THE IMPACTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JOB ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLES IN STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

by

Kathy C. Bruce

and

Nancy A. Sutton

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Ferris State University

September 2015

THE IMPACTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JOB ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLES IN STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

by

Kathy C. Bruce

and

Nancy A. Sutton

Has been approved

September 2015

APPROVED:

Roberta C Teahen, PhD
Committee Co-Chair

Diane Chaddock, EdD
Committee Co-Chair

Noreen Thomas, EdD
Committee Member

Dissertation Committee

ACCEPTED:

Roberta C. Teahen, PhD, Director
Community College Leadership Program

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes employee engagement strategies at six Midwestern community colleges as related to the employees' perceptions of their own impacts on student success. A review of organizational theory and employee motivation research provided the foundation for a framework of engagement strategies, while a review of the literature concerning student success provided the context for connecting student success with employee success. Through a quantitative survey, employees were asked about their participation in orientation and mentoring programs, as well as their involvement in goal-setting, professional development, and preparedness to assist students. Mean values of both engagement and preparedness were calculated, and CCSSE data from participating institutions were used to compare employees' perceptions of engagement with students' perceptions of supportive institutional environments.

Qualitative document analysis of materials from the participating colleges provided a method of triangulation that allowed researchers to consider content of the engagement strategies connected with higher levels of employee engagement and student satisfaction in order to determine what strategies and program content would have the greatest impacts on employee engagement and lead to greater student success. Structured employee engagement programs were found to enhance employee engagement and commitment to the mission of community colleges and to have the potential to positively impact student success. Mentoring was shown to have a greater impact than orientation on employees' preparedness to assist students and on employee engagement in the community college mission. Both mentoring and orientation increased employees' participation in goal-setting and professional development opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express deepest gratitude to our committee: Dr. Roberta Teahen (co-chair), Dr. Diane Chaddock (co-chair), and Dr. Noreen Thomas, and dissertation director, Dr. Sandra Balkema. They have our thanks for their willingness to allow us the privilege of writing the first co-authored dissertation in the Doctorate of Community College Leadership program and our appreciation for their engagement, guidance, insight, and patience as we navigated the process.

We extend our thanks to the six participating community colleges. The support and assistance of the college administrators and institutional research offices in administrating the surveys and providing the requested documents were invaluable. Thanks also to the many employees who took the time to thoughtfully complete the survey and provide comments.

Finally, our heart-felt thanks to our families for their support and the sacrifices they made during our three-year journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Community colleges today face a complex scenario of increasing legislative demands aimed at assessing performance and viability based on student success in the midst of economic and institutional uncertainties. Such external demands can potentially hinder a college's ability to foster a cohesive, supportive, and inclusive internal workforce environment. In an appeal aimed at refocusing institutions on access with success and establishing a framework through which colleges can meet the needs of tomorrow's students while remaining accountable to the communities served, the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges recommended that community colleges embrace a culture of collective responsibility for student success (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) call to focus on the internal culture of the institution in order to better support student success forms the basis for the following study.

The theme of collective responsibility for student success has remained constant over the past two years and is now mentioned frequently as an essential element of any student success initiative. Papandrea (2015) identified the need for all employees of the community college to be concerned with student success as a dominant theme in institutional planning and indicated that more institutions are now evaluating upper and mid-level administrators on their understanding and implementation of student success initiatives. Likewise, leaders throughout higher education have expressed the belief that collaboration across all units of the college will be essential in the near future. Papandrea quoted Michael Reilly, executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers as stating,

> No matter your job, you now have to think across the student lifecycle. You might have had silos where everyone dealt with their issues. Now, there's much more of a need to integrate and try to get everyone's heads around a more strategic approach [*sic*]. (Increasing student success collaboration section, para. 3)

The issue at hand is determining how to best coordinate such integration and create a common understanding of the role of each employee in fostering student success. While most current student success initiatives tend to be focused on the students themselves by encouraging goal-setting and college preparedness while attempting to increase the effectiveness of student interactions with faculty and student services personnel, there is a need to develop strategies that will include all employees in these efforts. At present, there is little evidence to identify the most effective strategies for helping community college employees understand the impacts they might have on student success or to engage them in student success initiatives.

Studies concerned with identifying institutions that seem to have been successful in the development of pervasive cultures of student success do appear to have identified two characteristics common to institutions that are seeing increases in student success rates. These characteristics are identified as leadership that incorporates a message of student success in all communications with employees, through the mission and policies of the institution, and a specific focus on the individual through targeted programs, services, and coordinated cohorts (Bradley & Blanco, 2010). In a report to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Bradley and Blanco identified six institutions that had internalized a culture that supports student success by communicating values, customs, traditions, and beliefs across all units of the college in such a way as to allow all employees to understand how their behavior could exemplify those values and beliefs. When institutional messages are consistently crafted and shared across all units of the college, those messages are more likely to have a lasting impact on the behaviors and attitudes of the employees exposed to the messages.

Tinto (2005) argues that the "institution's capacity to engage faculty and administrators across the campus in a collaborative effort to construct education settings, classrooms and otherwise, that actively engage students in learning" (p. 1) is central to successful retention efforts. In 2006, Tinto and Pusser called for colleges to acknowledge that "institutional policy must be coherently constructed to enable all sectors of the institution to collaboratively construct (conditions supporting educational success) for all students on campus" (p. 10). If this is the case, and we can agree that engaging all employees in student success initiatives in order to have them perceive student success as a part of their jobs, then it becomes imperative for us to consider what strategies are most likely to be successful in achieving that level of employee engagement and how an understanding of those strategies can be used to support the mission of community colleges in order to increase student success.

The Issue in Context

The health of any organization is dependent on those individuals who do the work of that organization. The productivity and success of the organization are directly related to the performance of the employees, and that performance is related to a complexity of motivations that compel employees to invest time and energy into the work they do

(Spector, 1997). When the organization in question is a community college, and the work of the organization is to educate students with the measure of that work now being considered the success of the students, one can posit that the success of the students may, in some way, be related to the job satisfaction and performance of the employees at that institution.

Job satisfaction has long been considered an outcome of organizational climate, task structure, and motivational factors such as compensation, job autonomy, and opportunities for job enrichment. Spector (1997) listed 14 such factors and included recognition for work, a sense of being appreciated, strength of organizational communication, consistency and equity in policies, leadership and supervision, as well as factors related to compatibility of coworkers, compensation and benefits, and opportunities for growth and advancement; and the employees' own perceptions of the importance of their jobs. Hackman and Oldham (1976) identified five core job characteristics—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback—that are related to the employees' perceptions of the meaningfulness of their tasks and their opportunities to see and appreciate the actual results of their efforts. The concept of task significance, when coupled with the employees' perceptions of that significance and their beliefs that what they do is important to the overall success of the organization, becomes a driving factor in job engagement, which can be described by considering the amount of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy the employees invest in job performance (Kahn, 1990).

Job engagement is often associated with the alignment of an individual's value system with that of an organization. The more closely an employee's beliefs of what is significant are aligned with what that employee believes to be the true mission of the institution, the more fully engaged in that mission the employee is likely to be. The more meaningful the employee feels the task is to the community, the higher the level of engagement (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Thus, the more the mission of the institution is perceived to be of value to the community, and the more the employee is able to relate his or her individual job to that mission, the higher the level of engagement the employee may achieve. When compared to the Hackman and Oldham model of job characteristics, which states that the more meaningful the work is the higher degree of job satisfaction and the higher the quality of work performance, one can assume that if the institution can help the employee to see that there is alignment between the mission of the organization and the task for which the employee is responsible, then the employee will put forth greater energy to succeed in the mission.

Meaningfulness is seen as a significant factor in most motivational theories, and indeed, the perceived meaningfulness of one's work has been shown to increase the amount of energy one will invest in a task (Thomas, 2000). In education, the concept of meaningfulness has often entered the classroom, as faculty will attempt to make the subject meaningful to a student's career goals in order to increase the student's interest in completing the coursework (Fink, 2013). Getting a student to care about the topic and its relationship to his or her own values and interests follows the same motivational theory found in employee engagement. If a teacher is motivated and cares about his or her students' success, he or she will be more likely to engage students in investing energy to study (Bakker, 2005). The implication that students might be motivated to succeed by teachers who are motivated because they see their work as teachers to be meaningful raises the question of what impact there might be on the motivation levels of students if every employee at a college saw his or her job as meaningful to the success of the students.

Significance of Employee Engagement in the Community College Setting

Studies have consistently documented that interactions with faculty and staff at an institution can significantly influence a student's motivation to continue his or her education (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006). Understanding that a student's success is often influenced by that student's interaction with just one member of the institution's faculty or staff, and realizing that there are numerous variables which could determine which employee will influence which student, it becomes reasonable to consider the impact we could have on student success if we could be certain that all employees had a positive influence on those students with whom they interacted. Theories of employee engagement and commitment to the organizational mission tell us that those employees who are more engaged and feel that their jobs are directly connected to that mission are more likely to support that mission through specific actions (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2011). It should not be unreasonable to expect that an employee who understands how his or her job impacts student success might be more likely to offer more positive assistance, support, and encouragement to those students with whom he or she interacts. It should also not be unreasonable to assume that if there is a relationship between employee engagement and commitment to the mission and the potential for increased opportunities for student success, community colleges would endeavor to initiate strategies that might increase employee engagement and encourage an organizational culture of student success.

Viewing strategies such as orientation and mentoring programs as channels through which messages supporting task significance and encouraging involvement in goal-setting and professional development, it is possible to see the potential for creating an environment that nurtures employee success in a manner similar to the way Kuh's model of student engagement proposes nurturing student success. While Kuh considers the time and effort students participate in educational tasks and the ability of the institution to encourage that participation, Kahn's model of employee engagement considers the employees' commitment to the job as related to the organization's willingness to nurture that commitment. As depicted in Figure 1, the organizational mission and culture of student success may be achieved by the balance of student success and employee success in an environment where both are fostered by an institution that seeks to provide opportunities for an individual to see the value of his or her engagement in the academic process and initiates strategies to encourage that engagement.

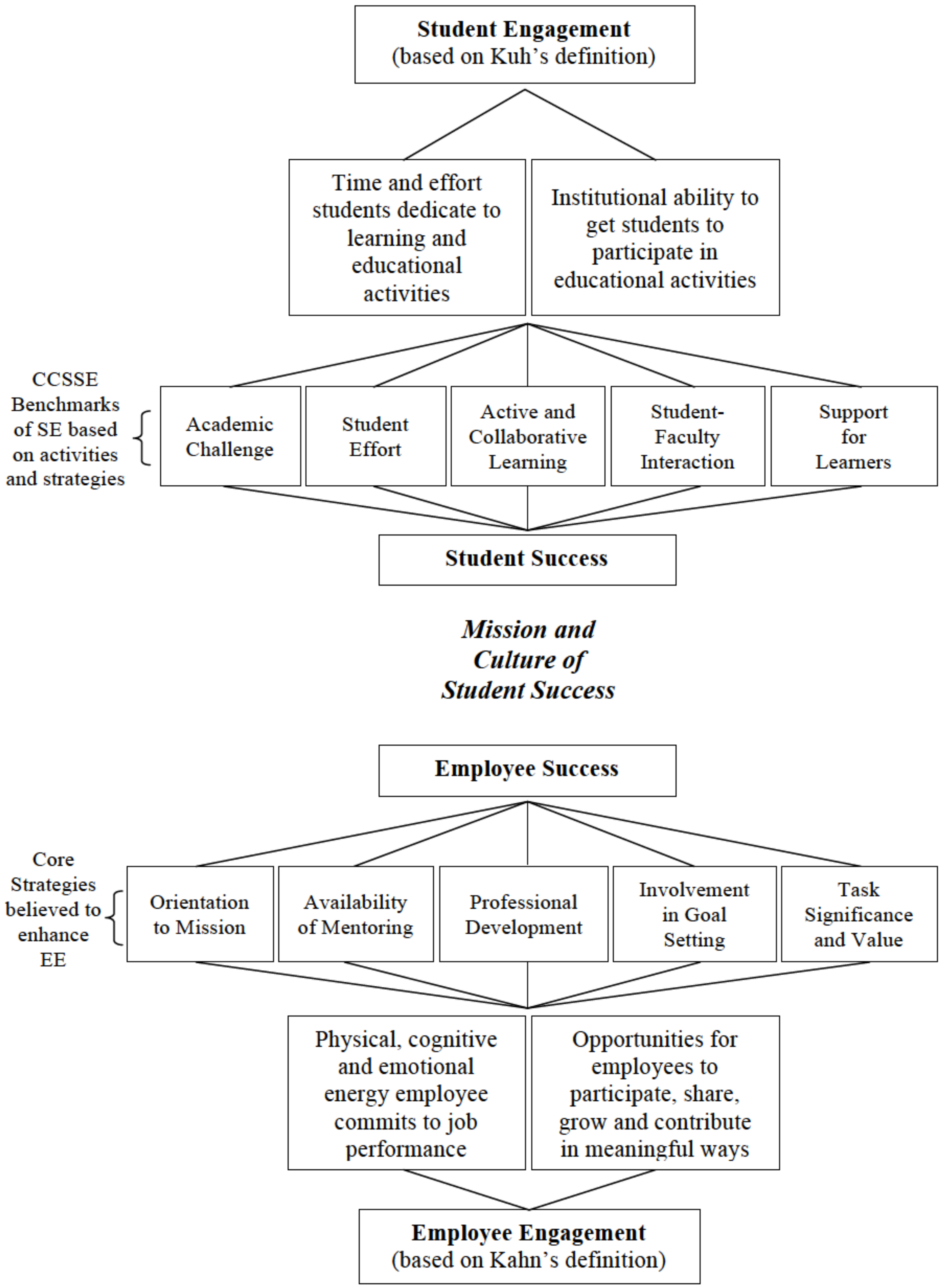

Figure 1. Model of the Intersection of Employee and Student Engagement

Goal of Present Study and Advancement of Knowledge

The recent shift from community college access to community college success has resulted in increased efforts to determine factors that have a positive and measurable impact on student success (AACC, 2012). Most research on student success has been on faculty and student services initiatives that promote student engagement through programming and services. Such studies have documented that a student's interaction with faculty and staff can have a large impact on the student's motivation to persist. Research in organizational theory has demonstrated employees who are engaged and understand their roles in organizations are more committed to the mission and goals of those institutions.

If it is known that faculty and staff at an institution can have a positive impact on students' potential to succeed in their educational goals, then it would seem reasonable to consider what the institution might be able to do to increase the potential for such positive employee—student interactions. If the mission of the college is student success, and organizational theory shows that engaged employees are more committed to the mission of the institution, then it would seem that in order to increase the impact of employee behavior on student success, institutions need to consider strategies by which they can increase employee engagement. If institutions are to increase employee engagement in order to positively impact student success, it is first necessary to determine how employees in community colleges currently perceive their roles in promoting student success and what strategies might have contributed to those perceptions.

The following study attempts to bridge the research on organizational theory and student success to determine what, if any, institutional strategies influence employee engagement as it relates to student success. A review of research and analysis of issues concerning both student success and organizational theory related to job engagement will lay the foundation for a study focused on community college employees' perceptions of their roles in student success, as well as the possible impact that strategies identified through the literature have on fostering an understanding of and ability to fulfill those roles.

Focusing specifically on the role strategies, such as orientation and mentoring programs, continued professional development, and goal-setting, may have on employee perceptions of their roles and their sense of preparedness to assist students, this study connects the frameworks underpinning student engagement and success, institutional mission, and organizational theory. By identifying their relationships it may be possible to suggest high-impact strategies to better engage employees in the institutional mission and thereby have greater potential to enhance student engagement and success. Several questions will be considered in the course of the study including:

- Does a relationship exist between employee engagement strategies, such as employee orientation and mentoring programs, and employees' perception of engagement in student success initiatives?
- Does exposure to such strategies increases employees' perceptions of their preparedness to assist students?
- What are the relationships between employee perceptions of engagement and student perceptions of engagement?

- What are the common elements in employee engagement resources found in institutions that exhibit positive relationships between organizational strategies and employees' perception of their impacts on student success?
- Is it possible to identify best practices in employee engagement strategies in order to suggest a model for other institutions to use in increasing employee participation in student success initiatives?

These questions will be addressed in a mixed method approach through four phases of research. Employee perceptions of the mission of the institution and their roles' impacts on student success will be analyzed through quantitative data gathered in a survey of community college employees. Student perceptions of engagement and satisfaction will be identified through review of data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as reported by institutions participating in this study. The study will consider the usefulness of the CCSSE benchmarking data in identifying potential opportunities for connecting employees to student success initiatives and will also consider the impacts of organizational messages found in institutional documents related to employee engagement strategies, such as orientation and mentoring, on employee engagement in the organizational mission.

Qualitative data will be drawn from an analysis of documents pertaining to employee engagement strategies currently in use at the participating institutions. The results of the quantitative survey, the extracted CCSSE data, and the qualitative information from the document analysis will be combined to identify emergent effective practices that will then be combined into a proposed model of high-impact practices that community colleges can use as a framework for developing their own strategies for impacting student success through employee engagement.

This study is unique in that it represents the combined efforts of two researchers, each approaching the material from a different perspective. As administrators at one community college, both researchers independently developed interests in engagement research but approached the topic with different questions in mind. One focused on components of student success with a special interest in how the students' perception of engagement may be positively influenced by consistent messaging from faculty and staff, and the need for holistic programming to ensure alignment of messaging. The second researcher sought to understand faculty and staff engagement in the mission of student success by considering elements of job commitment, satisfaction, and the willingness to adapt job tasks to changing institutional needs. Of particular interest was the perceived tendency for long-term employees, faculty in particular, to become disengaged from institutional initiatives. Sharing insights gained from individual observations, the two combined efforts in a small study aimed at identifying the college employees' perception of their impact on student success and their understanding of methods through which they could assist students. That study led to initiatives aimed at creating a shared message of student success that would allow all employees to speak with one voice, united through awareness of programs and resources available to help students achieve their desired goals.

The opportunity for continued research through a co-authored dissertation allowed the researchers involved with the current study to merge existing work in student success benchmarks and organizational theory as it relates to private-sector and community colleges. Co-authored dissertations, not uncommon in scientific and technical fields of study, allow for the union of ideas across multiple fields of research, which often results in the creation of new models of interactions within the field. By combining the researchers' knowledge of organizational theories of job engagement in the private-sector with that of student success initiatives and student engagement research related specifically to community colleges, it was possible to conceptualize a framework through which to understand how employees at community colleges might play more vital roles in fostering student success. Through a triangulated study that includes quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as both new and existing data from several sources, the combined perspectives of multiple researchers mirror the desired outcomes of a community college culture that thrives on the diversity of engagement across the institution. Student success is not the purview of one person at the institution, but rather it is the responsibility of all the employees. It takes many perspectives concerning what can help students succeed in order to create a culture of success.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Considering Student Success

Recent years have seen an increase in initiatives designed to increase student success in community colleges across the nation. While the concept of student success is not a new one, and the need to increase such success has been a goal of community colleges for decades, current legislative and political pressures have increased the importance of institutions not only supporting student success but of identifying, and institutionalizing, measurable methods of assessing and documenting that success (Boggs, 2010). Efforts to increase measureable rates of student success have led to an increased interest in determining factors within the college environment, human and otherwise, that might impact student success.

Several studies have positively correlated student engagement to student success (Kuh et al., 2006; McClenney, 2007; Price & Tovar, 2014). Definitions of student engagement are often based on Kuh's (2003) work and refer to the time and effort that students dedicate to educational activities and the ability of institutions to effectively get students to participate in such activities. In 2000, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was launched to measure student engagement among students at four-year institutions (Kuh, 2001). A year later a similar instrument to measure engagement of students at two-year institutions, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), was developed (McClenney, 2007). The surveys gauge engagement in five benchmark areas: academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, student effort (CCSSE) and enriching education experience (NSSE), and support for learners (CCSSE) and supportive campus environment (NSSE). Research has demonstrated that institutions that achieve high marks on these student engagement surveys have enhanced rates of student success as defined by increased GPA, course and degree completion rates, and persistence from semester to semester and year to year (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006; McClenney, 2007; Price & Tovar, 2014).

Research has also demonstrated relationships between mission, or *ethos,* and student engagement and success (Kezar, 2007; Kezar & Kinzie, 2006; McClenney & Greene, 2005). Kezar and Kinzie (2006) studied 20 institutions over a two-year period and found that mission did influence strategies for student engagement. While the authors focused on the alignment of mission with the NSSE benchmarks of academic challenge and an enriching educational environment, they found "living missions" were also positively correlated to NSSE benchmarks of student-faculty interactions and creating a supportive campus environment. In a subsequent study, Kezar (2007) described *ethos* as the essence of a culture that conveys its values and connects its members. In this expansion of the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) study, Kezar concludes, "The DEEP project revealed that a strong, well-tended *ethos* can have a powerful impact not only on student engagement and learning but on the entire campus community as well." In *A Tale of Two Students,* McClenney and Greene (2005) posit that a culture of engagement emanates from the mission and vision and is manifested in policies and practices. These works demonstrate institutional cultures that provide an allencompassing environment focused on success having a positive effect on student engagement and success.

Organizational theory, as explained in the previous chapter, suggests that employees who understand how their roles fit into the overall mission of an organization experience greater satisfaction and higher productivity. Satisfaction and productivity, in conjunction with the alignment of the employee's values with the values of the organization, are considered key factors in predicting engagement. Kahn (1990) proposed measuring engagement as the manifestation of the physical, cognitive, and emotional energy the employee would commit to the job, Christian et al. (2011), Hackman and Oldham (1976), and Spector (1997) all identified employee perception of task significance as a factor in determining the extent of job engagement, and Boon et al. (2011) determined several HR practices that enhance engagement through increasing satisfaction and commitment. Based on these works, the concepts of orientation, mentoring, identification with institutional mission, task significance, goal-setting and professional development endeavors have been determined to be reasonable determinants of employee engagement, as depicted in Figure 1.

Reviews of early studies surrounding student success identified the need for a consistent definition of student success that is supported and fostered within all units of an institution (Calder & Gordon, 1999). Beginning with Tinto's model of "person-environment fit," Calder and Gordon explored the potential for networking within the institution when it is understood that positive outcomes for students are typically the result of interactions between the student and any number of staff members. They determined that establishing networks involving students, faculty, staff, the institution, and the community was more likely to gain greater commitment to the mission and values of the institution from all employees than those networks that included only select groups within the institution. Ensuring that employees can understand the benefits to the students, themselves, and the organization is the first step toward increasing commitment to the goal of student success.

The work of B. W. Harris (1998) provided a model for achieving student success through cultural change. Harris, chancellor at Los Rios Community College at the time of publication, described the challenges of implementing change at a stable and effective institution and the necessity to do so to avoid complacency and mediocrity. Harris used strategic planning as an opportunity to create goals, one of which was student success, and a sense of urgency. A task force of students, faculty, staff, and administrators was assembled and set out to define student success in measurable terms and develop short- and long-term goals. Subcommittees were formed to work on individual goals. Harris cited the need for involving many people, maintaining focus, engaging in frequent communication, and ensuring dissemination of results. The notion of involving all employees in the mission of student success was at the forefront of Harris' work, and the idea that involvement in creating goals would increase commitment to those goals was the foundation for that work.

Vanwagoner, Bowman, and Spraggs (2005) expanded the concept of moving toward a student-focused environment when they offered a definition of the significant community college as one that has moved from faculty- to learner-centered, a decision-making institution that leverages resources rather than balances budgets, uses data to improve performance rather than just for accountability, forms alliances for the future, and uses technology to generate a tech-savvy workforce. The significant college was defined as an institution driven by organizational culture, and the authors challenged colleges to become significant by moving from a traditional to a transcendent culture where student learning is embedded in all aspects and student success is visibly and audibly paramount.

Most research concerning employees' impact on student success has focused on faculty and specific student service units, and most studies concerned with engagement have centered on student engagement as a means to increase student success (Troy, 2013). What institutions may now need to consider is the impact and influence that all employees, not just faculty, may have on a student's motivation to remain in school and successfully complete a course of study. Does the environment of the institution, from the maintenance of the facility to the helpfulness of the staff, to the availability of useful information from anyone at hand, have the potential to be the one factor that changes the course of a student's path to completion? These are questions for which there may be no definitive answers, but, given that data show that one individual has the potential to make a difference in a student's drive to succeed, it seems reasonable for an institution to consider ways to encourage positive student/staff interactions in as many ways as possible (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004; McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012). Certainly there is evidence to suggest that fostering a culture that encourages all employees to work together for student success is the first step to initiating a paradigm shift from the traditional model of higher education to one in which institutional awareness for the needs of the students creates a culture of shared responsibility (McGrath & Tobia, 2008).

