date:_____

Signature of Person Obtaining
Consent:_____Date:_____

Signature of Investigator: _____Date:_____

We may wish to present some of the tapes from this study at conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to do so with our tape. I hereby give permission for the video (audio) tape made for this research study to be also used for educational purposes.

Signature:_____Date:_____

We may want to include some of your quotes from the qualitative interview with the researcher in publications, at conventions, or as demonstration in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to include your quotes and attribute them to you. I hereby give permission for my quotes from my qualitative interview to be also used in publications, at conventions, or as demonstration in classrooms.

Signature:_____Date:_____

APPENDIX
C: SCRIPT FOR PRESIDENT/BOARD CHAIR INTERVIEW

PARTICIPATION REQUEST

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral student in the Ferris State University Doctorate of Community College Leadership Program. The title of my dissertation is *President/Trustees Perspective on the Effectiveness of Governance Institutes for Student Success*.

The catalysts of the study are governance institutes' effect on student success. The researcher is applying a qualitative approach, using the research method of grounded theory, and will be conducting interviews of Community College Presidents and Board Chairs who have participated in Governance Institutes. Because you were an institute attendee, I am inviting you to be a participant in this research study.

Research Overview

The purpose of the study is to explore the question: In what ways and to what extent has the governance institute for student success manifested itself within community colleges?

The interview will consist of several questions and will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete. Note that as a voluntary participant, you can refuse to answer any question and you may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence. Upon completion of the interviews, l will analyze the responses for common themes and draw conclusions that may help improve the quality of future national governance institutes on student success as well as inform institutional and national organization leaders as to whether or not governance institutes are an effective strategy for increasing student success within community colleges.

The results of the study will be included in my dissertation to be defended to a committee at Ferris State University in the spring of 2013 and may be used in future published articles and professional presentations.

Benefit of Participating in this Research

Participation in this research provides an opportunity for both presidents and board chairs to voice their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of governance institutes as they contribute to advancing the student success/completion agenda within their community college, the state, and the nation. Collectively, participant input has the potential to influence curricular and delivery enhancements of governance institutes at the national level.

Anonymity/Confidentiality

The community colleges in this case study will be identified and thus the institution and the participants will not remain anonymous.

Risks of Participating in the Research

Each college's president and board chair individual comments will be identifiable. The researcher will avoid using any sensitive comments or conversations that may cause the colleges and the subjects any concern. A draft of the study will be sent to each participant to review prior to completion and submittal.

Research Data

The interview will be video or audio taped and professionally transcribed for analysis. Video and audio recordings and transcripts will be securely maintained by me as the researcher and password protected.

Informed Consent

I will be sending you a follow-up email to arrange a time for this interview in hopes that you will voluntarily consent to participate. The interviews will be conducted via telephone or face-to-face depending on regional location. You will be asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the onset of the interview.

Attached you will find the approval allowing me to proceed with my research efforts issued by the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Your participation will provide significant value to the study.

Sincerely,

Kathryn K. Mullins
Doctoral Candidate
Ferris State University
Doctorate of Community College Leadership Program

Attachment: Ferris State University IRB Approval

APPENDIX
D: SCRIPT FOR PRESIDENT/BOARD CHAIR INTERVIEW

PARTICIPATION ACCEPTANCE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview for the research being conducted for my dissertation entitled, *President/Trustees Perspective on the Effectiveness of Governance Institutes for Student Success*.

Time and date for the interview has been identified as _____. Again, the interview will consist of several questions and take approximately 60-90 minutes. Note that as a voluntary participant, you can refuse to answer any question and you may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence. Upon completion of the interviews, l will analyze the responses for common themes and draw conclusions that may help improve the quality of future national governance institutes on student success, as well as inform institutional and national organization leaders as to whether or not governance institutes are an effective strategy for increasing student success within community colleges.

The results of the study will be included in my dissertation to be defended to a committee at Ferris State University in the spring of 2013 and may be used in future published articles and professional presentations.

Your voluntary participation in this research provides an opportunity for both presidents and board chairs to voice their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of governance institutes as they contribute to advancing the student success/completion agenda within their community college, the state, and the nation. Collectively, participant input has the potential to influence curricular and delivery enhancements of governance institutes at the national level.

Anonymity/Confidentiality

The community colleges in this case study will be identified and, thus, will not remain anonymous. Interview subjects will be identified by their title and their comments will be screened for any sensitive concerns or topics. The researcher will make every effort to avoid linking specific responses to a specific administrator or subject.

Risks of Participating in the Research

The risks associated with this study are no greater than everyday life. Each college's president and board chair individual comments will not be anonymous. The researcher will plan to avoid the use of any sensitive comments or conversations that may cause the colleges and the subjects any concern. A draft of the study will be sent to each participant to review prior to completion and submittal.

Research Data

The interview will be video or audio taped and professionally transcribed for analysis. Video and audio recordings and transcripts will be securely maintained by me as the researcher and password protected.

<u>Informed Consent</u>

Attached you will find the approval allowing me to proceed with my research efforts issued by the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study – I appreciate it very much.

Sincerely,

Kathryn K. Mullins
Doctoral Candidate
Ferris State University
Doctorate of Community College Leadership Program

Attachment: IRB Approval

APPENDIX

E: FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

Ferris State University

Institutional Review Board (FSU - IRB)
Connie Meinholdt, Ph.D. - Chair
820 Campus Drive
Ferris State University
Big Rapids. MI 49307
(231) 591-2759
IRB@ferris.edu

To: Dr. Donald Burns & Ms. Kathryn Mullins
From: C. Meinholdt, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Applications #121102 (Title: President/Trustees Perspective on the Effectiveness of Governance Institutes for Student Success)
Date: December 18, 2012

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, "President/Trustees Perspective on the Effectiveness of Governance Institutes for Student Success" (#121102) and determined that it is _exempt – 1A_ from full committee review. This approval has an expiration date of three years from the date of this letter. As such, you may collect data according to procedures in your application until December 18th, 2015.   It is your obligation to inform the IRB of any changes in your research protocol that would substantially alter the methods and procedures reviewed and approved by the IRB in this application. Your application has been assigned a project number (#121102) which you should refer to in future applications involving the same research procedure.

We also wish to inform researchers that the IRB requires final reports for all research protocols as mandated by CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 45, Title 46 for using human subjects in research. We will send a one-year reminder in December 2013 to complete the final report or note the continuation of this study. The final-report form is available at: http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/ administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/IRB/. Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let me know if I can be of future assistance.