Considering Employee Engagement Theory

Studies in organizational theory have indicated that employees who are more committed to an institution are more likely to see adherence to the mission and goals of that institution as a greater priority, and relevance of the individual's job to that mission are strong predictors of commitment to the organization (Glisson & Durick, 1988). Reviewing a decade's worth of research focusing on variables contributing to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, Glisson and Durick compared variables across three categories—job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and worker characteristics. By interviewing workers in service organizations, like educational institutions, the researchers found that employee attitudes, when identified to be a function of the organization, could impact the success of the organization. While individual worker characteristics were less likely to be associated with job satisfaction and commitment to the organization, job and organizational characteristics were related to commitment to the organization. Leadership of the organization and relevance of the job were stronger predictors of commitment, while characteristics of the job itself were strongly correlated to satisfaction. The work of Glisson and Durick created a foundation for further studies looking at the level of impact the organization can have on employee commitment by assessing the jobs and the support systems put in place to assist employees in those jobs. Engagement strategies such as orientation and mentoring programs have come to represent major components of the support systems many organizations have initiated, and a 2005 study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that 83% of private-sector companies reported the use of a formal orientation program for new employees, which represented a 34% increase in investments in orientation of “on-boarding” programs in just one year (Lockwood & Tai, 2006).

In 2000, Kenneth Thomas published the text *Intrinsic Motivation at Work*, which opened the door to the study of workforce productivity as not one of compliance and obedience but one of satisfaction, motivation, and engagement. Past research indicated that much effort was spent trying to empower workers to care about their jobs, but less effort was being spent trying to determine what elements in the jobs would be likely to engage employees enough to make commitments to the tasks. Following the work of Kahn (1990), in which researchers defined job engagement as the measure of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy an employee is willing to commit to job performance, Davenport and Prusak (1998) developed a scale of job engagement that moved from passive observation to active participation and understanding of organizational mission to include the ability to teach and mentor others. Similar to Thomas’ theories of intrinsic motivation, job engagement encompassed elements of meaningfulness and choice on the part of the employee to commit to the organization, as well as competence and opportunities for personal development through goal-setting and training.

Gallo (2011) found that goal-setting for employees often involves connecting the personal goals of an employee with the goals of the organization. Greater productivity has been found to come from employees who understand how their jobs are tied to the larger institutional mission and strategic plan. Gallo discussed how employees who do not see how their roles connect to the company’s success are more likely to be become disengaged in completing their own tasks and are unlikely to see even personal value in the jobs they hold. Suggestions were made for connecting individual goals to broader organizational objectives, demonstrating the partnership between employee and organization, and incorporating employees' personal interests and goals into their professional goals. Gallo emphasized the need to ensure goals are challenging but attainable with a plan for implementation and a method to assess and monitor progress.

Additional studies have sought a causal relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment and have found that, once again, the perception of job characteristics and their value to the organization were the strongest predictors of commitment. The more predictable those job characteristics, meaning the more the employee could be certain of his or her role in the institution, the greater the job satisfaction and the more likely the employee would be personally invested in organizational goals (Huang & Hsiao, 2007). Such studies suggested that redesigning job contents and changing management styles would be two methods to increase employee satisfaction and commitment. The notion that the job itself can alter an employee's level of engagement should not be surprising if one considers that other motivational theories speak to the importance of a correlation between the employee's work and his or her own belief in the purpose for that work (Thomas, 2000).

When "task significance" was identified by Castellano (2015) as one of five core job dimensions that leads to greater satisfaction and productivity, the focus sharpened on the positive role that engagement has in achieving organizational goals and strengthening that organization. Castellano found engagement to be correlated with satisfaction and commitment, and indicative of an employee's willingness to remain with the organization. Thus, engagement is also correlated with the organization's ability to maintain continuity and growth through employees' sustained awareness and understanding of the mission and goals of the organization. Through a series of concepts and dimensions, Castellano demonstrated the importance of employees knowing the value of the work they do and understanding the organization's strategy. Employees need a "clear line of sight between their job and the organization's goals" (p. 19).

Addressing issues such as job satisfaction and employee engagement allows the organization to review traditional relationships with employees. The traditional transactional contract, one based on objective terms such as compensation for a specific service or number of hours, can be enhanced with the addition of relational contracts that offer appreciation for loyalty to the organization in exchange for commitment to the mission. While transactional contracts alone do not always equate to lower job satisfaction or commitment, there is evidence that many employees seek satisfaction through the feeling that their work has meaning beyond the paycheck. The addition of a relational contract that demonstrates the significance of the job to the overall institutional goal is more likely to result in higher job satisfaction and overall job performance (Walker, 2013). Institutional effectiveness becomes dependent on not only the basic job performance of the employees, but the quality of leadership that can blend the complex cultures of both transactional and relational contracts to create an environment in which employees can see themselves as instrumental in the work of the organization and in which they can value that work (Smart, 2003).

Strategies for Fostering Engagement

Subsequent to the understanding that the organization itself must create an environment in which employees recognize opportunities for engagement, researchers have considered those strategies that seem inherent in organizations identified as having high levels of employee engagement. Not surprisingly, methods of communicating information, consistency of messages, focus on primary goals or institutional missions, and ongoing efforts to connect individual employees' jobs to that mission were paramount among successful strategies. Trahant (2008) discovered a strong correlation between effective internal communication strategies and organizational performance as defined through achievement of specific goals. Six strategies were identified that correlated to successful communication and involved keeping the customer at the center of all employee communications in order to focus all tasks on the primary goal. Trahant pointed out consistent messages could engage employees in the business of the organization and focus on the employees' experience in that business. The research suggested that measuring the impact of employee communication should be a key business metric and that efforts should be made to develop the communication effectiveness of managers.

Zeffane (2006) studied preferences for channels of workplace communication in relation to job satisfaction, perception of teamwork, and willingness to participate in organizational goals and identified three channels of communication—"grassroots," "management," and "workplace-wide," such as newsletters. While grassroots channels were preferred when there was a high level of trust in peers, communication from trusted managers was more predictive of employees' perception of teamwork in the workplace and indicated that organizations that provide open communication and feedback from managers are more likely to encourage employee participation in organizational initiatives. Strong communication strategies can impact continued employee engagement and job satisfaction as studies have shown that these are impacted not just at the start of a job, but as time on the job progresses and knowledge of the organization grows and uncertainty of one's role diminishes (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005).

Boon et al. (2011) considered the impact that strategies implemented through the human resource units of organizations have on employee satisfaction and commitment and identified several practices that are correlated with each employee's understanding of his or her job and perception of value to the organization. In a study of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) or engagement, opportunities for professional development, evaluation processes that included goal-setting, participation in strategic planning, and coaching or mentoring that supported the individual's role in the organization, were among the strategies found to "not only directly enhance the extent to which employees feel commitment and show OCB, but the HR practices also affect the extent to which the employees feel their values match those of the organization, which in turn enhances commitment" (Boon et al., 2011, p. 156). Strategies that contributed to organizational socialization, the process through which individuals learn and adjust to their roles within the organization, include six factors that many researchers feel must be addressed in order for employees to understand the significance of their tasks in relation to the organization (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). Often included in orientation or on-boarding programs, those factors included the organizational history, language, politics, people, goals and values, and job expectations (Chao et al., 1994).

Likewise, in a study that suggested that increasing numbers of disengaged employees would place organizational effectiveness at risk, Vorhauser-Smith (2013) determined that strategies to keep employees engaged and therefore committed to the organizational mission include development of strong communication networks, the creation of an intentional organizational culture that supports and demonstrates appreciation for employees, and the ability to share positive and consistent stories about the organization. In addition, strategies set forth for supporting personal and professional growth of employees and fostering social networks outside of the workplace were also identified as contributing to greater employee engagement. The continued support of such networks, and the persistent application of strategies, becomes significant when considering that job satisfaction, and therefore productivity, is thought to increase over time, with the average employee reaching full productivity anywhere from eight weeks for clerical positions to 26 weeks for professional and administrative positions (Williams, 2003).

Connecting Student Success with Employee Engagement

Any discussion of expanding student success initiatives beyond the silos of academic and student services must consider the nature of the traditional and prevalent attitudes toward such initiatives, as well as the cultural dimensions that impact how employees in the organization perceive the direction and values of the organization. In 1978, Cameron proposed a model of organizational effectiveness for four-year colleges, which has since been applied to two-year colleges. Cameron's model consists of nine dimensions of effectiveness including student educational satisfaction, student academic development, student career development, faculty and administrator employment satisfaction, professional development and quality of the faculty, system openness and community interactions, and the effectiveness of internal processes and operations. The dimensions of employment satisfaction, as related to student satisfaction and academic development, is notable as the first indication that organizational effectiveness could in some way be impacted by the relationship between student outcomes and employee satisfaction.

Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), pioneers in the study of organizational effectiveness in management in the private-sector, expanded Cameron's work in an attempt to demonstrate that when considering organizational effectiveness, researchers exhibited a tendency to define terms differently, leading to what Quinn and Rohrbaugh referred to as The Competing Values Framework (CVF). Contending that the choices of certain criteria to demonstrate effectiveness as related to employee satisfaction usually reflected personal biases on the part of the researchers related to the type of organization being considered, Quinn and Rohrbaugh invited 52 researchers to help identify criteria that were consistent across several employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness studies. Looking at four extremes of two dimensions, structure as flexible or controlled and focus as internal or external, Quinn and Rohrbaugh were able to identify values of human resources, professional growth of employees, planning and goal-setting, information management and communication, conflict, cohesion and morale, and quality and productivity as constructs occurring most frequently in discussions of employee satisfaction as related to organizational effectiveness (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). While these constructs were not considered to be the only elements contributing to a culture of effectiveness, they were perceived as having significant value in most models of organizational culture and were a more generalized match to the nine dimensions Cameron proposed when considering only academic organizational effectiveness. In 1983, Quinn and Rohrbaugh identified the four models arising from the intersection of focus and structure as the human relations model, open systems model, rational goal model, and internal process model.

Later in 1983, and refined in 2006, Cameron and Quinn used the models identified by Quinn and Rohrbaugh and proposed four organizational culture types that could impact employee engagement in the organizational mission, thereby helping to identify the relationship between employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. The four culture types were identified as Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy. Clan culture was identified as sharing common goals and values in an organizational environment that empowers employees and encourages professional growth and frequent communication and interactions among members. Great importance is placed of the history of the organization, and there is typically great stability and longevity among employees. The adhocracy culture is more temporary in nature, with structure created around specific needs and tasks and ending when the task is accomplished. Consulting firms, project development, and entertainment industries often fit in this category as there is a transient nature to the work, and there is little expectation of growth or commitment among employees. The market culture was identified as having an external focus with transactions outside the organization having greater impact than interactions within. Goals are typically profit-oriented, and employee development is limited. The fourth model, the hierarchy culture, is grounded in a clear organizational structure with specific rules and control that does not allow for much flexibility or employee involvement in goal-setting or decision making (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

In a 1993 study of the relationship between perceptions of effectiveness and dominant organizational culture in two-year colleges, Smart and Hamm used a survey instrument based on the Institutional Performance Survey, Quinn's competing values framework, and Cameron's classification of organizational culture to determine what cultural style would be most likely to encourage employee engagement and effectiveness. When considering the four hierarchies of organizational culture originally described by Quinn and Cameron in 1983, it was determined that although institutions with a dominant *adhocracy* culture exhibited the highest adjusted scores in all nine dimensions of effectiveness, the parallels between effectiveness and culture are more complex. The clan culture, in which employees are motivated through vision, shared goals, outputs, and outcomes was found to correlate with an environment perceived as more supportive of employees' personal growth and, subsequently, their perceived sense of belonging in the organization. Smart and Hamm (1993) urged community college leaders to consider cultural change as a key component in enhancing institutional performance.

Smart (2003) continued to consider the influence of culture and leadership roles on institutional effectiveness by assessing the magnitude of the relationship between employee perceptions of effectiveness, culture, and leadership. A positive correlation between perceptions of culture and leadership and perceptions of effectiveness in eight of Cameron's nine dimensions was studied, and again, high institutional performance was found to be associated with both adhocracy and clan culture types. However, institutions with complex cultures, or blends of multiple culture types, are perceived to be more effective. Highly effective institutions perceive their leaders as complex leaders, those who have the ability to move fluidly from collegial to political to symbolic to bureaucratic roles. Smart determined that the most effective institutions have dynamic leaders who can manage multiple roles and create balanced complex cultures that encourage participation from all members of the organization in achieving the mission of the institution.

McLeod and Young (2005) reiterated Smart's views on the importance of a college's leadership building a foundation on which all employees can contribute to a culture of student success. In their study of a university chancellor's campaign to create an institutional culture of student success, they identified the importance of developing goals, supporting an environment of change, fostering dependability and stability, and ensuring everyone at the institution is vested in the vision. McLeod and Young suggested that merely stating that an institution is committed to student success is insufficient. The structure must support culture by designating and supporting units and individuals to maintain and be accountable for student success. Additionally, the strategic plan must establish specific goals and allocate funds towards realizing those goals.

In order to assess the value of how an institutional culture of student success might impact the effectiveness of that institution, Jenkins (2007) undertook a study involving data from over 150,000 students at 28 Florida community colleges, six of which were selected for field research. The project compared policy, practice, and culture against institutional effectiveness. Results demonstrated that highly effective institutions have targeted support and early alert systems for underperforming students. To lend themselves to student success, the support services must be integrated across departments and units rather than offered in isolation. The research also revealed specific programs, policies, and procedures are not particularly useful in advancing student success, but rather it is the aligned management of all services that renders an institution effective.

The theme of a collaborative alignment of efforts across all units of the college continued in the work of Kennedy and Moore (2008) when they presented results from one college's restructuring of an Admissions Call Center in order to increase the consistency of messages and to increase frequency and quality of student support. Specifically, the restructuring addressed the need to encourage employees to willingly provide needed information to students and to develop a system by which employees could correctly direct students to those individuals or units most able to provide assistance. There was an intended goal of not only providing greater support to current students but also tracking and assisting students through the recruiting and enrollment process. The overall intent was to increase student success through an improved system of communication, service, and response to inquiry that was consistent across all areas of the college. All college employees were trained to provide information needed by students in order to share in the student success initiative.

Likewise, Lee (2004) used Smart and Hamm's 1993 study to consider the correlation between culture and institutional effectiveness at one college in the process of implementing several student success initiatives. Using a mixed adhocracy and clan cultural model, the institution in question developed a culture of campus collaboration and innovation between units. This "no-silo" concept was endorsed by the campus administration, demonstrating again the importance of leadership in the change initiative, and led to a TRIO grant, a student Ambassador program, and the ESPIRIT program. The latter provided a mechanism for students, faculty and staff to gather informally outside of the classroom, actions that have been shown to foster student development and academic success.

Kinzie and Kuh (2004) designed their Project DEEP to look at just that type of cross-campus collaboration at four-year institutions. Participating institutions were selected on "quality" as defined by high scores on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and notably high graduation rates. The study identified "a widely shared sense of responsibility for educational quality and student success" as the common factor at all twenty institutions. The cornerstones of the framework were leadership, partnerships between academic and student services, student agency, and "the power of one." Key elements of the cornerstones included strong senior administrators, common goals centered on student success, leadership teams composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and students collaborating to establish and maintain student success initiatives, and a shared sense of responsibility for student success between academic and student services. The most successful institutions had a student peer program and student government systems in place. The study stressed that student success is a shared responsibility and must be a culture that immerses everyone on the campus and demands the level of job engagement that is so often sought through organizational theory in the studies outside of academia.

Organizational studies such as those discussed earlier can be applicable to the academic setting if one considers that theories of employee engagement are grounded in social theory and factors that motivate and define all individuals. The question is not whether employees of different organizations seek relevance in their jobs in order to be engaged, but rather does the specific organization's mission hold relevance for the individual employee in order to foster engagement. Organizational behavior theory is already being applied in student success initiatives through models of parental, peer, and faculty support designed to foster a student's commitment to his or her academic program. Using the framework of organizational commitment that states that an individual's identification with an organization is determined by shared goals and a desire to maintain membership in the organization, students are encouraged to see themselves as integral parts of academic programs and are therefore more inclined to support the goals of the programs and work harder to stay in the programs (Daily, Bishop, & Maynard-Patrick, 2013). Likewise, were the same framework to be applied to employees of the academic institution by reinforcing the importance of their jobs in the larger goal of student success, along with providing a reasonable transactional contract, they would be more likely to make stronger commitments to those goals, and their jobs would provide greater satisfaction.

Troy (2013) sought to construct a new definition of engagement that can be applied to community college faculty as he contended that most research up to the present has focused more on student engagement rather than faculty. While defining engagement as a measurable construct associated with an understanding of the organization's mission, involvement in that mission beyond minimal responsibilities, and an overall sense of satisfaction and well-being related to those responsibilities, Troy suggested there is a need for a method of measurement of the risks to the institution when faculty become disengaged as well as consideration of methods to prevent disengagement.

When considering strategies found to be predictors of increased organizational effectiveness, Cameron's nine dimensions included opportunities for personal growth and development. Hackman and Oldham (1976) identified task identity and significance, as well as feedback as core elements of job, and Davenport and Prusak (1998) included the importance of mentoring in their model of engagement. Trahant (2008) and others clearly identified the importance of communication networks in building job engagement. When connected to job satisfaction, this has been shown to increase organizational effectiveness. The significance of goal-setting and the autonomy to shape one's contributions to the organization were also common themes in much of the job engagement research presented earlier in this chapter. Reoccurring themes of professional development, mentorship, evaluation and feedback, significance of the work to the mission of the institution, methods of communicating and acknowledging that significance, and an alignment with the perceptions of the employee regarding the values of the institution as related to the stated values are prevalent in all the literature related to job engagement and increased job performance. Similar themes can be found in much of the recent literature concerning community colleges.

The work of McGrath and Tobia (2008) identified organizational culture as an important, although often invisible tool, to support student success and an equity agenda. They posited that a well-developed organizational culture is crucial in driving a paradigm shift from the traditional, which places the responsibility for success on the student, to a shared responsibility with institutional awareness on the challenges of student transition from home to college. The creation of such a culture requires a thorough study of institutional beliefs, values, assumptions, and culture barriers to student success. Identifying "who" the institution is and who it serves should form the fabric for establishing a targeted mission, a common language, and a reconstruct of institutional goals. Continual professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators was found to be a critical component in transforming the culture to one focused on student support and success.

Corbin (2001) examined the role of perceptions and levels of job satisfaction among full-time faculty members at one community college. Acknowledging that more is currently known about the status of students in community colleges than is known about the status of employees at those colleges, Corbin assessed the faculty members' perceptions of the significance of their impacts as role models for students and correlated that to job satisfaction. While one of Corbin's primary hypotheses involved differences in perceptions of impacts across minorities, the overall study did not find differences across gender or race. It did find, however, that, as a group, the faculty were frustrated with the low retention in their classes and expressed the need for support from the institution to help them understand how to help their students. There was a call for development of a mentoring system to assist faculty in strengthening their own personal and academic goals so they would be better equipped to support students. While the majority of faculty did not express dissatisfaction with their job, they did perceive conflict in their roles in student success and, as a result, expressed the feeling that they were not doing as much as they might be able to do for students if they had more information or additional support from the administration. The connection between the effectiveness of the organization and the perception of job impact and engagement was perhaps tenuous but suggested to the point that further study beyond that one institution is warranted.

There can be no question that community colleges across the nation are seeking opportunities to increase student success through retention, persistence, and completion of student academic goals (Price & Tovar, 2014). Studies focused on student success have identified the impact that one individual on campus can have on a student's motivation to succeed (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004; McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012). While the majority of student success initiatives have been aimed at the students themselves, faculty and student services representatives have been the focus of most employee-based initiatives to increase student success despite reports from students themselves that it is often a relationship with a support staff member or someone outside the classroom or counseling office who provides them with the information and support they need to continue in school. If this is the case, then now is the time for colleges to start thinking about how to engage all college employees in the mission of student success.

Applications of Organizational Theory in Higher Education

As previously detailed, research in organizational theory has demonstrated identification with mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development as essential elements of employee engagement and orientation and mentoring as vehicles through which to connect employees to those elements. Additionally, leaders in higher education have established the importance of creating a culture of student success in which all employees are immersed in the mission, accept that student success is the shared responsibility of the institution, and understand how their individual roles support student success. The merits of applying organizational theory in higher education to support employee engagement and enhance student success are clear, yet the literature suggests application of these constructs has not reached full potential.

In a 2005 study, Garrison noted that many orientation programs at two- and four-year colleges are described in the literature but that information is lacking on the quantity and quality of those programs. To address this void, Garrison conducted a study of university faculty that had previously worked in the business sector. He found that 74% of respondents indicated their institutions offered orientation programs for new faculty. The overall rate of participation in an orientation was 78%, but increased to 89% for faculty who had been employed for five years or less. Garrison found program strengths to be the opportunities for interacting with other faculty, learning university procedures, and mentoring. Weaknesses included the lack of opportunity to provide program feedback or evaluation, insufficient depth of topic, poor organization, and the lack of clear objectives. Faculty in Garrison's study provided ideas for programming to assist new faculty in acclimating to their new roles including mentoring, teaching, professional development, networking, time management, and orientation. These concepts, proposed by faculty, represent three of the five benchmarks of employee engagement—orientation, mentoring, and professional development, described in Chapter 1 and demonstrated in Figure 1.

Williams (2009) described a three-day intensive orientation program for new faculty at a four-year institution. The program allowed for discussion on the scope and work of faculty at the institution and provided opportunities for networking, with the ultimate goal of developing faculty as citizens and scholars. A similar week-long faculty orientation program that focused on creating a sense of community and collaboration among faculty was reported by Cullen and Harris (2008). Faculty orientation programs are in existence in community colleges as well. Welch (2002) provided a synopsis of a community college new faculty orientation program designed to create a learning-centered environment in which the faculty could learn about the programs and services at the college, network, learn of ways to become involved in the campus community, and establish goals for continued professional development and growth. The year-long program consisted of a week of orientation in the fall and continued workshops throughout the fall and spring semesters. All of the aforementioned programs contained common elements in that they introduced new faculty to the institution, provided opportunities to network and develop a sense of community, and were so comprehensive that the work could not be accomplished in a one-time session.

Orientation programs, while well-designed and well-intentioned, remain primarily focused on faculty despite the call for a more inclusive, college-wide approach to student success initiatives (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004; McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012; McGrath & Tobia, 2008). Staff orientation programs tend to concentrate on the basics such as benefits and do not emphasize the connection of task to the mission of student success or capitalize on the opportunity for staff from differing units of the college to network. One college abandoned its face-to-face orientation program in favor of an online method of introducing health benefits and policies and procedures to eliminate scheduling difficulties and avoid having “different people in different employee classification in the room together” (Durso, n.d.).

In 2004, Savage, Karp, and Logue noted the benefits of and support for faculty mentoring in higher education despite the lack of research and literature on such programs. They discussed the program at their comprehensive university, which begins with orientation and extends throughout the first year of employment. Program goals are to support and empower new faculty, enhance job satisfaction, provide a venue for faculty to learn and understand expectations, the culture, promotion, and tenure system at the institution, provide cross-disciplinary networking opportunities, and to balance teaching and research commitments. The importance of pairing the mentee with a mentor who would meet his or her needs without introducing a hierarchical relationship was also noted. Blunt and Conolly (2006) reported similar findings and goals with regard to mentoring but included faculty and staff in their research. They cited mentoring as an under-utilized strategy to assist employees in reaching their full potential. The authors discussed the need for a transformational mentoring relationship that fosters holistic growth rather than a transactional relationship with a focus on training. Several challenges in achieving this type of relationship were noted, including matching the needs of the mentee with an appropriate mentor, ensuring the mentee was not a subordinate of the mentor, and emphasizing the need to train, provide incentive, and recognize the mentors. The authors proposed that mentoring become an accepted service that is included in job descriptions and incorporated into institutional committee structures. A study by Hopkins and Grigoriu (2005) found that community college faculty and staff welcome mentoring opportunities. They report that mentees prefer strong but non-intrusive programs. In other words, they perceive the benefit of the mentor-mentee relationship is greater if the institution provides support, information, and options for activities rather than a rigid, standardized program with mandatory components. They too emphasized the importance of the need to pair mentees with mentors who are not direct supervisors or have a role in their performance evaluations. Group sessions were recognized as an added benefit for networking and information sharing. The authors offered a list of suggested activities to support career development and methods to develop a formal yet flexible program with institutional support.

Much of the literature related to employee engagement in higher education is centered on professional development. In 2002, Bellanca noted the need for community colleges to “plan and provide comprehensive ongoing professional development programs for their faculty and staff” (p. 34) to adequately and effectively respond to the changing needs of students and the increasingly complex challenges brought forth by internal and external demands. During the same year an issue of *New Directions for Community Colleges* was dedicated to professional development. In this issue, Watts and Hammons (2002) posited that one of the greatest challenges of professional development in the community college setting is overcoming the notion that professional development is an added benefit but not a necessity. The authors suggested that offerings should be scrutinized for quality rather than quantity and that participation become an expectation that is included in performance evaluation. Friesen (2002) reported on a community college that had successfully overcome such challenges by requiring all full-time employees to participate in 32 contact hours per year with a balance of customized options in addition to required core curriculum that focuses on “broad organizational issues relevant to all employees” (p. 48). Troller (2002) also highlighted a comprehensive professional development program for faculty and staff at a community college. In the program outlined by Troller, employees were not required to participate but were offered incentives to do so. Although both Friesen and Troller cite the importance of connecting the planning and programming to mission and vision, neither touched on orientation nor mentoring as methods to promote professional development.

Perhaps this need for professional development stems from the fact that most faculty were not formally educated to be teachers but to be experts in a specific discipline

(Jones, 2008). Jones discussed the need for orientation and development programs, access to institutional teaching and learning centers, and the need to create a culture of instructional development for new faculty to facilitate their development as educators focused on active student learning. Re-socialization of new faculty through mentoring and seminars, supported by release time for new and senior faculty, were seen as necessary elements of the transformation.

Lunceford (2014) provided a similar account on the need to prepare and develop student affairs and services employees to ensure they could fulfill their duties to their full potential and serve as valued and participatory employees of the institution. The study by Lunceford found that 72% of student affairs employees had attained master's degrees, yet only 12% thought their education prepared them well for their jobs at community colleges. Lunceford's work featured a training program for counselors at a community college that emphasized guidelines and expectations, time allocation and commitment, involvement of key individuals, and ongoing evaluation and development. The author opined that investments in professional development and training are well worth the time and resources, but once again there was no mention of the inclusion of orientation or mentoring in the training program.

A comprehensive project to orient community college faculty and staff to the history, current issues, student demographics, and "what it means to work at a community college" was developed by a group of graduate students under the direction of Pamela Eddy (Eddy et al., 2004). While the group was limited in time and resources, they suggested material that would acclimatize employees to the history, mission, and students of community colleges, as well as resources such as national community college associations. The authors provided a foundation on which individual institutions may expand to connect employees to the vision and mission of community colleges and how employees can contribute.

Research concerning job engagement indicates that the greater the understanding an employee has of the significance of his or her particular job to the overall mission of the institution, the more satisfied the employee may be and the greater his or her job performance will be. If individual employees at community colleges understood the impact his or her job could have on student success, this would translate into employees making a greater effort to assist students and support their needs throughout all units of the college. In turn, the more effort that is made across campus to impact student success, the more likely the institution is to see a positive result in terms of student satisfaction, persistence, and completion.

Colleges need to develop strategies that communicate to employees the significance of their individual tasks to the mission of student success and then develop ways to increase and maintain job engagement across campus. Research concerning the application within higher education of organizational theory associated with employment engagement strategies suggests that while there is movement toward implementing strategies to engage employees in the mission of the institutions, those strategies are more focused on professional development and often pass over the phases of organizational socialization reflected in orientation programs. Studies that have focused on mentoring relationships and strategies to connect employees with the mission and vision of the community college would benefit from research that could clearly align employee engagement with student engagement and identify and measure the outcomes of those strategies most likely to increase student success through the involvement and commitment of all employees.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Based on the framework of organizational theories of employee engagement, current strategies used by community colleges to engage employees, and the emerging notions that all community college employees have the ability to enhance student success, this study addressed the following questions.

1. What are the relationships, if any, between exposure to institutional strategies for employee engagement, such as employee orientation and mentoring programs, and employee engagement, as defined by employee perceptions of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development?
2. What are the relationships, if any, between exposure to institutional strategies for employee engagement, such as employee orientation and mentoring programs, and employee perceptions of their preparedness to assist students?
3. What are the relationships, if any, between employee perceptions of engagement and student perceptions of engagement reported in CCSSE data?
4. What are the common elements in employee engagement resources found in institutions that exhibit positive relationships between organizational strategies and employees' perception of their impacts on student success?

5. Based on findings, is it possible to identify best practices in employee engagement strategies in order to suggest a model for other institutions to use in increasing employee participation in student success initiatives?

To answer these questions, a multi-faceted mixed methods study was conducted. Detailed descriptions of the four phases of the study will follow but, in brief, Phase I addressed the first two questions and included a quantitative analysis of the responses from a web-based questionnaire. The online survey was developed and administered to full-time faculty and staff at community colleges in the Midwest to determine if there is a relationship between institutional strategies, such as orientation and mentoring programs, designed to indoctrinate employees to the mission of student success, task significance, goal-setting and employee perceptions of their ability and preparedness to impact student success (Appendix B). Phase II addressed Question 3, through comparing employee perceptions from the web-based survey administered in Phase I against student perceptions of engagement and support from the college's most recent CCSSE data. Phase III, addressing Question 4, consisted of a qualitative document analysis of the orientation, mentoring, professional development, and evaluation documents from the colleges that participated in the survey. Phase IV, in which emerging effective strategies identified in the analysis of data from the first three phases of the study were used to create a framework for community colleges to consider in developing their own strategies for impacting student success through employee engagement, is discussed in Chapter 6. That framework focuses primarily on the development of suggested high-impact models for orientation, mentoring, professional development, and evaluation of community college employees.

For the purposes of the study, working definitions of several terms were adopted or established. As suggested by Kuh (2003), student engagement is considered to be the time and effort that students dedicate to educational activities and the ability of institutions to effectively get students to participate in such activities and is measured by elements of the five CCSSE benchmark areas of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, student effort, and support for learners (McClenney, 2007). Student success is equated to increased GPA, course and degree completion, and fall-to-spring and year-to-year persistence (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006; McClenney, 2007; Price & Tovar, 2014). Based on the work of Kahn (1990), employee engagement refers to the amount of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy employees commit to job performance and the willingness of the organization to foster that commitment.

This study attempted to quantify employee engagement by linking participation in orientation and mentoring programs with perceptions of understanding the mission of student success, task significance, goal-setting, and participation in professional development activities. The terms *orientation* and *orientation program* refer to an activity or series of activities that introduced employees to their jobs and the mission, values, and culture of the institution, while *mentoring* and *mentoring programs* refer to a connection with an individual who was to introduce an employee to his or her job and the mission, values, and culture of the college. Based on the work of Hackman and Oldham (1976), Castellano (2015), Thomas (2000), and Christian et al. (2011), task significance is considered to be the ability of employees to see their individual duties as relevant and connected to the overall mission of student success. Understanding the significance of each task or duty leads to job meaningfulness, a comprehension of the value and importance of the position to fulfilling the mission of the organization, in this case student success, resulting in greater employee investment and engagement (Thomas, 2000). The term *professional development* references internal and external activities for further development, continued training, and/or to learn about new initiatives.

Phase I

Introduction

Current studies in community college employee engagement in student success initiatives have been limited to faculty or select student services representatives. Research up to this point has focused primarily on factors contributing to student satisfaction and success and factors related to faculty and student services roles in that success. Thus, there exists a need to explore employee perceptions of impact on student success across all units of the college and consider what strategies, as identified by research in other organizations, might help shape those perceptions among community college employees in order to broaden the scope of student success initiatives. Further research is needed to determine if community colleges are providing all employees—faculty and staff—with the opportunity to participate in employee engagement strategies such as orientation and mentoring programs, and if messaging through those channels is providing sufficient information and support to fully engage employees and assist them in understanding, embracing, and preparing to fulfill their role in student success. Research is also needed to identify those employee engagement initiatives that have the greatest impact on student success in order to propose a model for employee engagement for community colleges. In order to begin to research the potential of a more collaborative approach to increasing the impact of employee engagement on student success, data are needed from a population of college employees that includes all units of the college.

Population and Sample

The target population for Phase I included non-student, full-time faculty and staff working within community colleges. The rationale for including all employees as opposed to only those who traditionally work with students is to gain a deeper understanding of institutional strategies as they relate to student success and to determine if immersing all employees in the mission of student success through orientation, goal-setting, evaluation, and professional development results in better engaged employees and students and, thus, enhances student success. This notion that anyone at the institution can personally connect with students and strengthen their resolve and engagement is supported by the works of McClenney and Arnsparger (2012) and Kinzie and Kuh (2004). McClenney and Arnsparger stressed the importance of helping students make early connections with the college and the people within and how such connections are positively linked to student retention. They included the story of Shirl, a campus groundskeeper, who is noted for taking an interest in students and making a difference in their college experiences (p. 45). Similarly the DEEP project found that one person, no matter what their official duties, can significantly impact student success (Kuh & Kinzie, 2004).

Limited time and resources rendered it impractical to conduct a nationwide study of community college employees within the scope of this study. Therefore, the focus was narrowed to public two-year colleges in the Midwest with similar characteristics and range of enrollment between 5,000 and 15,000. Institutions that fit this profile were determined based on information collected and reported by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a division of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). All institutions that participate in or have applied to participate in federal student financial aid programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 are required to complete the annual IPEDS survey. This comprises over 7,500 institutions and includes more than 1,700 two-year colleges (IPEDS, 2014). The IPEDS collects and stores information on institutional characteristics, human and financial resources, tuition and fees, enrollment, financial aid, and completion and success rates. Based on the aforementioned information, the IPEDS automatically assigns similar institutions into peer groups for comparative purposes.

A 2012 IPEDS peer group consisting of 26 public two-year institutions of similar enrollment size in the Midwest was selected to serve as the target population. The institutions in the IPEDS peer group were then cross-referenced for recent, 2012 or later, participation in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Based on this criterion, 24 community colleges in the IPEDS peer group were invited to participate in the study. Per fall 2012 IPEDS peer group data, enrollment at the selected institutions ranged from 5,800 to 15,450, with an average headcount 10,300; the number of full-time employees in the 2012 peer group ranged from 193 to 718 with an average of 410 (IPEDS, 2014). The interpretation of full-time status was determined by the institution based on appointment at the time of the IPEDS snapshot date (IPEDS, 2014).

Instrumentation

Despite a myriad of tools available to survey faculty, staff, and student engagement and satisfaction, there is not an existing instrument to collect data regarding perceptions of employees' roles in student success and what institutional strategies may prepare employees to fulfill those roles. Borden's 2001 study provided an historic overview and review of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems Institutional Performance Survey (NCHEMS-IPS), and the Noel-Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey (NL-IPS). The HERI evaluates faculty perception of faculty-student interaction, as well as faculty resources and professional development, but does not include provisions for assessing interactions between students and non-faculty employees at the college nor the non-faculty employee perceptions of their roles in and training for student success. The NCHEMS-IPS, obsolete as of November 2014, was administered to all college employees and students to gauge perceptions regarding institutional culture and effectiveness but provided little opportunity to assess employee-student interactions or whether employees believed they were adequately trained to assist students (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2015). The NL-IPS instrument gathers information on institutional priorities and compares the perceptions of those priorities among faculty, staff, and student groups. While the NL-IPS is focused on academic and student services that may foster student success, it too lacks the ability to correlate faculty and staff programming to their perceptions of their roles and effectiveness in enhancing student success (Noel-Levitz, 2014). In 2005, the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) was introduced to obtain information on faculty demographics, practices in and outside the classroom, and their perceptions on student engagement (McClenney, 2007). This instrument was developed to align with the CCSSE but again included only faculty and did not inquire as to whether institutional programming and professional development enhanced faculty's understanding of the importance of engagement in student success.

In the absence of a known model to assess community college employee perceptions of their roles in student success and whether those perceptions are correlated to institutional strategies to orient them to the mission of student success, a web-based questionnaire was developed by the researchers for this purpose. The web-based product SurveyMonkey was used to construct, deliver, collect, and track all questionnaires for this phase of the study.

The design of the web-based questionnaire was modeled after a similar study performed by the researchers (Bruce & Sutton, 2014). The use of an online instrument to collect data can introduce coverage and sampling errors if the researchers are unsure as to whether everyone in the sample has access to the internet and a valid email address to receive the survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Umbach, 2004). This risk of compromising anonymity was minimized as the survey was sent by participating institutions to employees who have institutional email accounts, and the researchers did not have access to participants' email addresses. Details of the mode of distribution will be discussed later in the chapter.

The modified survey also incorporated several best practices summarized by Umbach (2004) to further minimize coverage, measurement, and nonresponse errors. The survey provided clear instructions, used little color, was easy to navigate, allowed respondents to move back and forth between most questions, included a progress indicator, and was divided into sections. Furthermore, the survey did not include the use of drop-down boxes nor include a counter indicating visits to the survey web page. As recommended by Dillman et al. (2014), the survey was pretested using multiple methods. First, the survey was reviewed by several research experts in the offices of institutional research at two separate academic institutions as well as the principal researchers' committee chairpersons. Select community college employees from institutions not included in this study were then asked to complete the survey and provide feedback. The third phase was the administration of a small-scale pretest pilot study. The scope of this pretest pilot was limited given that the researchers' previous study also served as a pilot (Bruce & Sutton, 2014). All pretests were conducted using a prototype of the survey in SurveyMonkey. The instrument was modified accordingly at each stage of the pretest process. The final format of the 34-question web-based survey was also subject to review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Ferris State University (Appendix A) and at participating institutions.

The survey was designed to establish levels of employees' engagement and preparedness to assist students by asking about their perceptions of student success as a primary mission, their impact on student success, goal-setting, and the frequency of participation in professional development activities, as well as the frequency at which students asked for assistance in eight key areas and their preparedness to assist students in those areas. Employees were also asked whether they were exposed to orientation or mentoring programs and, if so, their perceptions as to the helpfulness of those programs. Questions were also included to gain a better understanding of modes of delivery of the orientation and mentoring programs. The survey also contained seven questions for the purpose of gathering demographic data. The final question was open-ended and afforded participants the opportunity to share additional information.

Questions asking whether respondents were exposed to employee engagement programs, such as orientation or mentoring, as reflected in questions 18 and 23, served as the independent variables for the study. These closed-ended *yes* or *no* questions included skip-logic to advance participants who answered *yes* to more specific questions regarding orientation and mentoring programs.

The dependent variables for assessing employee perceptions of employee engagement messaging, including institutional mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development between the groups, included the following four items:

- Student success is one of the primary missions of your institution (question 1).
- You believe your job has a significant impact on student success (question 2).
- You are encouraged or required by the college to develop annual performance goals that include continued professional development and training to help you better support student success (question 6).
- How often do you take advantage of opportunities for professional development, continued training, and to learn about new initiatives? (question 10).

The dependent variables for assessing perceptions of impact on student success by the ability and preparedness to assist students included the following eight questions:

- How prepared do you believe you are to answer student questions about (questions 16.1 - 16.8):
  - Academic or course selection
  - Career advice
  - Directions

- Financial advice
- Personal advice
- Registration information
- Safety/security assistance
- Technical/computer assistance

A 5-point Likert composite rating scale was used to measure dependent variables, which allowed for responses to be summed, averaged, and tested for reliability. Response options for questions gauging employee perceptions ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* or *not at all prepared* to *very well prepared*. Response options for frequency questions range from *never* to *very often*.

Data Collection

To protect institutional identity, the names of the participating institutions were randomized and assigned alphabetic aliases. The survey instrument for each institution was identical. However, SurveyMonkey randomly assigned each institution a unique and secure link for the purpose of collecting and analyzing disaggregated data.

The distribution design permitted only two points of contact with the potential respondents and no direct contact between the target audience and the researchers. Administrators from the office of institutional effectiveness or research at participating community colleges were asked to send electronically a cover letter supplied by the researchers inviting employees to participate (Appendix C). While this limited the ability to send a prenotice letter prior to distribution of the survey and to personalize survey notices, it increased the assurance of anonymous participation as it eliminated the need for the researchers to handle employee names or email addresses. Waiving the ability to send a prenotice was deemed appropriate since they are seldom used for web-based surveys (Dillman et al., 2014). The inability to personalize the survey recruitment letter and subsequent contacts may have hindered response rates (Dillman et al., 2014), although Umbach's (2004) study reported inconsistencies in the research on the benefits of personalization.

The electronic cover letter served as an introduction to the researchers; briefly described the purpose of the study; contained information regarding the legal rights, risks, protection of privacy, and voluntary nature of the survey; as well as contact information for the researchers, their dissertation chairs, and the Ferris State University IRB. The letter also provided the unique link to the web-based survey. The first page of the survey reiterated much of this information and acknowledged that by continuing to the survey questions, participants were providing informed consent. The IP and email address collectors and recorders in SurveyMonkey were disabled, which prevented the collection and storage of individual participants' email addresses and any possible linkage back to the name of the participating community colleges. Although this measure aided in ensuring anonymity of respondents, it negated the ability to send email reminders to individual non-respondents. Follow-up emails have been shown to increase response rates, although there is no recommendation as to the most effective number of reminders (Dillman et al., 2014; Umbach, 2004). To that end, administrators from participating institutions that sent the invitation to participate were asked to send one reminder letter via email to all employees who had received the original recruitment letter. The electronic reminder, supplied by the researchers, acknowledged that some receiving the letter would have already completed the questionnaire and thanked them for their participation. It went on to invite those who had not yet responded to do so prior to the close of the survey and included the closing date. Surveys were open for response, on average for 25 days, with reminders letters emailed approximately five days prior to the close. The time variance between institutions was due to academic calendars and holidays that may have fallen within the survey period.

SurveyMonkey received the completed surveys and tracked the number of respondents from each institution. To protect the information supplied by the respondents, the researchers elected to collect responses using Secure Sockets Layers (SSL) technology to encrypt response data and authenticate the server. SurveyMonkey.com attests to the security of their servers, networks, hardware and software, client information, and the integrity of their employees. Detailed information on security provisions are documented on the SurveyMonkey website (SurveyMonkey, 2013). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 was used for analyses of disaggregated and aggregated data. Data were exported from SurveyMonkey to SPSS for analyses.

Data Analysis

Of the 24 institutions in the population as defined by the IPEDS peer group, six consented to participate in the study. Data from individual institutions are reported and described under the aliases of CCa, CCb, CCc, CCd, CCe, and CCf to ensure their identities remain anonymous. A total of 2,885 employees received the survey solicitation letter to participate in the study with the number of full-time employees at individual institutions ranging from 399 to 601, as reported by the participating institutions. After data cleaning to ensure responses were collected from only full-time employees, a total of 464 responses were deemed valid.

An exploratory data analysis, including descriptive statistics, was used to analyze several aspects of the data, aggregated and disaggregated by institution. The purpose was to establish central tendencies and standard deviations for comparative purposes. Particular attention was given to the percentage of employees who participated in employee engagement strategies such as orientations, mentoring, or both, as well as percent responses from employee classification, length of employment, and the questions comprising the dependent variables.

Two independent variable groups were determined by affirmative answers to question 18, "Did your job require an orientation (a mandatory activity or series of activities to introduce you to your job and the mission, values, and culture of the college)?" and question 23, "Did you have a mentor to introduce you to your job and the mission, values, and culture of the college?" Employees who answered affirmative to both questions composed a third independent variable of employees having been exposed to orientation and mentoring programs.

Aggregate and disaggregate composite mean values of engagement and preparedness were computed. The composite mean for engagement was derived by summing the 5-point Likert scale responses to survey questions 1, 2, 6, and 10 and then calculating the mean. This approach was also used to obtain the composite mean of preparedness but with survey questions 16.1 through 16.8. Results were compared using descriptive statistics. The engagement and preparedness composites were then treated as dependent variables and individually tested for effects as related to the independent variables, orientation, mentoring, or orientation plus mentoring programs, by performing a factorial analysis of variance.

The Pearson chi-square test was performed to examine the relationship between the independent and individual dependent variables, survey questions 1, 2, 6, 10, and 16.1 through 16.8. The test yields a quantitative measure of the relationship between the variables by comparing the observed frequencies with the expected frequencies that would be present if no relationship existed. As the value of chi-square increases, the probability that the observed outcomes occurred by chance decreases. Thus, larger chi-square values were indicative of a relationship between the variables. Although it was deemed acceptable by Yates, Moore, and McCabe (1999) to have up to 20% of the expected counts less than 5 when all individual expected counts are 1 or greater, given the small sample size, responses collected on 5-point Likert scales were collapsed into 3-point scales to reduce the incidence of cells with counts fewer than expected ($n = 5$) in the chi-square test. The recoded values are displayed in Table 1.

A p value of < 0.05 was used as the threshold for statistical significance and indicated it was unlikely a relationship would have been observed in this study unless the relationship was also present in the larger population. The Cramer's V test was performed to determine the strength, or effect size, of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The analysis provided evidence as to whether the variables were related and illustrates the magnitude and statistical significance of the relationship.

Table 1

Recoded Dependent Variables for Pearson Chi-square Computation

Variable/Survey Question Number	Coding	Likert Scale				
1, 2, 6		strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
	Code	5	4	3	2	1
	Recode	3	3	2	1	1
10		never	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
	Code	5	4	3	2	1
	Recode	3	3	2	1	1
16.1-16.8		not at all prepared	prepared	somewhat prepared	well prepared	very well prepared
	Code	5	4	3	2	1
	Recode	3	3	2	1	1

In addition to using Cramer's *V* to evaluate effect size, relative risk, a ratio used to determine the possibility that one event will occur because of exposure to a previous event, was used to demonstrate the relative likelihood of a change in employees' perceptions of messages involving task significance, goal-setting, professional development, or the institutional mission due to exposure to employee engagement strategies such as orientation, mentoring, or both. Consideration was given to calculating odds ratio, but given that odds ratios compare only the chances of events occurring in one group to the chances of the same events occurring in another group, it was determined that relative likelihood or risk ratios would provide stronger implications for causation by considering the relationship of one event to another. Relative risk ratios were also calculated to demonstrate the likelihood of an employee's perceptions of preparedness to assist students based on exposure to orientation, mentoring, or both. For this purpose, responses to the dependent variable questions 1, 2, 6, and 10 were recoded into nominal units of measure where 1 equaled "engaged" and 2 equaled "not engaged." The nominal units of measure for preparedness to assist students, question 16, were recoded where 1 equaled "prepared" and 2 equaled "not prepared," as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Recoded Dependent Variables for Relative Risk Computation

Variable/Survey Question Number	Coding	Likert Scale				
1, 2, 6		strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
	Code	5	4	3	2	1
	Recode	2	2	2	1	1
10		never	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
	Code	5	4	3	2	1
	Recode	2	2	2	1	1
16.1-16.8		not at all prepared	prepared	somewhat prepared	well prepared	very well prepared
	Code	5	4	3	2	1
	Recode	2	2	2	1	1

Limitations and Delimitations

The most significant limitation in the study was the small sample size. Limiting the sample population to the 24 institutions in an IPEDS peer group, while a non-random sample, included a sufficiently large sample to survey. Coverage errors should not have been a factor in this study, as participating institutions sent the recruitment letter and survey information out to employees with institutional email addresses and then reported the number of individuals to whom the survey was sent. Therefore, there was little concern that a subset of the sample did not have access to the survey.

While the researchers were sure that all invited participants had access to email and the internet, some employees declined to respond. It could be argued that those who elected to respond were the most engaged employees and therefore skewed the data. Survey participants were not required to answer all questions before submitting the survey. This introduced additional non-response bias and resulted in the need to reject some surveys, which further contributed to sampling error. The researchers also acknowledge the survey instrument, although thoughtfully constructed and tested, was not perfect. Misinterpretation of the questions, mis-checking the radio buttons when answering, and misrepresentation due to inaccuracies in respondent recall may have contributed to bias or increased variance due to measurement errors. Additionally, participants were allowed to skip questions, which may have diluted the results. Due to the selected sample and methods of analysis, even if the results demonstrate a relationship between the independent and dependent variables, one cannot exclude the possibility that unaccounted variables may have contributed to the relationship.

Phase II

Introduction

In order to begin to consider organizational strategies that may contribute to a positive relationship between employee and student engagement, it is important to identify potential relationships between those institutions in which employees perceive their roles as having a strong impact on student success and students' perceptions of satisfaction and support. One test of the legitimacy of the employees' perceptions of their preparedness to assist students should be the students' perception of an institution in which all employees are available to assist and support the students' educational objectives. Utilizing data available through the CCSSE and the survey described in Phase I, these concepts were explored to determine similarities and differences between student perceptions of support and employee perceptions of preparedness to assist and support students. The discovery of discrepancies between student and employee perceptions provided insight as to what types of employee engagement activities and professional development are beneficial or could be improved upon.

Population and Sample

The employee target population and sample for Phase II was identical to that of Phase I. The sample of non-student, full-time faculty and staff working within community colleges again consisted of institutions from a 2012 IPEDS peer group based on similarities in size, characteristics, and geographical location that had administered the CCSSE at least once since 2012.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to determine if there exists an association between high levels of employee engagement and student engagement: the levels of employee engagement as determined by specific queries and responses on the web-based survey in Phase I and student engagement as determined by CCSSE benchmarking means.

Research has demonstrated perceptions and activities are associated with employee engagement and immersion in the culture and mission of the organization (Christian et al., 2011). As discussed in Phase I, there are several instruments available to measure employee satisfaction or engagement. However, all have limitations that prevented their selection for this research. The HERI and CCFSSE questionnaires are measures of engagement and satisfaction but are exclusive to faculty. The NCHEMS-IPS and NL-IPS were designed to assess and compare perceptions of all college employees against the perceptions of students with regard to institutional culture and effectiveness and perceptions of institutional priorities, respectively, but neither assessed employee perceptions of their preparedness to assist students or institutional strategies that help them fulfill their roles in student success. Many community colleges administer in-house climate surveys to gauge institutional effectiveness and employee satisfaction; however, no two are alike. Thus, the web-based survey used for Phase I included several items designed to gather data on employee perceptions regarding their perceived engagement and role in student success.

The measures of employee perception were based on Kahn's 1990 definition of employee engagement, and the institutional strategies chosen were aligned with the work of researchers in the field of job satisfaction and job engagement over the past several decades, applicable to the community college environment. Cameron's 1978 dimensions of organizational effectiveness and job satisfaction identified the significance of opportunities for professional development in supporting satisfaction. Vorhauser-Smith (2013) confirmed those findings. The significance of consistent communication of organizational messages, including mission statements, core values, goals, and expectations for each employee was identified by Zeffane (2006) and Trahant (2008). The employee orientation was identified as one organizational strategy that has potential to lay the groundwork for future employee engagement. Davenport and Prusak (1998) and Zeffane (2006) all identified the relationship between mentors and mentees as a factor in strengthening employee engagement, most likely through the perceived trust in peer communications. Smart and Hamm (1993) provided support for the previous strategies and also identified the perception of task significance as the underlying message that should be evident in those strategies. Castellano (2015) confirmed the importance of task significance as one the five core dimensions leading to engagement, satisfaction, and productivity. Strategies that have a positive correlation to the employee's perception of the significance of his or her role in the organizational mission should have the potential to increase the effectiveness of the organization.

Based on that research, the following were among the statements included on the survey to gauge employee engagement:

- Did your job require an orientation?
- Did you have a mentor to introduce you to your job and the mission, values, and culture of the college?
- How prepared do you believe you are to answer student questions about:

- Academic or course selection
- Career advice
- Directions
- Financial advice
- Personal advice
- Registration information
- Safety/security assistance
- Technical/computer assistance

A 5-point Likert composite rating scale was used to measure these variables, which allowed for responses to be summed, averaged, and tested for reliability. Response options for questions gauging employee perceptions ranged from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, *very well prepared* to *not at all prepared*, or *never* to *very often*.

The second instrument in Phase II was the CCSSE. The CCCSE has been administered for nearly 15 years. In 2007, CCCSE released a national report confirming the validity of the instrument and its reliability to correlate student engagement with student success. The report cited three external data sets including the Florida community college system, the CCSSE Hispanic Student Success Consortium, and 24 colleges from the Achieving the Dream project. The study demonstrated positive correlations between all five CCSSE benchmarks and measures of student success including GPA, completion ratios, first-to-second-term and first-year-to-second-year persistence, credit hours completed, and degree and certificate completion (McClenney, Marti, & Adkins, 2007). The CCSSE instrument was further validated in a recent report by Price and Tovar (2014). The authors found three of the five CCSSE benchmarks, including student-faculty interaction and support for learners, were correlated with graduation rates at a statistically significant degree.

In addition to comparing the participating college's mean composite values for engagement and preparedness, calculated from the data collected in Phase I, with their mean values in the five CCSSE benchmark areas, specific items from the benchmark areas of student-faculty interaction and support for learners were selected for further study. These benchmarks were selected as they concentrated on student perceptions of interactions with employees and support from the college.

One item was selected from the student-faculty interaction benchmark. Responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale where 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, and 4 = very often. Students were asked to respond to the *frequency at which students talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor* (item 4m).

Five items were selected from the support for learners benchmark. Items 9b, 9d, and 9f were measured on a 4-point Likert where 1 = very little, 2 = some, 3 = quite a bit, and 4 = very much and asked students how much emphasis the college places on:

- Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college (item 9b)
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) (item 9d)
- Providing the financial support you need to afford your education (item 9f)

Items 13.2a and 13.2b, measured on a 3-point Likert where 1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, and 3 = very, asked students their level of satisfaction with services including:

- Academic advising/planning (item 13.2a)
- Career counseling (item 13.2b)

Data Collection

Data collection methods for the web-based survey were previously described in this chapter under Phase I Data Collection. In brief, participating institutions were assigned alphabetic aliases to protect their identities. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, administrators from participating institutions were asked to email recruitment and follow-up letters containing a link to the survey to all full-time employees. SurveyMonkey was used to construct, deliver, collect, and track all questionnaires. The CCSSE data for the six participating institutions was obtained through publically available reports on the Center for Community College Student Engagement website (CCSSE, 2015).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze employee responses to queries concerning level of preparedness from the web-based survey discussed in Phase I. Data were evaluated in aggregate and disaggregated by institution. The comparisons between CCSSE data from the participating colleges and data for individual institutions from the web-based survey conducted for this research were based on whether they were above or below the CCSSE national mean values and the aggregated mean values for select questions from the research survey. This method of comparison was chosen due to the variation in Likert scale responses between the surveys.

Perceptions of academic advice were compared by using the mean values for survey question 16.1 and CCSSE question 13.2a. Questions 16.2 and CCSSE 4m and 13.2b were used to compare perceptions on career advice, questions 16.4 and CCSSE 9f for financial advice, and 16.5 and CCSSE 9d for personal advice. The composite mean value of preparedness, computed in Phase I, was used to compare employee perceptions of preparedness to assist students with CCSSE question 9b, which asked students to indicate how much emphasis the college placed on providing the support they needed to succeed.

The Kendall's tau-b test was performed to determine if associations existed between the benchmarks of this research study, engagement and preparedness, and the five CCSSE benchmarks: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. The composite means for engagement and preparedness and the CCSSE mean scores were used for this purpose.

Limitations and Delimitations

As with Phase I, the web-based research survey presents limitations with regard to sample size and nonresponse errors. Data analysis was limited due to the differences in sample sizes and in Likert scales of the web-based research and CCSSE survey instruments. The two instruments were not identical in wording of responses or number of options on the Likert scales. The researchers were aware of this limitation when the web-based survey was constructed. Given that the target population and sample were considerably smaller for this survey as compared with the large, random sample of the CCSSE survey, using a larger Likert scale provided more flexibility in analysis. Furthermore, comparisons with CCSSE data were not the sole purpose of the study. This phase of the project was included to provide a peripheral view of the differences and similarities between student and employee perceptions and evoke considerations for methods to align those perceptions.

Phase III

Introduction

Document analysis, when done in a systematic and well-defined manner, can provide a deeper understanding of institutional artifacts that may give meaning to the perceptions and values of that institution’s culture. Merriam (2009) defines ethnographic document analysis as a means to understanding the purpose behind various communications within an organization and identifies documents as unbiased sources of data that remain unchanged by the study in ways that human subjects may not. As objective sources of data, documents can be used in conjunction with the survey data to strengthen the validity of a study by approaching the research question in both qualitative and quantitative ways (Neuendorf, 2002). Denzin (1970) referred to the triangulation of methods in which different approaches are combined to study the same phenomenon, as a means to provide confirmation of the data gathered through one method by confirming that the constructs created to assess variables in the first method can also be identified in institutional artifacts that would have served to shape the perceptions pertaining to those constructs. Triangulation reduces the possibility of bias that can exist in a single study by using more than one method of analysis to support and balance the findings (Eisner, 1991). In the case of this study, document analysis is used to corroborate the existence and description of artifacts that support the responses provided in the survey of employees.

Population and Sample

As the intent of Phase III was to serve as a method of triangulation that would supplement and reinforce data gathered in Phase I, the population sample for Phase III included only institutional documents from the six colleges that participated in Phase I. Documents were selected based on relevancy to the framework of the study. The institutional documents requested were only those associated with the employee engagement strategies addressed through the Phase I survey, employee orientation, employee mentoring, employee professional development, and employee evaluation, with the latter two documents being potential channels through which goal-setting might be communicated. A secondary sample of institutional messages that are public in nature was also included in Phase III and included mission statements, strategic plans, goals, and core values of the six participating colleges.

Instrumentation

A spreadsheet (Appendix D) was created using a thematic approach as described by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). Predefined codes, based on thematic categories defined by the research in employee engagement, formed the categories for analysis. A thematic approach to document analysis allows researchers to review documents for themes which are pertinent to the phenomenon, in this case employee engagement, in order to supplement other research methods. By categorizing and evaluating excerpts, content headings, paragraphs, or other segments of messages within documents and grouping those by theme and perceived intent, the researcher is able to assign meaning that corresponds to other data sets in the study (Labuschagne, 2003). Intended to serve as a supplement to the survey of employees conducted in Phase I, the document analysis spreadsheet looked at eight key documents of communication addressing the following areas:

- mission statement

- strategic plan
- institutional goals
- core values
- employee orientation packet
- mentoring program
- professional development program
- employee evaluation processes

The first four of these documents were reviewed for specific references to student success in order to determine if a student success initiative is apparent in the document and if the initiative appears to include all employees in the organization. The second grouping of four documents was reviewed across eight factors:

- Description: type of document, how it is made available, which area of the institution has responsibility for oversight of preparation and implementation of the program described
- Inclusiveness: identifying which employees have access to the programs being described
- Goal-setting: inclusion of discussion, training, or encouragement of individual goal-setting as an ongoing component of employee development or as a method through which employees can participate in the mission of the institution
- Task Significance: seeking any references that would assist employees to a greater understanding of how their individual jobs or roles in the organization

might impact the overall mission of that organization. Specific attention was given to any reference to the employees' ability to impact student success.

- Resources for Assisting Students: documents were reviewed for any materials designed to help prepare employees to respond to questions from students or to direct students to other areas for assistance.
- Opportunities for Contribution to Program: documents were assessed for references to opportunities for employees to make suggestions or provide assessment of programs for future improvement
- Frequency of strategy implementation: length of program or frequency of offerings was noted if apparent

The eight factors, or themes, that were assessed across documents were aligned with employee engagement strategies and messages identified through the review of literature and incorporated into the Phase I survey. Understanding of the mission (Q1), task significance to that mission (Q2), goal-setting (Q6), professional development (Q10), orientation (Q18), and mentoring (Q23) were the questions primarily related to the document analysis.

Data Collection

Documentation was requested from all six of the colleges participating in Phase I of the study. Requests were made through email and by telephone to the directors of offices for institutional research, directors of offices for human resources, and directors of institutional centers for faculty and staff development for any existing documents they were willing to share that encompassed employee orientation programs, employee mentoring programs, and employee development programs. In addition, the institutional websites were searched for mission statements, core values, strategic plans, and institutional goals, as well as any online documents or statements pertaining to employee orientation, mentoring, or professional development programs. Each researcher independently searched the public website of each of the six participating institutions, first by searching the site index to locate the institutional portfolio and "about the institution" page. These pages were determined to be the most complete repositories of environmental scanning data, mission statements, accreditation reports, and all information made public to the community served by the institution. Each site was also searched by keywords *mission*, *vision*, *strategic plan*, *goals*, and *values* to be certain that no information concerning those specific documents was missed. The entries found by all four researchers where then cataloged, and web addresses were shared among the researchers to be certain that all researchers would be reviewing the same entries.

Data Analysis

Reliability of document analysis is increased by having more than one person look at the documents to identify themes and categorize elements, while the validity of the analysis is increased by having the reviewers approach the documents with clearly defined themes and categories that have been aligned with the framework of the study (Neuendorf, 2002). Using an ethnographic approach in which reviewers read documents thoroughly, searching for themes and interpreting meaning as individual employees might, documents from the six institutions were reviewed for purpose, strength of message, possible audiences, alignment with student success initiatives, and overall depth of content as related to ability to prepare employees to assist students and engage in the mission of the institution.

Themes identified in the instrument previously described were aligned with the employee engagement messages of goal development, task significance, and professional development as found in the strategies of orientation and mentoring programs. The documents related to mission, goals, strategic plans, and core values were searched using word retrieval software with key words *success* and *student success*. Four reviewers participated in the document analysis, two being the primary investigators and the other two being community college employees. After training in the process of document analysis, all reviewers were asked to carefully search the documents for references to collaborative efforts aimed at fostering a culture of student success or indicated the involvement of employees across the institution. Phrases and statements pertaining to such efforts were highlighted.

All reviewers were provided with all available employee orientation, mentoring, professional development, and employee evaluation documents and asked to describe the content in terms of the categories and themes identified in the instrument. Reviewers were asked to provide a short narrative for what they found and their impressions of the messages and intent of the documents. Reviewers were asked to pay close attention to themes or messages within documents that pertained to student success or the employees' part in assisting students. The reviewers' four spreadsheets were then combined so that if any one reviewer perceived a document to carry a message related to success, it was seen as valid. It is understood that document analysis requires that researchers assign meaning to elements within the documents according to their perceptions of the intent and quality of message (Rapley, 2007). The identification of themes that are generally understood across all reviewers, and the use of reviewers all familiar with the community college environment, worked to minimize variations in perception of messages that might have resulted from unfamiliarity with topics or terms found in the documents. While all impressions of the reviewers were seen as valid, those documents that were perceived in the same manner by multiple reviewers were identified as being stronger in that construct.

The strength of the themes within the documents was compared with the Phase I survey results from the individual institutions in order to determine if employees from institutions possessing artifacts exhibiting stronger employee engagement strategies also exhibited stronger indications of employee engagement in student success initiatives through their survey responses. Characteristics of documents aligning with positive survey results were noted, so as to be considered for incorporation into a best practices model of employee engagement strategies.

Limitations and Delimitations

As with the previous phases in the study, the most significant limitation in the study may be the small sample size. However, the document analysis is not about comparing documents across a large group of colleges; it is about comparing the documents from specific colleges with those colleges' employee responses and perceptions of the strategies represented by the documents. In that sense, the small sample of colleges represented in the document analysis is not a limitation of the study, but the number of documents available from each college represented could be a delimiting factor. Inclusion of documents in the study was dependent on the existence of such documents and each institution's willingness to allow those documents to be included. The ability to identify and compare thematic constructs could be limited by the variations in document design and purpose found across institutions. Limited access to documents, as indicated by Yin (2009), could be the result of biased selectivity on the part of the organization as a result of documents being blocked due to institutional policies or principles, or on the part of the researcher for minimizing the scope of documents considered for the study. On the other hand, the existence or absence of documents to support strategies can be valuable information because the lack of documents might be indicative of the value placed on an initiative or the resources made available for implementation of that initiative (Bowen, 2009).

While the availability of mission statements, goals, strategic plans, and core values was consistent with all six institutions and the intended audience, internal and external stakeholders, was apparent, the same could not be said for documents connected to employee engagement strategies. Variations in document structure, intended audience, and message delivery methods could limit the usefulness of documents in triangulating the research associated with employee engagement, but the overall value of analyzing documents for trends and message continuity while comparing employee survey responses to what is exhibited in the document can provide a richer understanding of the quantitative data by seeking to understand the methods through which messages are shaped and delivered.

Phase IV

Although much research exists on the theory of employee engagement strategies as a method of promoting employee investment, there is little research on best practices of engagement strategies specific to community college employees. The vast majority of available literature focuses on student or faculty engagement as means to promote student engagement and success. Based on analysis of the data collected in Phases I, II, and III, and available literature, a suggested model to enhance the effectiveness of employee engagement strategies, which in turn may lead to student engagement and thus student success, was developed. Strategies such as orientation and mentoring programs were approached as channels through which messages supporting task significance, encouraging goal-setting and professional development, and preparing employees to assist students could be effectively delivered.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

Data from Phases I, II, and III were gathered and compiled through methods identified in the previous chapter. Statistical analysis that was completed on Phase I data provided for both aggregate and disaggregate values, allowing for more in-depth analysis of the impact of engagement strategies on employee groups by allowing the researchers to consider results across colleges or within, when compared to the results of documents specific to the institutions. The combined analysis of the document review of Phase III with the specific data from both the Phase I survey and Phase II CCSSE data from each institution, provided a means of triangulation, which allowed the researchers to validate more of the findings despite the small sample size. Results of the first three phases of the study are found in this chapter and the combined analysis and discussion of the results will follow in Chapter 5. Implications of the analysis and suggestions for application in community colleges will be the focus of Chapter 6.

Phase I

Population and Return Rate

The survey elicited a 16% return rate from the sample population of six community colleges. Percent responses from institutions, displayed in Table 3, ranged from a low of 12% to a high of 23% with an average response rate of 16%.

Table 3

Responses by College

College	*N* Full Time Employees	*n* Respondents	%
CCa	444	54	12
CCb	477	112	23
CCc	525	81	15
CCd	601	85	14
CCe	399	48	12
CCf	439	84	19
Total	2885	464	16

Demographic data were collected to determine length of employment and with which units of the colleges respondents were affiliated. Length of employment among the 461 full-time employees who responded to the length of service query varied from less than one year to more than 25 years. The largest percent of response rates were collected from employees in the 6-10 years category, closely followed by the 11-15 years and 1-5 years categories. Detailed responses by college and length of service are provided in Table 4.

Of the 459 full-time employees who indicated the areas of the college in which they worked, 51% (n = 233) identified themselves as working within Academic Services including faculty, 21% (n = 95) within Student Services, 17% (n = 77) within Administration and Finance, 6% (n = 27) within Institutional Research and Advancement, 3% (n = 13) within Physical Plant/Grounds Maintenance, 2% (n = 8) within Marketing/Community Relations, and 1% (n = 6) within Foundation or Fundraising. Due to the relatively small number of responses from units outside of

Academic Services/Faculty and Student Services, responses from all other units were collapsed into one categorical variable labeled "All Other Units." These three units, Academic Services/Faculty, Student Services, and All Other Units, as shown in Table 5, will be the points of reference for college unit for the remainder of the study.

Table 4

Responses by Length of Employment in Years

College	*n* < 1 year	*n* 1–5 years	*n* 6–10 years	*n* 11–15 years	*n* 16–20 years	*n* 21–25 years	*n* > 25 years	Total
CCa	2 (4%)	8 (15%)	19 (35%)	12 (22%)	8 (15%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)	54 (100%)
CCb	5 (5%)	14 (13%)	30 (28%)	21 (19%)	22 (20%)	10 (9%)	7 (6%)	109 (100%)
CCc	6 (7%)	26 (32%)	14 (17%)	20 (25%)	9 (11%)	1 (1%)	5 (6%)	81 (100%)
CCd	2 (2%)	19 (22%)	21 (25%)	23 (27%)	9 (11%)	6 (7%)	5 (6%)	85 (100%)
CCe	7 (15%)	9 (19%)	11 (23%)	12 (25%)	5 (10%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	48 (100%)
CCf	5 (6%)	24 (29%)	15 (18%)	21 (25%)	7 (8%)	5 (6%)	7 (8%)	84 (100%)
Total	27 (6%)	100 (22%)	110 (24%)	109 (24%)	60 (13%)	29 (6%)	26 (6%)	461 (100%)

Table 5

Responses by Unit of Employment, Recoded

College	*n* Academic Services/ Faculty	*n* Student Services	*n* All Other Units	*n* Total
CCa	21 (39%)	9 (17%)	24 (44%)	54 (100%)
CCb	72 (65%)	18 (16%)	21 (19%)	111 (100%)
CCc	38 (48%)	16 (20%)	25 (32%)	79 (100%)
CCd	32 (38%)	27 (32%)	26 (31%)	85 (100%)
CCe	27 (56%)	11 (23%)	10 (21%)	48 (100%)
CCf	43 (52%)	14 (17%)	25 (30%)	82 (100%)
Total	233 (51%)	95 (21%)	131 (29%)	459 (100%)

Descriptive Statistics on Employee Engagement Programs

Data showed 67% (n = 307) of the respondents had participated in orientation programs. Participation in mentoring programs was less common with 39% (n = 181) of respondents indicating they had mentors. Only 31% (n = 144) reported participating in orientations and mentoring programs. Participation by college, length of employment, and employee unit are illustrated in Tables 6, 7, and 8, respectively.

Table 6

Participation in Employee Engagement Programs by College

College	*n* Orientation	*n* Mentoring	*n* Orientation/Mentoring
CCa	32 (60%)	8 (15%)	6 (11%)
CCb	68 (61%)	60 (55%)	44 (39%)
CCc	64 (79%)	43 (54%)	38 (47%)
CCd	53 (63%)	26 (31%)	20 (24%)
CCe	33 (69%)	23 (48%)	18 (38%)
CCf	57 (69%)	21 (25%)	18 (21%)
Total	307 (67%)	181 (39%)	144 (31%)

Table 7

Participation in Employee Engagement Programs by Length of Employment

Length of Employment	*n* Orientation	*n* Mentoring	*n* Orientation/Mentoring
Less than 1 year	23 (85%)	15 (56%)	13 (48%)
1-5 years	81 (82%)	47 (48%)	40 (40%)
6-10 years	80 (73%)	45 (41%)	37 (34%)
11-15 years	69 (65%)	36 (33%)	29 (27%)
16-20 years	38 (63%)	22 (38%)	18 (30%)
21-25 years	9 (31%)	8 (28%)	5 (17%)
More than 25 years	6 (23%)	6 (23%)	2 (8%)
Total	306 (67%)	179 (39%)	144 (31%)

Table 8

Participation in Employee Engagement Programs by Unit of Employment

Employee Unit	*n* Orientation	*n* Mentoring	*n* Orientation/Mentoring
Academic Services/Faculty	166 (72%)	115 (50%)	96 (41%)
Student Services	61 (64%)	32 (34%)	25 (26%)
All Other Units	77 (59%)	33 (25%)	22 (17%)
Total	304 (67%)	180 (40%)	143 (31%)

Modes of orientation by employee unit are illustrated in Table 9. Of the employees who participated in orientation programs, nearly 80% ($n = 240$) reported experiencing orientations in group settings. Only 13% ($n = 41$) participated in face-to-face, one-on-one orientation sessions with mentors or supervisors. Even fewer participated in orientations with blended formats (7%, $n = 20$). As seen in Table 10, there was much variation in the frequency of orientation sessions. Nearly 60% of employees

(n = 177) reported that they participated in one-time orientation sessions. Participation in one-session orientations was the case for over three quarters of the employees in Student Services and All Other Units but for only 44% of those in Academic Services/Faculty. Almost 30% of employees from Academic Services/Faculty (n = 48) indicated they had monthly orientation sessions for one semester. Employees from Academic Services/ Faculty also responded “other” more frequently than their peers in other units of the colleges. Analysis of the open-ended responses (Appendix E) demonstrated that 20 of the 57 employees responding experienced monthly orientation sessions over a two-semester period. The second most common response (n = 8) was that orientation was for an intensive two- to three-day period during the first week of employment.

Table 9

Mode of Orientation

Employee Unit	Face-to-face with a supervisor or mentor	Face-to-face in a group setting	Online only	Blended, online and face-to-face sessions	Other	Total
Academic Services/Faculty	23 (14%)	137 (82%)	0 (0%)	6 (4%)	2 (1%)	168 (100%)
Student Services	6 (10%)	46 (77%)	0 (0%)	8 (13%)	0 (0%)	60 (100%)
All Other Units	12 (15%)	57 (73%)	1 (1%)	6 (8%)	2 (3%)	78 (100%)
Total	41 (13%)	240 (78%)	1 (0%)	20 (7%)	4 (1%)	306 (100%)

Table 10

Frequency of Orientation Sessions

Employee Unit	Once	Weekly for one semester	Monthly for one semester	Other	Total
Academic Services/Faculty	73 (44%)	8 (5%)	48 (29%)	39 (23%)	168 (100%)
Student Services	45 (75%)	2 (3%)	7 (12%)	6 (10%)	60 (100%)
Other Staff	59 (77%)	1 (1%)	5 (7%)	12 (16%)	77 (100%)
Total	177 (58%)	11 (4%)	30 (20%)	57 (19%)	305 (100%)

Of the employees who had participated in orientations, 62% (*n* = 187) reported they agreed or strongly agreed that orientations were helpful, when analyzed using the recoded 3-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree/disagree, 2 = neither agree nor disagree, and 3 = agree/strongly agree. When observing employee responses by unit, over 60% of the employees in Academic Services/Faculty (*n* = 109) and Student Services (*n* = 38) agreed or strongly agreed that orientations were helpful, while only 53% of employees in All Other Units (*n* = 40) reported the same. When asked if the orientations helped them better understand the mission of student success, 75% (*n* = 255) agreed or strongly agreed that the orientations were helpful. The percent of all employees who agreed or strongly agreed orientations were helpful decreased to 57% (*n* = 170) with regard to fostering a better understanding of their roles in student success and to 41% (*n* = 123) to preparing them to answer student questions. Responses by employee unit are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Employee Perceptions on Helpfulness of Orientation by Unit of Employment

Orientation:	Helped employees understand the college's mission of student success	Helped employees understand their role in student success	Prepared employees to answer student questions	Was helpful overall
Academic Services/ Faculty				
% agree/strongly agree	73%	62%	47%	76%
n agree/strongly agree	121	103	76	73
Total *N*	165	165	161	96
Student Services				
% agree/strongly agree	80%	62%	43%	64%
n agree/strongly agree	49	37	26	16
Total *N*	61	60	60	25
All Other Units				
% agree/strongly agree	72%	40%	28%	55%
n agree/strongly agree	55	30	21	12
Total *N*	76	76	76	22
Total				
% agree/strongly agree	66%	62%	53%	62%
n agree/strongly agree	109	38	40	187
Total *N*	166	61	75	302

The reported frequency of mentor and mentee interactions was widely varied, as shown in Table 12. About half of the employees who had mentors reported meeting with their mentors on a weekly (24%, $n = 43$) or monthly (25%, $n = 45$) basis for one semester. The majority of employees (44%, $n = 79$) who had participated in mentoring programs selected "other" and provided open-ended responses. Open-ended responses (Appendix F) on interactions with mentors varied from meeting on an as needed basis ($n = 21$) to having never met with the mentor ($n = 2$). Twelve employees reported informal or casual meetings, while 14 stated they met with their mentors on a daily basis.

Table 12

Frequency of Mentoring Sessions

Employee Unit	Once	Weekly for one semester	Monthly for one semester	Other	Total
Academic Services/Faculty	7 (6%)	27 (23%)	27 (23%)	55 (47%)	116 (100%)
Student Services	3 (10%)	8 (26%)	10 (32%)	10 (32%)	31 (100%)
Other Staff	4 (12%)	8 (24%)	8 (24%)	14 (41%)	34 (100%)
Total	14 (8%)	43 (24%)	45 (25%)	79 (44%)	181 (100%)

Although the frequency and formality of mentoring programs was disparate, 70% (n = 125) of employees who had participated in mentoring programs agreed or strongly agreed that their mentors were helpful overall, when analyzed using the recoded 3-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree/disagree, 2 = neither agree nor disagree, and 3 = agree/strongly agree, as shown in Table 13. Employees from Student Services responded most favorably with 78% (n = 25) agreeing or strongly agreeing the programs were helpful to them. The percent of employees who agreed or strongly agreed decreased to 69% (n = 78) for employees in Academic Services/Faculty and 67% (n = 22) for those in All Other Units. Overall, about 70% of employees agreed or strongly agreed the mentoring programs increased their understanding of the mission of student success, their roles in student success, and their preparedness to answer student questions (Table 13).

Table 13

Employee Perceptions on Helpfulness of Mentoring by Unit of Employment

Orientation:	Helped employees understand the college's mission of student success	Helped employees understand their role in student success	Prepared employees to answer student questions	Was helpful overall
Academic Services/ Faculty				
% agree/strongly agree	63%	68%	73%	69%
n agree/strongly agree	71	77	82	78
Total *N*	112	113	113	113
Student Services				
% agree/strongly agree	78%	81%	81%	78%
n agree/strongly agree	25	26	26	25
Total *N*	32	32	32	32
All Other Units				
% agree/strongly agree	73%	60%	55%	67%
n agree/strongly agree	24	20	18	22
Total *N*	33	33	33	33
Total				
% agree/strongly agree	68%	69%	71%	70%
n agree/strongly agree	120	123	126	125
Total *N*	177	178	178	178

Research Question 1

What are the relationships, if any, between exposure to institutional strategies for employee engagement, such as employee orientation and mentoring programs, and *employee engagement, as defined by employee perceptions of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development?*

Descriptive statistics were used to study employee engagement as measured by the dependent variables of mission (survey question 1), task significance (survey question 2), goal-setting (survey question 6), and professional development (survey question 10). Central tendencies of responses on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, for survey questions 1, 2, 6, and 10 are listed in Table 14. The highest frequency of responses was in the *agree* or *strongly agree* categories for questions 1, 2, and 6. The frequencies, high mean values, and small standard deviations for questions 1 and 2 were indicative of clustered responses on the high-end of the Likert scale. Responses to question 10 were also clustered but on the mid- to high-range of the Likert scale with a mean of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 0.836. The data set for question 6 was more dispersed with a mean value of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 1.2.

Table 14

Response Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation of Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Student success as a primary mission	307	126	12	12	6	463	4.55	0.782
Task significance/job impact on student success	251	159	38	6	9	463	4.38	0.843
Goal-setting/ encouraged or required to develop annual performance goals	110	167	75	79	29	460	3.54	1.2
	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never			
Professional development	46	184	186	39	6	461	3.49	0.836

Responses to survey questions 1, 2, 6, and 10 regarding engagement in mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development were then summed and the mean value calculated to serve as a representative measure of overall employee engagement. The overall engagement value was then treated as a dependent variable to perform a 2 × 2 (orientation × mentoring) factorial analysis. As indicated by the analysis, mentoring exhibited a statistically significant effect on employee engagement, $F(1, 445) = 7.07$, $p = .008$. Thus, employees who had been exposed to mentoring programs ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .438$) exhibited higher levels of engagement than those who had not been exposed to engagement programs ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .652$). Participation in orientation programs also was found to have a statistically significant effect on employee engagement, $F(1, 445) = 6.74$, $p = .010$, indicating employees who had been exposed to orientations showed a higher level of engagement ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .530$) than those who had not been exposed to engagement programs ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .652$). However, there was not a statistically significant interaction between the variables $F(1, 445) = 2.57$, $p = .109$, indicating that employees who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs ($M = 4.1$, $SD = .549$) had similar effects on overall employee engagement when compared to only orientation or mentoring. Results are illustrated in Figure 2. As demonstrated in Table 15, institutions were also ranked based on their composite mean engagement values as compared to the aggregate mean engagement value.

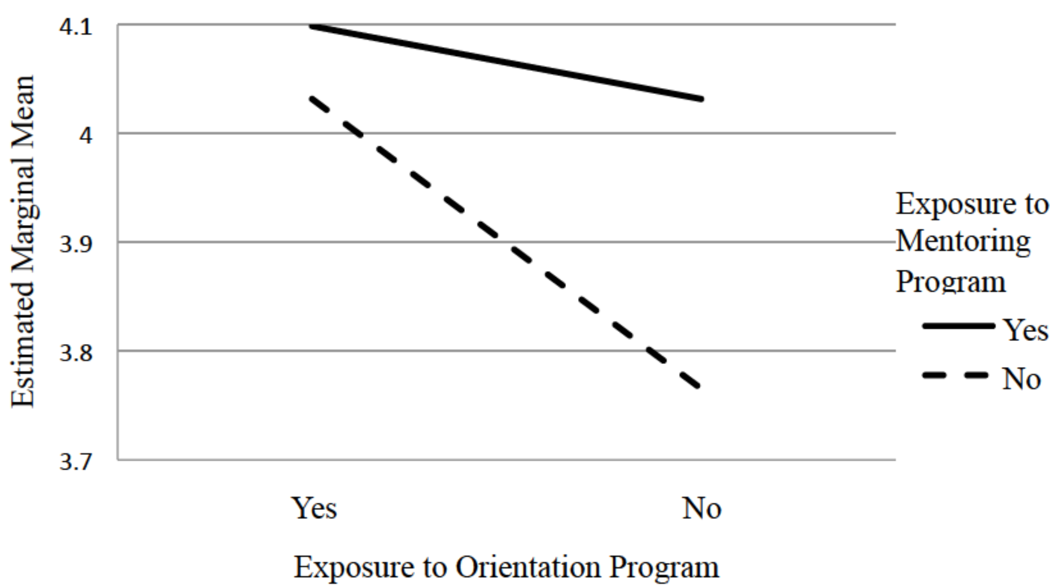

Figure 2. Estimated Marginal Mean of Employee Engagement

Table 15

Composite Mean Engagement Values by College

College	*M*
CCa	4.1394
CCc	4.1204
CCe	4.1094
Aggregate	**3.9855**
CCb	3.9722
CCf	3.9518
CCd	3.7589

Responses from the dependent variables were then recoded on a 3-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree/disagree, 2 = neither agree nor disagree, and 3 = agree/strongly agree for survey questions 1, 2, and 6, and 1 = never/rarely, 2 = sometimes, and 3 = often/very often for survey question 10, and data were analyzed to examine potential relationships between participation in employee engagement programs and the individual dependent variables of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development. As summarized in Table 16, employees who had been exposed to employee engagement programs exhibited slight to moderate percent increase in responses in the *agree/strongly agree* and *very often/often* categories, using the recoded, when asked about perceptions of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development, survey questions 1, 2, 6, and 10, respectively.

Table 16

Frequencies of Agree/Strongly Agree Responses to Dependent Variables on Engagement by Participation in Employee Engagement Programs

You are encouraged to set performance goals	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Student success as a primary mission						
% agree/strongly agree	95%	92%	93%	94%	94%	93%
n agree/strongly agree	290	141	168	261	134	299
Total *N*	306	154	180	279	143	320
Task significance/job impact on student success						
% agree/strongly agree	90%	87%	91%	87%	92%	87%
n agree/strongly agree	276	132	164	242	132	278
Total *N*	307	153	181	278	144	319
Goal-setting/encouraged or required to develop annual performance goals						
% agree/strongly agree	69%	43%	69%	54%	73%	55%
n agree/strongly agree	209	66	123	150	104	173
Total *N*	305	152	179	277	143	317
Frequency of participation in professional development						
% often/very often	52%	47%	54%	46%	54%	48%
n often/very often	158	71	98	128	77	153
Total *N*	306	152	180	277	143	318

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and the perception of student success as a primary mission. Of the 463 survey respondents, 94% (n = 433) agreed or strongly agreed that student success is one of the primary missions of their institutions. As illustrated in Table 17, results were similar for employees who had participated in orientation (95%, n = 290), mentoring (93%, n = 168), and orientation and mentoring (94%, n = 134) programs. There was little difference between the responses of employees who had been exposed to orientation, mentoring, and orientation and mentoring programs and those who had not with a difference of 3%, –1%, and 1%, respectively. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty and Student Services who had participated in orientations exhibited 5% and 7% increases, respectively, in the *agree* and *strongly agree* responses over the response rates of employees who had not been exposed to orientations. Student Services employees who had participated in orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs exhibited 3 to 7% increases in the rates at which they responded *agree* or *strongly agree* as compared to the their Student Services peers who were not exposed to such employee engagement activities. Employees from All Other Units who were not exposed to mentoring and/or orientation programs had slightly higher *agree* or *strongly agree* response rates than their peers in groups who were exposed to employee engagement activities. This indicates a possible inverse relationship between exposure to employee engagement activities and the perception that student success is one of the primary missions of the college.

The chi-square test demonstrated no statistical significance in the perception of student success as a primary mission between employees who had participated in orientation programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 2.36, p = .307$, Cramer's $V = .072$, mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 0.32, p = .984$, Cramer's $V = .008$, or orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 463) = 1.68, p = .432$, Cramer's $V = .060$, and those who had not been exposed to employee engagement programs.

Table 17

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Mission by Unit of Employment

Student success is one of the primary missions at your institution	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% agree/strongly agree	96%	91%	94%	94%	95%	93%
n agree/strongly agree	158	59	107	108	90	128
Total *N*	165	65	114	115	95	137
Student Services						
% agree/strongly agree	92%	85%	91%	89%	92%	87%
n agree/strongly agree	56	29	29	56	23	62
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% agree/strongly agree	95%	96%	94%	96%	91%	96%
n agree/strongly agree	73	51	31	93	20	105
Total *N*	77	53	33	97	22	109
Total						
% agree/strongly agree	95%	92%	93%	94%	94%	93%
n agree/strongly agree	290	141	168	261	134	299
Total *N*	306	154	180	279	143	320

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and the perception of task significance as defined by role in student success. Of the 463 employees responding, 89% (n = 410) agreed or strongly agreed that their jobs have significant impacts on student success. As illustrated in Table 18, cross-tabulations showed a 3 to 5% increase in the responses of *agree* or *strongly agree* among employees who had participated in orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs. Employees from All Other Units who had participated in mentoring and orientation/mentoring programs exhibited 14% and 9% increases, respectively, in responses of *agree* or *strongly agree* that their jobs impacted student success as compared with employees in All Other Units who had not been exposed to mentoring or orientation/mentoring programs. Employees from Student Services in mentoring or orientation plus mentoring programs recorded percent decreases ranging from –1% to –10% in response rates of agree or strongly agree that their jobs had significant impacts on student success as compared with their peers who had not participated in employee engagement programs.

Table 18

Employee Engagement Programs and Task Significance/Job Impact on Student Success by Unit of Employment

Your believe your job has a significant impact on student success	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% agree/strongly agree	95%	91%	93%	95%	94%	94%
n agree/strongly agree	158	58	107	108	90	128
Total *N*	166	64	115	114	96	136
Student Services						
% agree/strongly agree	95%	94%	88%	98%	92%	96%
n agree/strongly agree	58	32	28	62	23	67
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% agree/strongly agree	75%	76%	85%	71%	82%	73%
n agree/strongly agree	58	40	28	69	18	80
Total *N*	77	53	33	97	22	109
Total						
% agree/strongly agree	90%	87%	91%	87%	92%	87%
n agree/strongly agree	276	132	164	242	132	278
Total *N*	307	153	181	278	144	319

The chi-square test showed no statistically significant relationship between the variables. Employees who had participated in orientation programs did not differ in their perceptions as to whether their jobs had significant impacts on student success compared to employees who had no orientation, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 3.13$, $p = 0.21$, Cramer's $V = .082$. This was also the case for employees who had participated in mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 1.91$, $p = 0.39$, Cramer's $V = .064$, and for those who had participated in orientation and mentoring, $\chi^2(2, N = 463) = 4.94$, $p = 0.09$. Cramer's $V = .103$.

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and the perception of developing goals to support student success. Analysis revealed that there were statistically significant relationships between participation in employee engagement programs and the perceptions of encouragement or requirement to develop annual performance goals and frequency of participation in professional development opportunities. Overall, 60% ($n = 277$) of the 460 employees responding indicated they *agree* or *strongly agree* that their college encouraged or required them to develop annual performance goals that included continued professional development. Cross-tabulations demonstrated a moderate relationship between the variables. Response rates of *agree* and *strongly agree* were 69% for employees who had participated in orientation ($n = 207$) or mentoring ($n = 122$) programs and 73% ($n = 103$) for employees in orientation and mentoring program, as shown in Table 19. This represented increases of 26%, 15%, and 19%, respectively, over employees who had not participated in employee engagement programs. The greatest difference, an increase of 36% in *agree/strongly agree* responses, was seen in Student Services employees who had participated in orientations as compared with their Student Services peers who had not. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty who had participated in orientation, mentoring, and orientation and mentoring programs exhibited increases of 25%, 19%, and 21%, respectively, in responses of agreement that they were encouraged or required to develop annual performance goals as compared to their peers who were not exposed to employee engagement programs. The increase between mentored and non-mentored Student Services employees was 5% and between those in orientation and mentoring programs versus those who had not been exposed to orientation and mentoring was 13%. The percent increases for employees in All Other Units was 19% for those in orientation, 10% in mentoring, and 13% in orientation and mentoring programs as compared with employees in the All Other Units category who had not been exposed to those employee engagement programs.

The chi-square test demonstrated statistically significant relationships existed between participation in orientation and mentoring programs and the perception that the establishment of annual performance goals was encouraged or required by the college. The relationship between the orientation groups was significant with a moderate effect strength, $\chi^2(2, N = 457) = 28.69$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .251$, indicating employees who had participated in orientations were more likely to perceive they were encouraged or required to develop annual performance goals than those who had no orientation. The chi-square tests also indicated there was a significant association but weak effect strength for employees who had participated in mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 456) = 10.00$, $p = .007$, Cramer's $V = .148$, and those who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 13.56$, $p = .001$, Cramer's $V = .103$, as compared with employees who had not participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs.

Table 19

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Goal-setting by Unit of Employment

You are encouraged to set performance goals	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% agree/strongly agree	70%	45%	72%	53%	75%	54%
n agree/strongly agree	115	29	81	61	71	74
Total *N*	165	64	113	115	95	136
Student Services						
% agree/strongly agree	75%	39%	66%	61%	72%	59%
n agree/strongly agree	45	13	21	37	18	40
Total *N*	60	33	32	61	25	68
All Other Units						
% agree/strongly agree	61%	42%	61%	51%	64%	51%
n agree/strongly agree	47	22	20	49	14	56
Total *N*	77	53	33	97	22	109
Total						
% agree/strongly agree	69%	43%	69%	54%	73%	54%
n agree/strongly agree	207	64	122	147	103	170
Total *N*	302	150	178	273	143	313

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and professional development. Nearly 50% of the 461 respondents (*n* = 230) indicated that they take advantage of professional development opportunities often or very often. As shown in Table 20, the percent of *often* or *very often* responses increased to 52% for employees who had participated in orientations (*n* = 158) and 54% for employees who had been mentored (*n* = 98) or participated in orientation and mentoring (*n* = 77) programs. This represented increases of 5%, 8%, and 6% over employees who had not been exposed to orientation, mentoring, orientation and mentoring programs, respectively. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty exhibited the greatest differences demonstrated with a 12% increase for employees with orientations, a 15% increase for those with mentors, and a 7% increase in the *often/very often* response rates for those with orientations and mentors as compared with their peers who had no exposure to employee engagement programs. There was little difference among employees in All Other Units who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs and those who had not. However, there was an 8% increase in the *often/very often* responses for employees from the All Other Units category who had been exposed to orientations versus those who had no orientation. Student Services employees who had exposure to employee engagement programs showed a decrease in the frequency that they participated in professional development activities as compared with employees in Student Services who had not participated. The percent difference of *often* or *very often* responses was -17% for those with orientations, -9% for those with mentoring, and -4% for those with orientation and mentoring.

Despite the anomalies in the Student Services unit, the chi-square test revealed significant relationships between participation in orientation and mentoring programs and self-reported participation rates in professional development activities. Although the effect strength was weak, employees with orientations were more likely to respond that they took part in professional development opportunities often or very often than those with no orientation, $\chi^2(2, N = 458) = 9.13$, $p = .010$, Cramer's $V = .141$. A weak association was also seen between participation in mentoring programs and the frequency at which employees took part in professional development opportunities, $\chi^2(2, N = 457) =$

7.09, p = .029, Cramer's V = .125. Employees who had participated in orientations and mentoring programs were no more likely to participate in professional development activities often or very often than employees who had not been exposed to orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 461) = 5.72$, p = .057, Cramer's V = .172.

Table 20

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Participation in Professional Development by Unit of Employment

How often do you take advantage of opportunities for professional development	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% often/very often	58%	46%	61%	46%	58%	51%
n often/very often	95	30	69	53	55	70
Total *N*	165	65	114	115	95	137
Student Services						
% often/very often	41%	58%	41%	50%	44%	48%
n often/very often	25	19	13	31	11	33
Total *N*	61	33	32	62	25	69
All Other Units						
% often/very often	48%	40%	46%	45%	45%	45%
n often/very often	37	21	15	43	49	59
Total *N*	77	52	33	96	108	130
Total						
% often/very often	52%	47%	54%	46%	54%	48%
n often/very often	158	71	98	128	77	153
Total *N*	306	152	180	277	143	318

Relative risk and summary of Research Question 1. A statistically significant relationship was found between the independent variables, participation in orientation or mentoring programs, and the dependent variable of overall employee engagement, as measured by summed responses to questions regarding perception of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development. This indicates exposure to employee engagement programs does have an effect on perceptions of employee engagement. However, when dependent variables were tested to determine individual relationships with the independent variables, results varied. While there were slight to moderate percent increases in employee responses, participation in employee engagement programs had no statistically significant effect on employee perception of student success as one of the primary missions of the college or of job impact on student success. Analysis did indicate a significant but weak-to-moderate relationship between exposure to orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs and positive perceptions of developing annual performance goals that include professional development. Statistical analysis also established a weak relationship between participation in orientation or mentoring programs and the frequency of participation in professional development activities. However, there was not a statistically significant relationship between exposure to both orientation and mentoring programs and participation in professional development activities.

Relative risks computations descriptively indicated the extent to which employees exposed to engagement activities such as orientation and/or mentoring programs had an increased likelihood of a change in perception of messages involving task significance, goal-setting, or professional development. With regard to task significance, employees who had participated in employee engagement programs were 4% to 5% more likely to perceive their jobs had impacts on student success than their peers who had not been exposed to such programs. Employees who had been exposed to orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs were, respectively, 58%, 27%, and 32% more likely to perceive they were encouraged or required to develop annual performance goals that included professional development. Employees who had participated in orientations were 11% more likely to perceive that they had often or very often participated in professional development activities. There was an 18% and 12% increase in the likelihood of frequent participation in professional development activities for employees who had mentors or had been in orientation and mentoring programs.

Research Question 2

What are the relationships, if any, between exposure to institutional strategies for employee engagement, such as employee orientation and mentoring programs, and employee perceptions of their preparedness to assist students?

Using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, question 15 asked employees to estimate the frequency at which students ask them questions in 8 categories. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations are listed in Table 21. Employee responses indicated students asked for the most assistance with directions followed by registration information, academic or course selection advice, career advice, technical or computer advice, personal advice, financial advice, and safety or security information. The mean response for the frequency at which students asked for assistance with directions was 3.77 with a standard deviation of 1.02. Frequencies demonstrated clustered responses in the mid-to-high range of the Likert scale with regard to the frequency with which students asked employees for directions. Assistance with safety or security was the least common request, with employees' mean response of 2.15 and a standard deviation of 0.98, indicating the majority of employee responses were clustered in the sometimes to never range of the Likert scale. The rates at which students asked for assistance in the other categories were more widely varied with means ranging from 3.27 to 2.36 and standard deviations ranging from 1.18 to 1.41.

Table 21

Response Frequency, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Student Request for Assistance

How often have students asked you for help with the following:	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Academic or course selection advice	113	102	98	71	79	463	3.21	1.41
Career advice	82	96	128	83	73	462	3.07	1.31
Directions	129	151	132	37	10	459	3.77	1.02
Financial advice	34	41	105	158	124	462	2.36	1.18
Personal advice	42	72	154	113	80	461	2.75	1.18
Registration information	106	95	135	73	54	463	3.27	1.29
Safety/security assistance	19	16	100	207	121	463	2.15	0.98
Technical/computer assistance	70	89	145	92	66	462	3.01	1.25

Survey question 19 asked employees to indicate how well prepared they believed they were to answer student questions in those same areas. Responses on the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, were used to observe central tendencies. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations are shown in Table 22. Employees indicated they are most prepared to provide directions to students with a mean value of 4.1 on the 5-point Likert scale and standard deviation of .095. Most employee responses clustered in the *well* and *very well prepared* range of the Likert scale.

Table 22

Response Frequency, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Preparedness to Assist Students

Indicate how prepared you believe you are to answer student questions about the following:	Very well prepared	Well prepared	Prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not at all prepared	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Academic or course selection advice	100	100	94	98	71	463	3.13	1.38
Career advice	86	104	87	104	81	462	3.02	1.38
Directions	199	135	106	14	6	460	4.1	0.95
Financial advice	28	34	86	164	149	461	2.19	1.15
Personal advice	44	79	134	133	70	460	2.77	1.18
Registration information	89	94	135	104	40	462	3.19	1.23
Safety/security assistance	62	97	175	112	16	462	3.17	1.05
Technical/computer assistance	67	90	155	114	37	463	3.08	1.16

The perceived level of preparedness to answer student questions regarding registration information, safety and security, and academic or course selection advice were similar with mean values of 3.19, 3.17, and 3.13, respectively. Employee perceptions of preparedness were lower with regard to providing technical assistance, career, personal, and financial advice with means between 3.08 and 2.19. Perceptions of their abilities to provide financial advice were the lowest with a mean of 2.19 and standard deviation of 1.15.

An overall mean measure of employee preparedness was computed by summing and averaging the responses to survey questions 16.1 through 16.8. This measure of preparedness was then treated as a dependent variable to perform a 2 × 2 (orientation × mentoring) univariate factorial analysis. As illustrated in Figure 3, mentoring was found to have a statistically significant effect on employee preparedness, $F(1, 442) = 5.94$, $p = .015$. Employees who had participated in mentoring programs exhibited higher levels of preparedness ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .674$) than employees who had not been exposed to such programs ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .777$). Although preparedness levels for employees who had participated in only orientation ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .882$) or orientation and mentoring programs ($M = 3.16$, $SD = .720$) were greater than employees who had not participated ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .777$), no statistically significant effects were observed between participation in an orientation and employee preparedness, $F(1, 442) = .030$, $p = .862$, or preparedness and participation in both orientation and mentoring programs, $F(1, 442) = 2.49$, $p = .116$. As demonstrated in Table 23, institutions were also ranked based on their composite mean preparedness values as compared to the aggregate mean preparedness value.

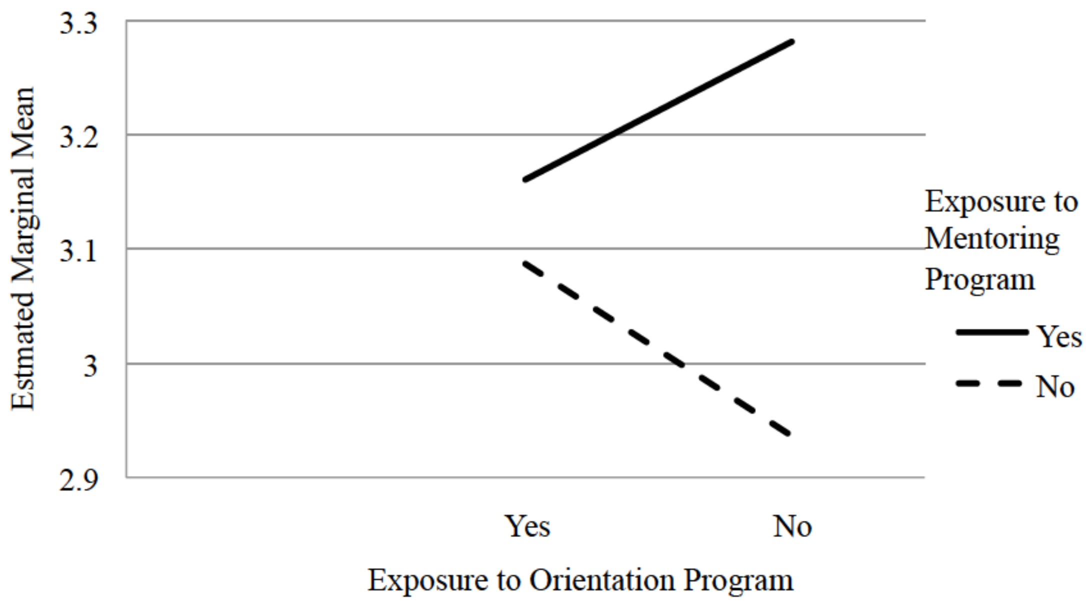

Figure 3. Estimated Marginal Mean of Employee Preparedness

Table 23

Composite Mean Preparedness Values by College

College	*M*
CCe	3.2636
CCa	3.1201
Aggregate	**3.0866**
CCb	3.0757
CCc	3.0617
CCd	3.0456
CCf	3.0412

Responses to the survey questions regarding preparedness were then recoded to a 3-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree/disagree, 2 = neither agree nor disagree, and 2 = agree/strongly agree. Cross-tabulations were performed using the recoded responses for the individual dependent variables, survey questions 16.1 through 16.8. As shown in Table 24, results demonstrated employees who had been exposed to employee engagement programs exhibited slight to moderate percent increases in their perceptions of preparedness to assist students when compared to employees who had not been exposed to engagement programs. Exceptions to this were with regard to assisting students with directions or safety and security information. In these categories there was no change or slight decreases in the perceived level of preparedness between employees who had participated in orientation and/or mentoring programs and employees who had not participated.

Table 24

Frequencies of Agree/Strongly Agree Responses to Dependent Variables on Preparedness to Assist by Participation in Employee Engagement Programs

Indicate how prepared you believe you are to answer student questions about the following:	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic or course selection advice						
% well/very well prepared	47%	36%	48%	41%	48%	41%
n well/very well prepared	143	56	86	113	69	131
Total *N*	306	154	181	278	144	319
Career advice						
% well/very well prepared	44%	34%	48%	37%	48%	38%
n well/very well prepared	135	53	86	103	68	122

Total *N*	305	154	180	278	143	319

Indicate how prepared you believe you are to answer student questions about the following:	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Directions						
% well/very well prepared	71%	76%	73%	72%	69%	74%
n well/very well prepared	216	116	123	199	98	236
Total *N*	304	153	180	276	143	317
Financial advice						
% well/very well prepared	14%	12%	16%	12%	14%	13%
n well/very well prepared	42	19	28	34	20	42
Total *N*	305	153	180	277	143	318
Personal advice						
% well/very well prepared	27%	25%	29%	25%	29%	26%
n well/very well prepared	83	39	52	70	41	82
Total *N*	303	154	180	276	143	317
Registration information						
% well/very well prepared	40%	40%	43%	38%	42%	38%
n well/very well prepared	121	61	78	105	60	123
Total *N*	305	154	181	278	144	318
Safety/security assistance						
% well/very well prepared	33%	36%	37%	33%	34%	35%
n well/very well prepared	102	55	67	91	49	110
Total *N*	305	154	181	277	144	318
Technical/computer assistance						
% well/very well prepared	36%	39%	38%	31%	35%	33%
n well/very well prepared	111	44	69	86	51	106
Total *N*	306	154	181	278	144	319

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with academic or course selection advice. Out of 460 responses on the recoded 3-point Likert scale, 43% (n = 200) indicated they were well or very well prepared to answer student questions regarding academic or course selection advice. The percent of employees who perceived they were well or very well prepared to assist students with academic advice increased slightly to 47% (n = 143) for employees who had orientations and to 48% for those who had mentors (n = 86) and for those with orientations and mentors (n = 69), as seen in Table 25. When observing the differences between employees who were exposed to employee engagement programs, an 11% increase was seen in the percent of *well* or *very well prepared* responses for employees who had orientations as compared to those who had not. Employees who had participated in mentoring and orientation and mentoring programs saw 7% increases as opposed to those who had not participated in such programs. While participation in orientations demonstrated a positive percent increase across all employee categories, the largest increase in the perceived preparedness, 11%, was seen for employees in the All Other Units category. Employees from All Other Units also exhibited the greatest differences between employees who had mentors, an increase of 24%, and those who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs, an increase of 23%, as compared with employees in All Other Units who had not been exposed to mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs.

The chi-square test did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between employees who had participated in employee engagement activities and their preparedness to answer student questions on course selection. Employees who were exposed to orientation did not differ in their perceptions as to preparedness to answer questions regarding academic advice compared to their peers who had not been exposed to orientations, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 5.13, p = .077$, Cramer's $V = .077$. This was also true of employees who had participated in a mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 3.37, p = .186$, Cramer's $V = .077$, and for those who participated in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 463) = 4.38, p = .112$, Cramer's $V = .112$.

Table 25

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Academic or Course Selection Advice by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	54%	49%	52%	55%	53%	53%
n well/very well prepared	90	32	60	63	51	72
Total *N*	166	65	115	115	96	137
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	53%	47%	41%	56%	36%	56%
n well/very well prepared	32	16	13	35	9	39
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	26%	15%	39%	15%	41%	18%
n well/very well prepared	20	8	13	14	9	19
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	103
Total						
% well/very well prepared	47%	36%	48%	41%	48%	41%
n well/very well prepared	143	56	86	113	69	131
Total *N*	306	154	181	278	144	319

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with career advice. When considering the relationship between exposure to employee engagement activities and employee preparedness to answer student questions regarding career advice, 41% (n = 190) of the 462 respondents indicated they felt well or very well prepared. The perception of being well or very well prepared increased to 44% for employees who had orientations (n = 135) and 48% for those who had participated in mentoring (n = 86) or mentoring and orientation (n = 68) programs, see Table 26. There was a 10% increase in the *well* and *very well prepared* responses for employees who had been exposed to orientation or orientation and mentoring programs as compared with employee who had not participated in orientation or orientation and mentoring programs. When comparing the perceived level of preparedness between employees with mentors and those who did not have mentors, an 11% increase was observed. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty who had participated in orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs demonstrated 9%, 4%, and 6% increases, respectively, in their perception of their preparedness to assist students with career advice over Academic Services/Faculty employees who had not participated in such programs. The greatest percent increases were seen among employees in the All Other Units category who had participated in mentoring (18%) or orientation and mentoring (16%) programs versus employees in the same category who had not been exposed to mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs. While there was a 6% increase in the *well* and *very well prepared* responses from employees in Student Services who had participated in orientation as opposed to employees who had not, Student Services employees who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs exhibited a percent decrease in the response rates of *well* and *very well prepared*. The difference was –7% for those who had mentors and –15% for those who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs.

Table 26

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Career Advice by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	55%	46%	55%	51%	56%	50%
n well/very well prepared	9	30	63	59	53	69
Total *N*	165	65	114	115	95	137
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	41%	35%	34%	41%	28%	43%
n well/very well prepared	25	12	11	26	7	30
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	25%	21%	36%	18%	36%	20%
n well/very well prepared	19	11	12	17	8	22
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	108
Total						
% well/very well prepared	44%	34%	48%	37%	48%	38%
n well/very well prepared	135	53	86	103	68	122
Total *N*	305	154	180	278	143	319

Despite the inconsistency of the results among Student Services employees, the chi-square test demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between the variables, although the effect strength was weak. Employees who had participated in orientations were more likely to indicate they were well or very well prepared to assist students with career advice than employees who did not have orientations, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 6.24, p = .044$, Cramer's $V = .117$. This was also the case for employees who had mentors, $\chi^2(2, N$

= 458) = 9.91, p =.007, Cramer's V = .147, and those who had orientations and mentors, $\chi^2(2, N = 462) = 9.25$, p = .010 Cramer's V = .141.

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with directions. Providing students with directions was the area in which all employees reported believing they were the most prepared, as illustrated in Table 27. Of the 460 responses, 73% (n = 334) stated they were well or very well prepared to give students directions. However, no relationship was found between exposure to employee engagement programs and the level of preparedness to assist students with directions. There were slight changes among employees who had participated in employee engagement programs with 71% of those who had orientations (n = 216) , 73% of those with mentors (n = 123), and 69% of those with orientations and mentors (n = 98) responding that they believed they were well or very well prepared to provide students with directions. Only employees who had participated in mentoring programs consistently responded that they were well or very well prepared to give directions when compared with those who had not participated. The increase was only 1% in Academic Services/Faculty and Student Services but was 12% for employees in All Other Units.

The chi-square test revealed no statistically significant relationship between the variables. Employees who had participated in orientation programs were no more likely to perceive themselves as prepared to give directions to students than those who did not participate, $\chi^2(2, N = 457) = 2.34$, p = .310, Cramer's V = .072. The relationship between mentoring programs and the perception of preparedness to assist students with directional advice was also insignificant, $\chi^2(2, N = 456) = 1.33$, p = .515, Cramer's V = .054, as was the relationship between orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 2.80$, p = .246, Cramer's V = .078.

Table 27

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Directions by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	66%	72%	68%	67%	62%	71%
n well/very well prepared	108	46	77	76	59	96
Total *N*	164	64	114	113	95	135
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	87%	88%	88%	87%	84%	89%
n well/very well prepared	53	30	28	55	21	62
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	68%	72%	79%	67%	73%	69%
n well/very well prepared	52	38	26	64	17	74
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	108
Total						
% well/very well prepared	71%	76%	73%	72%	69%	74%
n well/very well prepared	216	116	123	199	98	236
Total *N*	304	153	180	276	143	317

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with financial advice. Only 13% (n = 62) of the 461 respondents indicated they perceived themselves as well or very well prepared to assist students with financial advice. There was little change in the responses of employees who had participated in orientation (14%, $n = 42$), mentoring (16%, $n = 28$), or orientation and mentoring (14%, $n = 20$) programs (see Table 28). The percent increase between employees who had participated in employee engagement programs and those who had not ranged from 2% for orientations, 4% for mentoring, and 1% for orientation and mentoring programs, indicating there was little relationship between these types of employee engagement activities and perceptions of preparedness to answer student questions regarding financial advice. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty and Student Services who had participated in employee engagement activities did exhibit percent increases as compared with their colleagues who did not participate. A 1% increase was observed among employees in Academic Services/Faculty who had orientations, 8% for those with mentors, and 6% for those who had orientations and mentors as compared with employees in those categories who were not exposed to employee engagement programs. Observed increases for employees in Student Services employees were 8% for those with orientations, 7% for those with mentors, and 1% for employees who had orientations and mentors as compared with employees in Student Services who were not exposed to those employee engagement activities. Employees in All Other Units who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs experienced percent decreases of –4% and –7%, respectively, in the perceived level of preparedness to give financial advice to students as compared with their peers who did not participate in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs.

There was no statistical significance in the relationship between participation in employee engagement activities and level of perceived preparedness to provide students with financial advice. The chi-square test revealed that employees who had orientations,

$\chi^2(2, N = 458) = 0214$, $p = .898$, Cramer's $V = .022$, were no more likely to perceive themselves as prepared to provide financial advice than employees who did not have orientations. This was also the case for employees who had participated in mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 457) = 1.71$, $p = .426$, Cramer's $V = .061$, and for those who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 461) = .825$, $p = .662$, Cramer's $V = .042$.

Table 28

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Financial Advice by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	9%	8%	13%	5%	13%	7%
n well/very well prepared	15	5	15	6	12	9
Total *N*	165	64	114	114	95	136
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	26%	18%	28%	21%	24%	23%
n well/very well prepared	16	6	9	13	6	16
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	15%	15%	12%	16%	9%	16%
n well/very well prepared	11	8	4	15	2	17
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	108
Total						
% well/very well prepared	14%	12%	16%	12%	14%	13%
n well/very well prepared	42	19	28	34	20	42
Total *N*	305	153	180	277	142	318

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with personal advice. Of 460 respondents, 27% (*n* = 123) of employees reported that they were well or very well prepared to assist students with personal advice. As shown in Table 29, employees who had participated in orientation programs and indicated they believed they were well or very well prepared to assist students with personal advice was also 27%. The percent of employees indicating they were well or very well prepared increased to 29% for employees who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs. The percent increased slightly as compared to employees who had not participated in orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs, with a 2%, 4%, and 3% increase, respectively. Mentoring and orientation and mentoring programs appeared to have the greatest effect on employees in Academic Services/Faculty and in Student Services. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty exhibited a 3% increase between those who had mentors and those who had not and a 5% increase between those who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs and those who had not. Employees in Student Services had a 17% and an 11% increase between employees who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs and those who had not, respectively. Employees in All Other Units who had participated in employee engagement programs experienced a percent decrease in perceptions of preparedness to provide personal advice when compared with their peers who had not participated. The decreases were –1% for those who had participated in orientation programs, –5% for those in mentoring programs, and –9% for those in orientation and mentoring programs.

Table 29

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Personal Advice by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	24%	23%	26%	23%	27%	22%
n well/very well prepared	40	15	30	26	26	30
Total *N*	164	65	114	114	95	136
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	38%	32%	47%	30%	44%	33%
n well/very well prepared	23	11	15	19	11	23
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	26%	25%	21%	26%	18%	27%
n well/very well prepared	20	13	7	25	4	29
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	108
Total						
% well/very well prepared	27%	25%	29%	25%	29%	26%
n well/very well prepared	83	39	52	70	41	82
Total *N*	303	154	180	276	143	317

Although the cross-tabulation did not demonstrate strong relationships between participation in employee engagement programs and perceived preparedness to provide personal advice to students, chi-square tests indicated a significant relationship between participation in mentoring and orientation and mentoring programs and preparedness to answer student questions regarding personal advice. Employees who participated in mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 456) = 9.03$, $p = .011$, Cramer's $V = .141$, and in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 7.50$, $p = .024$, Cramer's $V = .128$, were more likely to perceive themselves as prepared to provide personal advice to students. There was no statistical significance in the relationship between participation in orientation programs and the preparedness to answer student questions regarding personal advice, $\chi^2(2, N = 457) = .936$, $p = .626$, Cramer's $V = .045$.

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with registration information. Cross-tabulations indicated there was not a strong relationship between participation in employee engagement programs and the perceptions of preparedness to provide students with registration information. Of 462 respondents, 40% (n = 183) reported that they were well or very well prepared to assist students with registration information. There was no change in the percent response from employees who had participated in orientations, 40% (n = 121). Of the employees who had been exposed to mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs, 43% (n = 78) and 42% (n = 60), respectively, indicated they were well or very well prepared to assist with registration information (see Table 30). This represented a 5% increase between employees who had participated in mentoring programs and those who had not and a 3% increase between employees who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs and those who had not. Employees in Academic Services/Faculty demonstrated the greatest difference between employees who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs with an increase of 8% and 9%, respectively, as compared to employees in that category who had not participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs. Student Services employees reported a 12% increase in the response rates of *well* and *very well prepared* between employees who had been exposed to orientation programs and those who had not; however, Student Services employees who had participated in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs reported differences of –5% and –7%, respectively, in the *well* and *very well prepared* response rates. Employees from All Other Units demonstrated a 10% increase in perceptions of preparedness between employees who had mentors and those who had not participated in mentoring programs, whereas there were –8% and –2% differences, respectively, observed in the perceived preparedness of employees in All Other Units between those who had participated in orientation and orientation and mentoring programs and those who had not.

Table 30

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Registration Information by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	33%	34%	38%	30%	39%	30%
n well/very well prepared	55	22	44	34	37	41
Total *N*	166	65	115	115	96	137
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	74%	62%	66%	71%	64%	71%
n well/very well prepared	45	21	22	45	16	50
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	29%	21%	36%	26%	27%	29%
n well/very well prepared	22	11	12	25	6	31
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	107
Total						
% well/very well prepared	40%	40%	43%	38%	42%	39%

n well/very well prepared	120	61	78	105	60	123
Total *N*	302	154	181	278	144	318

The chi-square testing did not find a statistically significant relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and perceived preparedness to assist students with registration information. Employees who had participated in orientation programs were no more likely to perceive themselves as well or very well prepared to answer student questions regarding registration information that those who had no orientation, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = .001$, $p = .999$, Cramer's $V = .002$. Employees who had mentors were also no more likely to perceive themselves as well or very well prepared to answer student questions regarding registration information, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 2.35$, $p = .310$, Cramer's $V = .071$, nor were employees who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 462) = 1.63$, $p = .443$, Cramer's $V = .059$.

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with safety/security information. Cross-tabulations did not produce significant evidence of a relationship between participation in employee engagement programs and perceptions of preparedness to answer student questions about safety or security on campus. Of 462 employees responding, 34% ($n = 159$) indicated they believed they were well or very well prepared to provide students with safety and security information. There was little change in the perceptions of employees who had participated in orientation and orientation and mentoring programs as demonstrated in Table 31. Of employees who had participated in mentoring programs, 37% ($n = 67$) indicated they were well or very well prepared to give advice on safety and security, which was a 4% increase over those who had not had mentors. This was observed for each of the employee categories with a 6% increase in the responses of Academic

Services/Faculty, a 2% increase among Student Services employees, and an 8% increase among the employees in All Other Units who had participated in mentoring programs as compared with their category peers who had not been mentored. Employees in all categories who had participated in orientation or orientation and mentoring programs reported no change or slight decreases in the percent response of *well* or *very well prepared* when compared with employees who had not participated in such programs.

Table 31

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Safety/Security Information by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	30%	32%	34%	28%	31%	31%
n well/very well prepared	50	21	39	32	30	42
Total *N*	166	65	115	115	96	137
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	40%	47%	44%	42%	44%	42%
n well/very well prepared	24	16	14	26	11	29
Total *N*	60	34	32	62	25	69
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	33%	32%	39%	31%	32%	33%
n well/very well prepared	25	17	13	30	7	36
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	108
Total						
% well/very well prepared	33%	36%	37%	33%	34%	35%
n well/very well prepared	102	55	67	91	49	110
Total *N*	305	154	181	277	144	318

Analysis with chi-square testing did not demonstrate that employees who had been exposed to employee engagement programs were any more likely to perceive themselves as well or very well prepared to answer student questions regarding safety and security than those who had not been exposed to such programs. There was no significance between employees who participated in orientation programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 2.48$, $p = .289$, Cramer's $V = .074$; employees who participated in mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 458) = 2.04$, $p = .361$, Cramer's $V = .067$; or those that participated in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 462) = 1.27$, $p = .531$, Cramer's $V = .052$, and preparedness to provide students with safety or security information.

Relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with technical/computer advice. Of 463 employee responses, 34% ($n = 157$) indicated that they were well or very well prepared to answer student technical or computer questions. Cross-tabulations revealed that employees who had been exposed to employee engagement programs were slightly more likely to respond that they were well or very well prepared, as demonstrated in Table 32. There was a 7% increase for employees who had participated in orientation or mentoring programs as compared with those who had no orientation or mentor and a 2% increase between employees who participated in orientation and mentoring programs and those who did not participate. The percent increase for responses of *well* or *very well prepared* for employees who participated in orientation programs was 15% in Student Services and 8% in All Other Units, while there was a –1% change for employee from Academic Services/Faculty when compared with category peers who had no orientation. The percent change in responses of *well* or *very well prepared* for employees who participated in mentoring programs was 8% in Academic Services/Faculty, 10% in All Other Units, and –17% for Student Services as compared with category peers who had no mentor. A 3% increase was observed in the frequency of *well* or *very well prepared* for Academic Services/Faculty who participated in orientation and mentoring programs, while a –15% and –4% change was observed for employees in Student Services and All Other Units, respectively.

Table 32

Employee Engagement Programs and Perceptions of Preparedness to Assist Students with Technical/Computer Information by Unit of Employment

	Orientation		Mentor		Orientation/Mentor	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Academic Services/ Faculty						
% well/very well prepared	41%	42%	45%	37%	43%	40%
n well/very well prepared	68	27	52	43	41	55
Total *N*	166	65	115	115	96	137
Student Services						
% well/very well prepared	33%	18%	16%	33%	16%	31%
n well/very well prepared	20	6	5	21	4	22
Total *N*	61	34	32	63	25	70
All Other Units						
% well/very well prepared	29%	21%	33%	23%	23%	27%
n well/very well prepared	22	11	11	22	5	29
Total *N*	76	53	33	96	22	108
Total						
% well/very well prepared	36%	29%	38%	31%	35%	33%
n well/very well prepared	111	44	69	86	51	106
Total *N*	306	154	181	278	144	319

Chi-square tests indicated there was no significance between employees who participated in orientation programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 4.27$, $p = .119$, Cramer's $V = .096$;

employees who participated in mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 459) = 5.30$, $p = .071$, Cramer's $V = .107$; or those who participated in orientation and mentoring programs, $\chi^2(2, N = 463) = .935$, $p = .627$, Cramer's $V = .045$, and preparedness to provide students with technical or computer information.

Relative risk and summary of Research Question 2. Factorial analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between one of the independent variables, participation in mentoring programs, and the dependent variable of overall employee preparedness, as measured by summed responses to survey questions 16.1 to 16.8, indicating exposure to employee engagement programs does have an effect on perceptions of employee preparedness to assist students. Analysis of the relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and perceptions of preparedness to assist students in individual areas by cross-tabulation and chi-square tests did indicate a statistically significant relationship between exposure to engagement programs and preparedness to assist students with career or personal advice. There was a relationship between all three modes of engagement programming and preparedness to give career advice, while only mentoring or combined orientation and mentoring programs were related to assisting with personal advice.

As with the association between employee engagement activities and mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development, relative risks computations reinforced the idea that employees exposed to orientation and/or mentoring programs had an increased likelihood of a change in perceptions of preparedness to assist students. The greatest impact was seen with regard to academic, career, financial, and technical advice. Employees who had been exposed to orientations were 29% more likely to perceive they were well or very well prepared to assist students with academic advice, while those in mentoring or orientation and mentoring programs had a 17% increase in the likelihood of responding *well* or *very well prepared*. Exposure to employee engagement programs increased the likelihood of responding *well* or *very well prepared* to provide career advice by 27% for employees who had participated in orientation programs, 29% for those exposed to mentoring programs, and 24% for those who had participated in orientation and mentoring programs. The increase in likelihood with regard to being well or very well prepared to assist with financial advice was 27% for employees who had mentors, 11% for those with orientations, and 6% for employees who participated in an orientation and mentoring programs. Employees who participated in orientation or mentoring programs were 27% or 23%, respectively, more likely to report they were well or very well prepared to assist students with technical or computer advice than employees who did not participate in such programs. Employees who were exposed to orientation and mentoring programs were 7% more likely to indicate they were well or very well prepared than those who did not participate.

Relative risk tests indicated smaller impacts with regard to preparedness to assist students with personal, registration, and safety or security advice. Participation in orientation, mentoring, or orientation and mentoring programs was associated with increased tendencies to be well or very well prepared to provide personal advice by 8%, 14%, and 11%, respectively. While there was no change for employees who had an orientation, employees exposed to mentoring programs were 14% and those to orientation and mentoring programs 8% more likely to believe they were well or very well prepared to answer student questions regarding registration. Although there was an impact among employees who participated in orientation or orientation and mentoring programs, employees with mentors exhibited a 13% increase in the likelihood of responding *well* or *very well prepared* to providing safety or security assistance.

Relative risk computations indicated no increase or decrease in the likelihood of employees who had participated in employee engagement programs would report they were well or very well prepared to give directions.

Summary

Nearly 70% of employees at the colleges surveyed participated in orientation programs, while slightly fewer than 40% reported participating in mentoring programs. Participation in both types of engagement programs was reported more frequently by employees who had been working at their institutions for 10 years or less and by employees identifying themselves as working in Academic Services/Faculty. Results indicated that 75% of employees found orientation to be helpful in fostering their understanding of the mission of student success. Perceptions on the helpfulness of orientation decreased to 57% with regard to understanding their roles in student success and to 41% with regard to preparing employees to assist students. About 70% of employees found mentoring to be helpful with regard to mission, role in student success, and preparing them to assist students.

Statistically significant relationships were found between exposure to orientation and mentoring programs and overall employee engagement, through the dimensions of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and participation in professional development activities, although the relationship between mentoring and engagement was slightly stronger. A similar relationship was demonstrated between participation in mentoring programs and perceptions of preparedness to assist students. Additionally, a modest positive correlation was seen, $r(444) = .28, p < .000$, between overall employee engagement and preparedness.

The relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and the individual elements of employee engagement and preparedness were not found to be statistically significant with the exceptions of perceptions of goal-setting, professional development, and preparedness to provide career and personal advice. However, relative risk computations demonstrated that employees who had been exposed to employee engagement programs had an increased perception of engagement and preparedness.

Phase II

Comparisons between student responses on CCSSE questions regarding academic, career, financial and personal/non-academic advice, and overall support, and employee responses from similar questions from the web-based survey are reported by institution in Table 33. Comparisons are reported as mean values and were retrieved from CCSSE national data or calculated based on employee responses from the survey administered for this study. As illustrated in the table, CCe is the only institution in which student and employee responses exhibited scores above the means in all areas. Perceptions of employees at CCa exceeded the mean values in all areas of comparison. However, student perceptions were contradictory, with means below the CCSSE national means in the areas of academic, career, and non-academic advice. Student and employee perceptions of engagement and support were varied at all other institutions. Two colleges, CCc and CCf, displayed the most scores below the mean values for students and employees.

Table 33

Comparison of Mean Values of Employee Survey and CCSSE Results

	Academic Advice		Career Advice			Financial Advice		Non-Academic/ Personal Advice		Overall Support for Learning	
College	CCSSE 13.2a	Survey Q 16.1	CCSSE 13.2b	CCSSE 4m	Survey Q 16.2	CCSSE 9f	Survey Q16.4	CCSSE 9d	Survey Q 16.5	CCSSE 9b	Survey Q 16 Composite
	2.26	3.13	2.08	2.13	3.02	2.59	2.19	2.02	2.77	3.03	3.09
CCa	2.15	**3.23**	2.04	**2.13**	**3.13**	**2.64**	**2.23**	2.00	**2.85**	**3.23**	**3.12**
CCb	2.22	3.04	**2.13**	**2.29**	2.96	2.58	**2.21**	**2.05**	**2.79**	**3.13**	3.08
CCc	**2.32**	3.04	**2.14**	**2.17**	2.99	2.16	2.06	1.94	2.70	3.02	3.06
CCd	2.24	**3.22**	1.95	**2.16**	3.00	**2.61**	2.16	1.87	2.67	**3.09**	3.05
CCe	**2.38**	**3.31**	**2.12**	**2.17**	**3.34**	**2.63**	**2.31**	**2.03**	**3.13**	**3.07**	**3.26**
CCf	2.24	3.07	**2.09**	2.02	2.92	2.53	**2.24**	1.91	2.65	3.02	3.04

Note. Individual mean values above the mean value for all institutions combined are in boldface.

When observing means by category, student perceptions were most frequently above the means when responding to queries regarding career advice, CCSSE questions 4m and 13.2b, and overall support, CCSSE 9b, and most frequently below the mean values regarding academic and non-academic/personal advice, CCSSE 13.2a and 9d, respectively. Employee perceptions by category did not correspond to that of the students. Employee responses were most frequently above the mean in the area of financial advice, survey questions 16.4, and with regard to career advice, survey question 16.2, and overall preparedness as computed as a composite mean of questions 16.1 through 16.8.

The Kendall's tau-b test was performed to determine association between the CCSSE benchmarks and employee engagement and preparedness. Each college's mean CCSSE benchmark scores were compared against their composite mean scores for engagement and preparedness. Although not statistically significant, moderate positive associations were found between the CCSSE benchmark of active learning and employee engagement ($r_t = .600$, $p = .091$) and preparedness ($r_t = .600$, $p = .091$). Similar results were observed between student-faculty interaction and engagement ($r_t = .552$, $p = .126$) and preparedness and support for learners ($r_t = .200$, $p = .573$). The strongest positive association was seen between employee preparedness and student-faculty interaction ($r_t = .690$, $p = .056$).

Summary

A comparison of composite mean values of engagement and preparedness and CCSSE means on questions related to academic, non-academic, career and financial advice, and overall support for success indicated students and employees at CCe were aligned in their perceptions. Furthermore, CCe was the only institution in which student and employee responses were above the means in all categories. Disparities between employee and student perceptions and mean values below the national CCSSE mean and the institutional survey means were more commonly observed in all other colleges. A modest association was seen between employee engagement and preparedness and the CCSSE benchmarks of active learning and student-faculty interaction. There was also a weak association between preparedness and the support for learners benchmark.

Phase III

The researchers are reporting results of the document analysis phase of the study individually, by institution, as the documents were unique to the individual colleges and not all requested documents were provided by each college. Results are being presented as an aggregate of the findings of all reviewers for each institution and were compared to the Phase I survey data that are specific to that institution. Two of the six institutions chose not to provide documents, while the other four selectively provided the documents they were comfortable sharing. In some instances, the institutions did not have current materials to share or materials would have been specific to units of the college rather than college-wide, and that would have been outside of the scope of this study. In a few instances, directors of human resources were not comfortable sharing documents for this study. Table 34 indicates the documents that were made available for analysis by institution.

Table 34

Documents Submitted for Analysis by College

College	Mission Statement	Strategic Plan	Goals	Core Values	FT Orientation Packet	Mentoring Program	Pro Dev Program	Evaluation processes
CCa	x	x	x	x				
CCb	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CCc	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CCd	x	x	x	x	x	x		
CCe	x	x	x	x	x	x		
CCf	x	x	x	x				

Results of Public Information

Mission statements, strategic plans, goals, and core value statements were available on the public websites of all six participating institutions. Reliability of the documents on the websites was confirmed verbally in conversations with representatives from all institutions.

Public documents for CCa. While the mission statement of CCa was found to be non-specific for student success, the strategic plan referenced student success 11 times in a 20-page document. The term *completion* appears three times in the document as part of a goal specifically focused on the student success initiative. *Persistence, retention,* and *student support* were not found in the document. The plan identified, as one objective, the development of a “climate of collaboration” and specifically referred to engaging faculty and staff in teams that address equity and student success. Two of the six goals focused on collaboration across the college as a means to student completion and emphasized the significance of including all college units in those initiatives. Of the seven core values identified by the institution, one referenced a commitment to students' achievement of goals. Neither the term nor the concept of *professional development* or *growth* appeared in the public documents.

Public documents for CCb. The mission statement of CCb was non-specific for student success, and the phrase *student success* did not appear in the six-page strategic plan. References to student persistence and completion appeared three times. The phrase *student support* did not appear in the document. Of the three primary objectives identified in the plan, one referenced the need for collaboration across all units in the planning process but not as related to student success. The vision statement of CCb, included in the strategic plan, did reference both faculty and staff as being engaged in supporting the students and referred to specific initiatives across academic and student services but that were exclusive of employees outside those areas. Professional development of faculty and staff was identified as significant in the vision statement of the institution. The five goals identified in the strategic plan described specific initiatives to be undertaken to increase retention, persistence, and completion and to market programs, increase enrollment, and to respond to the needs of employers, business partners, and secondary schools, but none referenced collaboration across units or engagement of employees in those initiatives. One goal does refer to the need to communicate the institution's core values across all practices and policies in all units of the college. The five core values of CCb did not reference student success.

Public documents for CCc. The mission statement of CCc was non-specific for student success, and the strategic plan, based on guidelines established by AQIP, did not identify any projects related to employee engagement as related to student success. While the phrase *student success* did appear seven times in the Higher Learning Commission AQIP report provided with the institution's strategic plan, the phrase did not appear in the plan itself. The terms related to completion, retention, or persistence also did not appear, and the phrase *student support* was also not used in the documents. The goals associated with the strategic plan of CCc did identify initiatives aimed at improving student outcomes, but employee participation in those initiatives were not inclusive to employees across all units of the institution. Five core values were identified, and one value specifically posited the idea that all employees contribute to the success of the students. A second core value referred to the importance of supporting not only student success but also employee success, although professional development and growth were not specifically mentioned.

Public documents for CCd. The mission statement of CCd was specific to student success, and the strategic plan, another guided by AQIP, identified four initiatives or goals, the first of which was student success. The phrase *student success* appeared three times in the 15-page document, and the term *completion* appeared once. *Student support* appeared once, but *persistence* did not appear in the document. *Organizational vitality*, perceived by all four reviewers to be explained as a function of employee commitment or participation in the overall mission of the institution, was referenced in the plan as well. The five core values of the institution did not reference student success in either title or narrative.

The mission statement of CCd was not specific to student success. The institution claimed to have an ongoing strategic planning process inclusive of all employees, but a detailed document had not yet been finalized. The first of three goals was specific to student success and identified the importance of creating a student-centered culture inclusive of all employees. The terms *retention, persistence,* and *completion* were referenced in the objectives within that first goal. Five core values were identified and though the term *student success* was not included in the narrative of those values, there was a reference to celebrating and supporting the successes of individuals. All four reviewers agreed that the intended meaning was extended to both students and employee successes and development. One action plan for the institution was specific to the creation of a process for professional development for employees of the institution.

Public documents for CCe. The mission statement of CCe was non-specific for student success. The vision statement was built around five core values, each identifying specific work-related skills or behaviors that model that value. Professional growth was specifically identified as significant in the core values. The strategic plan for the institution did identify goals and objectives specific to student success, with one objective clearly related to the role of employees in fulfilling the mission of the college. The terms *retention, persistence,* and *completion* were all found once in the strategic plan, all in conjunction with the goal related to student success.

Public documents for CCf. While the brief vision statement of CCf was not specific to student success, a lengthier mission statement did address success both professionally and personally and did indicate an emphasis on collaboration among individuals to attain success. The phrase *student success* appeared once in the strategic plan. Retention was identified as an initiative within one goal, but the terms *persistence* and *completion* did not appear in the document. Reviewers did note that reference was made to initiatives to decrease a student's time to degree, which was identified as indicative of an emphasis on completion. One of the six core values identified by the college did specifically reference student success, and one value focused on the importance of collaboration in efforts though referencing the community rather than employees in that collaborative framework. However, all reviewers identified the final goal of the institution as being related to building a culture of collaboration and inclusion among employees. Professional growth was identified as a goal for students but not for employees of the institution.

The Internal Document Review Process

Internal documents, those disseminated only to employees and typically through internal channels such as Internet portals or as resource materials provided at meetings of formal gatherings of the employees, were requested from each of the six institutions participating in the study. Documents related to employee orientation, mentoring, professional development, and evaluation process or participation in goal-setting or strategic planning were requested. Institutions agreeing to provide documents did so by sending digital copies. In several instances, the researchers were directed to institutional websites or provided with temporary access to employee portals to access specific materials.

Institutions CCa and CCf provided no internal documents for review. While the institutions were willing to have employees participate in the survey, the offices responsible for disseminating the requested materials chose not to respond to the requests from researchers. In both cases, no reason for that decision was given. In an effort to gain some understanding of information provided to employees of the two institutions, reviewers scanned the institutional websites for any indication of documents or institutional strategy related to orientation, mentoring, professional development, or goal-setting. Institution CCa provided public access to documents, which indicated the development of a five-step process for increasing student success through institutional change with one of the steps being the development of a culture of improvement based on data analysis and strategic planning. While no indication was found of a formalized strategy for employee engagement, there was evidence of a goal to include all employees in the strategic plan for student success. Institution CCf had no searchable documents related to employee engagement, orientation, mentoring, professional development, or goal-setting.

Review of internal documents for CCb. Institution CCb provided documents related to orientation, mentoring, professional development, and the evaluation process. The document evaluation is summarized in Table 35. Orientation documents included information on safety, benefits, and environmental scanning information for the institution. Calendars of orientation sessions were provided, specific to new full-time and part-time faculty orientation. Other employee orientations were designated "as needed," and no documents beyond the aforementioned informational items were provided. All reviewers had access to online materials that included a description of the institution's professional development program as written for an accreditation visit, a calendar of sessions offered throughout the year in the college's center for faculty and staff development, mentoring materials, guidelines for performance standards in evaluations, and information explaining how to participate in annual planning processes.

Institution CCb reported that the faculty orientation program consists of special sessions and tours the week preceding the start of fall classes. There are monthly sessions in the center for staff development focusing on topics such as evaluations and tenure, curriculum design, student services, assessment, classroom strategies, structuring the syllabus, and college policies and procedures. The program continues for one academic year, and attendance is expected for all new full-time faculty, though there was no indication of consequences for non-attendance. The orientation program for part-time faculty at CCb is a two-hour session held at the center for staff development in the week prior to the start of a semester. There was an indication the individual departments or programs may supplement orientation material but that is not formalized.

Table 35

Internal Document Review for CCb

Criteria	Orientation	Mentoring	Prof Dev	Evaluation
Includes All Employees	X	X	X	X
Encourages Goal-Setting		X		faculty
Connects Task Significance to Student Success	faculty			faculty
Discusses How to Assist Students	faculty		X	
Frequency of Strategy	varies by employee group	1 yr faculty; informal for others	ongoing	annual

Mentoring is a formal part of the faculty orientation for CCb. Department chairs are encouraged to assign mentors for new full and part-time faculty. A one-hour training session is provided for mentors, and compensation is offered to offset incidental costs such as lunches with the mentee. Both mentor and mentee are asked to clarify expectations for the relationship, which can be as formal or informal as desired, though there is an expectation of some regular meeting time for the pair. Both parties complete an assessment of the relationship at the end of the year, and the department chair is provided with a copy. Though the process is formalized, and providing a mentor to new faculty is encouraged, it is not required by the college. There is no indication of a formalized process for mentorship outside of faculty, but there was a suggestion that other employee groups are welcome to participate.

A calendar of professional development sessions is published by the center for staff development at CCb each semester. Reviewers grouped topics for the sessions into four primary categories: curriculum issues, institutional information, training sessions, and special topics. Curriculum issues included syllabus design, assessment methods, technology in the classroom, new ideas in student engagement, and student trends and attitudes. Institutional information included sessions on policies, planning processes, benchmarking data, budgetary issues, and initiatives such as on-time registration or changes in institutional technologies. Special topics appeared to be suggested and presented by employees and ranged from presentation of individual research to unit-specific initiatives to personal growth and development. There was no indication that any of the sessions were considered mandatory. Many sessions were held only once with capacity for no more than 30 participants, while others were held several times or had capacity for over 300 participants.

Institution CCb also provided documentation concerning a professional development day held each academic year in which classes were suspended and each unit of the institution could plan activities specific to the needs of that unit. The week prior to the start of fall and spring semester is also identified as a development week, and though activities are specific to faculty and classroom-related issues, guest speakers are invited, and all employees are invited to attend those sessions.

The evaluation processes for CCb are inclusive of all employees and dictated by contractual agreement. Annual performance evaluations are required and include discussions between employee and supervisor concerning opportunities for improvement or development. Goal-setting is included in all evaluation processes. Faculty and administrative employees are expected to identify professional development goals, while evaluation documents for professional staff suggested employees are encouraged to develop personal goals. Evaluations from the safety and security unit of the college suggested employees should consider improvement goals but did not indicate whether personal or professional improvement was expected. Documents indicated the faculty goal-setting is specifically directed toward curriculum and student initiatives, whereas professional staff goal-setting is more focused on specific tasks.

While all employee evaluation forms did include a specific section in which to include goals and anticipated completion dates, none of the evaluation documents suggested that goals should be connected to increasing the position‘s impact on student success nor is there discussion of how employees might connect their particular tasks to the college mission. While all documents specific to faculty were clear in the understanding that their primary responsibilities are related to teaching, none of the internal documents for any other employee group directly addressed the issue of task significance to student success or to the mission of the college in general.

Review of internal documents for CCc. Institution CCc provided documentation related to employee orientation, mentoring, professional development, and evaluation processes, as shown in Table 36. The development of the employee orientation process was identified as an AQIP Continuous Improvement Process Project. The materials included a checklist of activities for new employees to complete in a specified amount of time, along with topics to be covered in discussions or presentations in a similar amount of time. Topics and activities included the mission, vision, goals, culture, values, traditional benefits, policies, and institutional procedures. While orientation programs are available for all employees, the programs vary in method of delivery. The staff participated in a blend of face-to-face and online orientations, while full-time faculty had a full day of orientation plus monthly sessions. A one-hour orientation session is provided for part-time faculty. All four reviewers agreed that the documentation provided indicated that participation in the orientation program is mandatory for all employees. A 75-page faculty handbook is available to orient faculty to all available services, institutional policies, and employee benefits, but a handbook for other employees is not provided. While the handbook does identify services available to students, there was no indication that any other orientation information includes a discussion of how to assist students or answer student questions.

The mentoring program at CCc was also identified as a mandatory program developed through the office of human resources with mentors assigned to new employees by the dean responsible for the employee's area of employment. The mentor and mentee relationships are maintained for six months, though the documentation did not indicate frequency of meetings during that six-month period. No guidelines are provided to direct conversations in the mentoring relationship, and there was no indication of what type of assessment, if any, is included in the program. Neither the orientation nor mentoring program documentation identified task significance or goal-setting as areas for discussion.

Table 36

Internal Document Review for CCc

Criteria	Orientation	Mentoring	Prof Dev	Evaluation
Includes All Employees	X	X	X	X
Encourages Goal-Setting				includes self-assessment
Connects Task Significance to Student Success	faculty			faculty
Discusses How to Assist Students	faculty		X	
Frequency of Strategy	varies by employee group	6 month	ongoing; frequent	annual

Professional development opportunities at CCc were documented through a list of sessions that included scheduled employee orientations, college-wide events such as open forums with trustees and administrators, diversity hiring workshops, service project opportunities, and leadership training programs. Training sessions related to institutional training such as instructional technologies, negotiation and planning strategies, and pedagogy are also included. Professional development opportunities are conducted and supported by the offices of human resources, curriculum and scheduling offices, the institutional learning center, and administrative services. All employees are encouraged to participate in professional development sessions and are also invited to participate in planning and developing further sessions. All employees are able to participate in the institution's strategic planning process through professional development opportunities. Sessions are ongoing and frequent. The number of attendees per session is limited, but sessions appear to be repeated, as interest requires. The documentation discussed several initiatives aimed at increasing collaboration among units and providing professional and personnel support.

Documents pertaining to the employee evaluation process at CCc indicated that all employees are evaluated annually according to contractual agreements. The supervisor or dean conducts such evaluations, and while no indication was given that goal-setting is included in the evaluation process, each employee is expected to complete an annual self-assessment that includes a review of personal and professional development endeavors. Documents did indicate that the self-assessment process can include the employees' own perspectives of what they might do to improve job performance or become more involved in institutional initiatives. Included in that expectation is the opportunity to identify resources that might help them achieve their goals and objectives or develop new initiatives that might benefit the college.

Review of internal documents for CCd. Documents provided by CCd included orientation materials and mentoring program information. No professional development information or employee evaluation materials were made available, and reviewers found no information pertaining to professional development opportunities or employee evaluations in the aforementioned documents or on the institutional website. While this does not indicate that such initiatives do not exist at the institution, it does mean that no analysis could be made of those initiatives beyond information provided through the Phase I survey of college employees. A summary of the analysis is displayed in Table 37.

Table 37

Internal Document Review for CCd

Criteria	Orientation	Mentoring	Prof Dev	Evaluation
Includes All Employees	X	X	none provided	none provided
Encourages Goal-Setting		X	none provided	none provided
Connects Task Significance to Student Success	faculty		none provided	none provided
Discusses How to Assist Students	faculty		none provided	none provided
Frequency of Strategy	group session followed by unit-specific tasks	ongoing as needed	none provided	none provided

Institution CCd, like CCc, provided orientation documents related to an AQIP Continuous Improvement Process Projects. The orientation packet was developed around a specified task list. New employees are oriented to the institutional mission, vision, goals, values, and policies and procedures, as well as traditional benefits. Orientation is available for all employees and is coordinated by the human resources office with a group session that is followed by specific departmental orientations. The timeframe for departmental orientations and the number of sessions is dependent on the needs of the department.

The documents provided indicated that in 2006, the institution added the mission of student success and the requirement of mentoring to the orientation process. Prior to that time, the topics covered in the orientation had focused on the college's mission and goals, the responsibilities of the individual employee's position, policies and procedures of the college, as well as the history and culture of the institution.

The mentoring program for CCd is inclusive of all employees, and the mentor is assigned within the individual employee's own department. Mentoring is specifically mentioned in the orientation program as being available, but the nature of the mentor and mentee relationships is not guided by specific policy. The length of the relationship and the frequency of interaction are dependent on the expectations of the department and the needs of the mentee. No indication was given as to what specific topics might be covered in the relationship, nor is there a formalized method of assessment of the strategy. The documents related to mentorship were limited to the identification of the mentor and the potential to use the mentor relationship as a means to meet the expectations of the AQIP Continuous Improvement Process Project by having the mentor ascertain that the mentee has been oriented to all the steps required of in the process. There was no indication of any training program for mentors.

Review of internal documents for CCe. Documents provided by CCe included orientation materials and mentoring program information, as reported in Table 38. No professional development information or employee evaluation materials were made available. Furthermore, the reviewers found no information pertaining to professional development opportunities or employee evaluations in the aforementioned documents or on the institutional website. While this does not indicate that such initiatives do not exist at the institution, it does mean that no analysis could be made of those initiatives beyond information provided through the Phase I survey of college employees.

Table 38

Internal Document Review for CCe

Criteria	Orientation	Mentoring	Prof Dev	Evaluation
Includes All Employees	X	X	none provided	none provided
Encourages Goal-Setting		X	none provided	none provided
Connects Task Significance to Student Success	included in President's statement to employees	X	none provided	none provided
Discusses How to Assist Students	X	X	none provided	none provided
Frequency of Strategy	one large group session, followed by individual unit sessions	timeframe unspecified	none provided	none provided

The orientation packet provided by CCe included a statement to all employees from the president of the college. The statement identified the mission and goals of the institution and emphasized the role each employee has in that mission. While the statement was not specific to individual jobs within the institution, all reviewers did think it noteworthy that the concept of task significance to the mission was apparent. Orientation is inclusive of all employees and includes one group session conducted by the office of human resources and then assumes individual departments will provide additional task-specific orientation.

Beyond the president's message concerning the mission and goals, the remainder of the orientation packet was specific to operational policies and procedures and employee benefits. There was no specific information concerning how to assist students or identifying resources to which one might direct students. No information was provided regarding evaluation processes or professional development expectations or opportunities.

The mentoring program of CCe is a structured program with suggested activities including several directed toward goal-setting and professional development. The mentoring program is open to all employees though not indicated as mandatory. Length of the relationship and frequency of interactions is left to the discretion of the mentor and mentee, though the documents encouraged more frequent interactions for the first year of employment. The list of suggested topics implied opportunities to discuss task significance as well as strategies for increasing student success. Professional expectations, both departmental and college-wide, were included in the potential topics as were introductions to various college resources for employees and students alike. Mentors are encouraged to attend college events with the mentee, and to openly discuss the institutional culture. The mentoring program at CCe does include training for mentors, though no formalized assessment method was indicated.

Summary

In total, review of the available documents provided some information concerning the priorities of the institutions and an indication of where resources are allocated, in terms of employee engagement strategies. While internal documents were only provided by four of the participating institutions, public documents were available for all six institutions, and reviewers were able to identify priorities through mission statements, strategic plans, goals, vision statements, and core values. Although only one of the six institutions revealed a vision statement specific to student success, there were frequent references to student success initiatives in the goals or values of each institution, enough to confirm that it is reasonable to assume for the purposes of this study that student success is a goal of each of the six institutions, and a desire to increase employee engagement in order to support student success would be a viable objective.

Reviewers found sufficient information in the internal documents to build a framework of components to be analyzed in the context of results from the Phase I survey. Information was more readily available for orientation and mentoring programs than for professional development programs or evaluation processes. Still, document review revealed information relevant to the questions of inclusiveness, task significance, opportunities for participation in institutional planning, goal-setting, and encouragement toward professional development. As such, it was possible to analyze and discuss the results of Phase III within the context of the Phase I data and the parameters of this study. The document analysis will be used in support of the discussion of data across both Phases I and II in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Employee engagement, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this study, has been found to be instrumental in increasing employee satisfaction and commitment to the mission of the institution (Christian et al., 2011). Strategies designed to increase employee engagement are theorized to need the inclusion of elements that identify the meaningfulness and task significance of individual jobs in relation to the overall mission of the organization (Thomas, 2000). Likewise, strategies that align the mission of the institution with the values and beliefs of the individual employees are more likely to increase engagement, thus increasing employee satisfaction and job performance. Access to professional development opportunities and the ability to set goals through a defined planning and evaluation process have also been identified as indicators of increased employee engagement. Determining which strategies may yield the greatest increase in employee engagement would allow an institution to target resources toward those strategies in order to have the greatest impact on employee commitment and mission achievement.

Phase I of this study surveyed the perceptions of employees at six institutions in order to determine what exposure they may have had to employee engagement strategies and how such exposure may have impacted their understanding of the significance of their own jobs in relation to the missions of their institutions, and their performances of those jobs in relation to student success initiatives. Phase II reviewed existing CCSSE data from the six institutions in order to identify possible relationships between student perceptions and employee perceptions of engagement. Phase III analyzed institutional documents pertaining to college mission, goals, and strategic plans, as well as the four specific employee engagement strategies of orientation, mentoring, professional development, and evaluation. The information culled from Phases I through III was distilled and woven into Phase IV, suggestions for high-impact approaches to employee engagement programs, which will be described in Chapter 6.

While the purpose of this study was not to compare schools, the following discussion will reference differences in results from all three phases across the six institutions in order to identify strategies that resulted in the highest level of employee engagement across all units of the institutions. Per the previously reported calculated mean engagement value, it was found that institutions CCa, CCc and CCe were above the mean while CCb was only slightly below the mean. Document analysis from CCe was consistent for inclusion of strategies often related to higher levels of employee engagement. Structured programs in orientation and mentoring were found to exist in that institution, which could have contributed to the stronger than average level of employee engagement. CCa did not provide documents for review, so while this study was unable to connect Phase I survey results to actual programming at the institution, public documents concerning mission and strategic planning did indicate that CCa emphasizes student success as a collaborative effort across the institution, involving faculty and staff in specific student success goals and initiatives. Document analysis from CCc also revealed a structured orientation program, part of an AQIP improvement project, and a highly developed mentoring program that may account for increased employee engagement in that institution. CCb, while falling slightly below the mean, provided documentation of orientation and mentoring programs that did address elements and mission and job significance, goal-setting, and professional development. This could have the potential to increase engagement over time if content becomes more defined.

Full analysis of the data incorporated in the mean engagement value and discussion of how that data are reflected in the document analysis from those institutions providing relevant documents follows in this chapter.

Phase I

Employee Engagement Programs

An inverse relationship was observed between length of employment and participation in orientation with 85% (n = 23) of employees who had worked at an institution for less than one year reporting that they were oriented to their jobs and role at the institution. This decreased to 23% (n = 6) for employees who had worked at an institution for more than 25 years. This inverse trend was also seen with mentoring and orientation and mentoring programs with the exception of a slight increase for those who had been employed between 16 and 20 years. While one could speculate that formal employee orientation programs were not prevalent in community colleges 25 years ago, the scope of this study does not provide data to make those determinations. There is evidence to indicate that of the four institutions providing orientation documents for review, three had formal programs only for faculty, and all four gave indications that the programs had been developed or redesigned within the past 10 years. The data suggest that employees hired in the past 15 years are more likely to have been exposed to some employee engagement strategy, but the response rate for the overall study is too small to provide accurate data by which to make any generalization to community colleges as a whole.

Of the employee engagement programs of focus, orientation programs were the most common, with nearly 70% of employees reporting they had participated in orientations. Participation in mentoring programs was reported by only 40% of employees, whereas just over 30% reported exposure to both orientation and mentoring programs. Employees from Academic Services/Faculty consistently reported higher participation rates in employee engagement programs, while employees from All Other Units consistently reported the lowest rates. The gap between exposure to employee engagement activities and employee unit was the smallest for orientation programs. A decrease of nearly 25% was observed between employees in Academic Services/Faculty and those in All Other Units when considering participation in mentoring and orientation and mentoring programs. In both cases, participation rates among employees from Student Services fell in between the other two employee units. From these findings and the previously reviewed literature, it appears that employees in Academic Services/Faculty have more frequent exposure to engagement programs.

It remains unknown as to whether employees are self-selecting to participate or if certain employee groups, namely faculty, are required to attend while participation is optional for employees in other units. Analysis of orientation documents from the four institutions providing documentation showed that orientation programs are available for all employees, but none specifically identified the programs as mandatory. Three of the four institutions providing documentation presented more formalized orientations program for faculty than for other employees. While two of the four reported large group orientations that would encompass all new employees regardless of college unit, the other two implied that outside of faculty, orientation programs are unique to the individual units, and no college-wide employee orientation program exist. Of the two colleges not providing orientation documents, the employee responses indicated that between 60% and 70% of those responding were exposed to some type of orientation, though we have no information concerning those orientation programs. Thus, it appears that the more formal orientation programs are directed toward employees who interact with students on a daily basis. Employees with minimal or no direct interaction with students are less likely to be encouraged to see how their jobs impact students. Analysis of orientation documents by those institutions indicating formal group sessions for all employees identified only general task-related information was provided. Only one institution, CCe, included a specific message to encourage all employees to understand and embrace their roles in supporting students.

These data imply employee engagement programs are on the rise but still focus primarily on full-time faculty, as suggested by Garrison (2005). Intensive and intrusive orientation programs for employees other than faculty seem to be less commonly offered and may allow employees to opt out. The use of mentoring programs to enhance employee engagement is also increasing, but again, is much more common for faculty.

For those employees receiving an orientation, 78% indicated their orientations were one-time face-to-face sessions in a group setting. This was the most common delivery mode across all employee groups. Twenty of the 57 employees who responded “other” to the question regarding frequency of orientation indicated they had monthly orientation sessions throughout the first year of employment. In the document analysis, two of the four institutions providing orientation documents indicated that the orientation sessions included a large group session, and all four institutions indicated there were specific “by unit” sessions for which formal documentation was not provided. Those four institutions also had respondents to Phase I indicating that there was some online component to orientation and also indicating that orientation strategies continued beyond the group session. The two institutions not providing orientation documents had the highest percentage of employees indicating that orientation was in a single large group setting and no respondents indicating any online component to orientation.

Overall, 62% of employees who had been exposed to orientations agreed or strongly agreed that they were helpful. Employees from Academic Services/Faculty (66%) and Student Services (62%) perceived orientation to be more helpful than those from All Other Units (53%).

Mentoring programs were observed to be very flexible with many of the respondents indicating their mentoring sessions were “informal,” on an “as needed” or “occasional” basis. Documents from three of the four institutions providing information on mentoring programs indicated that formal monthly sessions between mentors were more predominant. Institutions CCb and CCe provided information indicating robust mentoring programs with several suggestions for discussion topics and activities and assessment plans. Responses for those two institutions indicated the greatest combinations of meeting frequency and types across employees, perhaps indicating that greater flexibility in mentoring relationships is better suited to maintaining open lines of discussion between mentors and mentees. We might speculate that those institutions that did not structure specific mentoring schedules but encouraged “as needed” or “at will” interactions with mentors were more likely to have varied responses to the question of interaction frequency.

Despite the lack of highly structured mentoring relationships, nearly 70% of employees reported that mentors were helpful in fostering their understanding of student success as a mission, in recognizing their roles in student success, and in preparing them to answer student questions. Employees from Student Services indicated a higher level of benefit (78%) than did those from Academic Services/Faculty (69%) and All Other Units (67%). These findings suggest that the substance relationships between mentors and mentees may be more significant than the frequency of the interactions and points toward a need for training in mentorship with guidance toward what the mentee needs to learn. These findings corroborate the works of Blunt and Connolly (2006) and Hopkins and Grigoriu (2005), which the concentrated on the mentor-mentee relationship, program structure, and outcomes.

Analysis of results from Phase I and Phase III indicates that orientation and mentoring programs may be viable strategies for community colleges to develop in order to increase employee engagement and provide a more quantitative view of the value than current literature on orientation (Cullen & Harris, 2008; Welch, 2002; Williams, 2009) and mentoring (Blunt & Conolly, 2006; Hopkins & Grigoriu, 2005; Savage et al., 2004). However, among the six participating institutions, the variations in accessibility and frequency of these strategies across employee groups may indicate that colleges need to direct resources to developing more formal, structured programs that are offered, perhaps required, consistently for all employees. To understand how such programs may impact the specific dimensions of employee engagement and commitment to student success initiatives, further analysis of results will be focused on the specific research questions posed in this study.

Relationships Between Exposure to Employee Engagement Programs and Employee Engagement, as Defined by Employee Perceptions of Mission, Task Significance, Goal-Setting, and Professional Development

While it can be accepted that both orientation and mentoring programs increase employee engagement, the results of the study indicate that strong mentoring programs have a significant impact on the employees' understanding of the missions of their institutions, their roles in those missions, and their commitment to goal-setting and professional development. When examining the relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and employee engagement as a whole, as determined by the quantified responses of perceptions on mentoring, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development, employees who had participated in engagement programs exhibited higher levels of engagement. Employees who had participated in orientation, mentoring, or both orientation and mentoring programs had higher mean scores of engagement (M = 4.03, 4.04, and 4.1, respectively) than did their peers who had not participated in such programs (M = 3.77). Furthermore, a factorial analysis demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between participation in orientation or mentoring programs and employee engagement.

Results were inconsistent when considering whether participation in employee engagement programs, such as orientation and mentoring, have a relationship with employee engagement in the individual areas of mission, task significance, goal-setting, and professional development. Statistically significant relationships were not observed between exposure to employee engagement programs and mission or task significance as they relate to student success. Between 92% and 95% of all employees, regardless of whether they were exposed to employee engagement programs, indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that student success was one of the primary missions of the college. Employees who were exposed to engagement programs did report that the programs fostered their understanding of student success as a primary mission. Of the employees who had participated in orientations, 75% reported they believed the orientations helped them understand that student success was a primary mission of the college. Of the Student Services employees, 80% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the orientations were beneficial in fostering their understanding of the mission of student success. This decreased to 73% for employees in Academic Services/Faculty and to 72% for employees in All Other Units. As with orientation, mentoring was perceived to be more helpful by employees in Student Services with 78% reporting they agreed or strongly agreed that their mentors helped them understand that student success was a primary mission, whereas only 73% of employees from All Other Units and 63% of employees from Academic Services/Faculty reported the same.

With regard to task significance, only 57% of employees who had been exposed to orientations and 69% of those who were exposed to mentoring reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that the programs increased their understanding of their roles in student success. Employees in All Other Units recorded the lowest *agree/strongly agree* responses with 40% of those perceiving the orientation programs and only 30% perceiving the mentoring programs were helpful in understanding their roles in student success.

In reviewing the public documents from all six institutions, it was found that while only one of the six published a mission statement that specifically mentioned student success as the primary mission, five of the six specifically mentioned student success or student completion of goals in either the institution's strategic plan or as one of the institutional goals. It would be expected that employees would be aware of student success as a primary mission as all six institutions provided that it was included in orientation or mentoring programs. Of the four institutions providing orientation documents, all four included the institutional mission, goals, and core values in the orientation materials. Only CCe addressed task significance. In an opening statement included in all orientation materials, the president of the college encouraged all employees to consider the impact of their jobs on the mission and goals of the institution. While CCe did not directly specify student success as the mission of the college, student success was identified as a key objective of the institution; so it can be assumed that through the orientation, employees were encouraged to see their jobs as playing a role important to student success. Of the four institutions providing mentoring documentation, reviewers identified two as encouraging discussion of task significance between mentors and mentees. Both CCb and CCe implied that mentoring is open to all employees but while CCb indicated a more structured method for faculty mentors to engage mentees in developing an understanding of their roles in student success, CCe provided a structured method inclusive of all employee groups. These findings on the perceptions of employee engagement programs and relationship to mission and task significance were supported by the document analysis in that employees, like many of those in All Other Units who did not interact with students on a daily basis, were more likely to receive orientations specific to their assigned tasks with little to no focus on how those tasks connect to student success.

Analysis did reveal statistically significant associations between participation in orientation and mentoring programs and goal-setting. While exposure to orientation and mentoring programs were both observed to have a positive relationship with employee goal-setting as defined by the perception that employees were encouraged or required to develop annual performance goals that included continued professional development and training to help support student success, participation in orientation programs appeared to have the greatest impact. The benefits of an orientation with respect to goal-setting were seen across all employee groups. However, the largest difference in perceptions of goal-setting, 36%, between employees who had participated in orientations and those who had not was seen among employees in Student Services.

Document analysis related to goal-setting revealed that only two of the four institutions that provided orientation and mentoring materials had clear goal-setting initiatives embedded in the engagement strategies. Institution CCb had clearly outlined expectations for goal-setting in the evaluation process of all employee groups, though not all goals were expected to connect the employee's job to student success. Institution CCe included goal-setting exercises in the mentoring relationship. When reviewing the public documents of all six institutions that pertained to institutional goals, it was noted that two institutions, CCa and CCe, had goals specific to student success that identified the importance of a collaborative effort to support that success across all employee units. Recall that CCa and CCe were both above the mean for the composite value of engagement and preparedness. The institution's emphasis on goal-setting at both the college level and the employee level could be a factor in the increased level of engagement for employees at CCe and perhaps at CCa as well.

Analysis also revealed statistically significant associations between participation in orientation and mentoring programs and professional development. However, exposure to orientation and mentoring programs was found to have a positive influence on perceptions on the frequency of participation in professional development activities only for employees in Academic Services/Faculty and All Other Units. Student Services employees who had been exposed to orientation and/or mentoring programs exhibited a decrease in responses of *agree* and *strongly agree* when asked about frequency of participation in professional development activities. This may be related to institutional priorities not addressed in the parameters of this study. While three of the six institutions identified employee development and success as components of either the strategic plan or institutional core values, only two institutions, CCb and CCc provided documents related to professional development programs. Both indicated that opportunities exist for all employees, and specific information was provided detailing annual calendars of sessions, topics, and ongoing leadership and educational programs for faculty and staff.

The possibility that most professional development programs are more accessible to faculty than Student Services employees cannot be overlooked. Knowing that opportunities for professional development can increase employee engagement, and assuming that such opportunities are explained and encouraged through employee engagement programs such as orientation and mentoring, it must be considered whether the programming is relevant to Student Services employees and whether those employees are given opportunities during the regular work schedule to participate. Whether due to content or scheduling, the discrepancy between exposure to employee engagement programs, such as orientation and mentoring, and the decrease in participation in professional development opportunities, could be seen as an opportunity for change in the engagement strategy.

Relative risk ratios, calculated to show relative likelihood, indicated that all employees who had been exposed to engagement programs had an increased likelihood of engagement, as identified by response of *agree/strongly agree* to survey questions asking about the mission of student success, roles in student success and goal-setting, and responses of *often/very often* to participation professional development activities, than did their peers with no exposure. Although the cross-tabulations and chi-square tests did not produce statistically significant results, there appears to be some indication that future surveys of larger populations of community college employees might provide stronger support for the positive impact that employee engagement strategies have on employee participation in initiatives known to increase engagement and commitment to the mission. The potential demonstrated by the increased likelihood of engagement is worth exploring as institutions consider where resources, both human and monetary, should be directed in order to have the greatest impact on student success.

Relationships Between Exposure to Employee Engagement Programs and Employee Perceptions of Their Preparedness to Assist Students

Again, knowing that orientation and mentoring programs may increase employee engagement, the results of the study indicate that while both orientation and mentoring programs have an impact on the employees' perception of their preparedness to assist students, mentoring programs appear to have the most significant impact. Unfortunately, the level of preparedness across most categories for all six institutions was much lower than might have been expected. When considering all responses, providing directions was the only category in which over 70% of employees indicated they were well or very well prepared to assist students. Responses of *well* or *very well prepared* dropped to below 50% in all other categories, regardless of whether employees had participated in employee engagement programs. This overall lack of perceived preparedness is disconcerting given the understanding that students are more likely to persist in pursuing their academic goals when they feel supported by members of the college community (McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012). However, these findings support the need for faculty and staff training as reported by Jones (2008) and Lunceford (2014).

Using mean response on a 5-point Likert scale where 5 = very often and 1 = never, employees reported that they are most frequently asked questions regarding directions ($M = 3.77$), followed by registration information ($M = 3.27$), academic advice ($M = 3.21$), and career advice ($M = 3.07$). The mean value of employees' preparedness to answer student questions, using a 5-point Likert scale where 5 = very well prepared and 1 = not at all prepared, regarding directions was 4.1, followed by registration information ($M = 3.19$), safety or security information ($M = 3.17$), and academic advice ($M = 3.13$). With 3 of the top 4 categories the same, there is some alignment between the types of questions students ask and employee preparedness to answer.

Employees in all units indicated that they believed orientation and mentoring programs helped them prepare to answer student questions. Of the employees from Academic Services/Faculty, 47% agreed or strongly agreed that orientation programs helped prepare them while 74% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring programs helped prepare them to answer student questions. This perception is consistent with Academic Services/Faculty responses to preparedness on individual questions. In three of the eight categories regarding preparedness to assist students, financial advice, safety/security assistance, and technical/computer assistance, employees from Academic Services/Faculty exhibited the highest number of *well* or *very well prepared* responses and the greatest percent increase in responses between employees who had participated in mentoring programs and those who had not. The usefulness of orientation and mentoring programs in preparing employees to answer student questions was ranked much lower by employees from All Other Units with only 28% who had participated in orientation programs and 53% who had participated in mentoring programs reporting that they agreed or strongly agreed the employee engagement programs helped prepare them. Their perceptions were also consistent when answering individual questions regarding preparedness. Employees from All Other Units who had participated in mentoring programs displayed the greatest percent increase in responses of *well* and *very well prepared* in four of the eight categories: career advice, registration information, safety/security assistance, and technical/computer assistance, as compared to those who had not had mentors. Of the employees from Student Services, 43% and 81% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that participation in orientation or mentoring programs, respectively, helped prepare them to answer student questions. While they perceived mentoring programs to be the most helpful, their perceptions did not support this when they answered individual questions on preparedness. Student Services employees who had participated in orientation programs recorded the highest percentage of *well* and *very well prepared* responses in four of the eight categories: academic advice, career advice, financial advice, and registration information. The percent of Student

Services employees responding that they felt well or very well prepared to assist students in the areas of academic advice, career advice, directions, registration information, and technical/computer assistance was actually lower for those who had participated in mentoring programs as compared with those who had not.

In considering why employees may believe that participation in engagement programs helped prepare them to assist students but then indicate they are not well or very well prepared to assist in specific circumstances, it may be important to recall that the Phase I survey asked only a general question pertaining to the relationship between orientation and mentoring and perception of preparedness. The survey did not ask employees whether they felt orientation or mentoring helped them assist students in specific circumstances. Respondents may have been conservative in their perceptions of preparedness, cautiously estimating their abilities in the specific areas while still feeling generally prepared to assist students. It is also possible that orientation and mentoring programs may not contain information aimed at preparing employees to answer questions or that material might be continued in unit-specific orientations rather than the general orientation programs for which institutions in this study provided documentation. Of the four institutions that provided employee orientation documents, only those aimed at faculty included any reference to discussion of methods to assist students. None of the institutions provided details for orientation programs specific to Student Services employees, so it is unknown if any of the six institutions have formal, structured orientations or mentoring programs for employees in that unit.

Results from the employee surveys did indicate that exposure to mentors significantly increased employees' perception of preparedness to answer, particularly in responses from CCa and CCe. While CCa did not provide documents for review, mentoring documents from CCe included detailed plans for a structured program that included numerous topics for discussion between mentors and mentees. Among those topics were several related to assisting students and meeting employees from various departments within Student Services. Access to information that may help students and to the specific functions of various offices on campus may be vital components of orientation or mentoring programs; components that will have a greater impact on employees' confidence in assisting students in the future.

When investigating the relationship between exposure to employee engagement programs and employee preparedness as whole, as determined by the summed responses of perceptions of preparedness to assist with academic, career, personal, and financial advice; registration, safety/security, or technical/computer information; or directions, employees who had participated in engagement programs exhibited higher levels of preparedness. The preparedness mean value for employees who had participated in mentoring programs was 3.28 as opposed to 3.16 for those who had participated in orientation plus mentoring programs, and 3.09 for those who participated in orientation programs as compared to the mean of 2.49 for employees who had not been exposed to employee engagement programs. A factorial analysis demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between participation in a mentoring program and employee preparedness.

Preparedness to provide career and personal advice were the only two categories found to have a statistically significant relationship with participation in engagement programs. Relationships between all three modes of employee engagement programming and preparedness to answer student questions regarding career advice were found to exist, while relationships were found between participation in mentoring and orientation plus mentoring and preparedness to give personal advice. In the case of career advice, employees from All Other Units exhibited the greatest percent increase with exposure to mentoring. Student Services employees reaped the largest benefit from mentoring programs when considering preparedness to provide personal advice.

Despite the lack of statistical significance when cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were performed, relative risk ratios indicated that all employees who had been exposed to engagement programs had an 20% to 30% increased likelihood of indicating they were well or very well prepared to provide students with assistance regarding academic, career, financial, and technical or computer advice than did their peers with no exposure. The likelihood increased by 8% to 14% with regard to assisting students with personal advice, registration information, or safety/security assistance.

Document analysis did not offer much insight into the question of why some employees might feel more prepared than others to assist students in specific areas. None of the four institutions providing orientation documents were found to include specific information for assisting students in the general employee orientation materials. The faculty orientations of CCb and CCc did imply that some of the monthly sessions would focus on resources available to assist students, and new faculty would have the opportunity to meet with employees in student service areas in order to learn more about how to direct students to those areas. One might infer that if no formal orientation beyond general benefits information was provided to student services employees, it is possible that those employees' levels of confidence in addressing student concerns beyond their immediate jobs was lower than average as a result of not having the same global picture of the institution that faculty might have received in their orientations.

Summary

Analysis of the Phase I survey data and the review of documents made available by the institutions does suggest that formal orientation programs do increase employee engagement, and robust mentoring programs do increase employees' sense of preparedness to assist students; but institutions could increase the impact of such employee engagement strategies by encouraging, or perhaps requiring, all employee groups to participate in such programs. Likewise, reviewing the types of information provided through orientation and mentoring programs and offering a more global picture of how all units of the college work together to support student success might increase employee engagement across all dimensions of mission commitment and student assistance. The institutions that focused on task significance, professional development, and goal-setting were found to have higher levels of employee engagement in several components of the study, and exposure to engagement strategies such as orientation and mentoring did have the potential to impact not only the employees' understanding of the mission and apparent commitment to that mission but also may have had an impact on how students perceived the level of support provided them by the institution. The potential for engagement strategies to increase the meaningfulness of the jobs in order to increase employees' motivation to support the mission of student success and thereby impact students' willingness to persist due to the perception of a supportive environment should not be overlooked.

Phase II

Relationships Between Employee Perceptions of Engagement and Student Perceptions of Engagement Reported in CCSSE Data

Similar to that of the CCSSE companion survey CCFSSE, the purpose of comparing employee engagement responses from the survey administered for this research with the CCSSE data was to stimulate contemplation and dialogue on the importance of student engagement to student success and how employee engagement and preparedness may influence those factors. Generalizations to the larger community college population cannot be made due to the known discrepancies between the CCSSE and web-based survey instruments and the size of this study. However, the comparisons did bring about some thought-provoking concepts and demonstrated some interesting patterns between student and employee perceptions.

Participating colleges CCa and CCe both exhibited composite mean values of engagement and preparedness above the total mean values for all colleges surveyed. The only other college that had a composite mean value above the total mean value with regard to engagement was CCc. Students and employees from CCe displayed mean values above the total means in all CCSSE benchmark variables selected for comparison. It is also interesting to note that CCe was the only institution in which employee and student perceptions regarding career and non-academic (personal) advice were in alignment and above the total means. These areas were found to have a statistically significant relationship with employee exposure to employee engagement programs. Thus, one may posit that employees at CCe are engaged and well prepared to provide students assistance with academic, career, financial and non-academic (personal) advice, as well as provide comprehensive overall support for student learning. This assumption is reinforced by student perceptions that are also above the CCSSE mean values in those areas. While there were a couple of discrepancies between employee and student perceptions, with student perceptions being below and employees perceptions above the total mean in the areas of academic, non-academic, and one of the CCSSE career variables, CCa still exhibited more alignment between student and employee perceptions than did the other four participation colleges.

Knowing that CCa and CCe exhibited mean values of engagement and preparedness above the average for participants gives us reason to consider again what was found in the document analysis of materials from those two institutions. While CCa did not provide orientation or mentoring documents, review of the public documents concerning strategic planning, vision, and goals indicated that engaging all employees, faculty and staff, in building a supportive environment for students, was a priority for the institution. Two of the six goals identified by CCa focused on student success and promoted a climate of support and inclusion for all units of the college community. Given the indication of employee engagement at the institution, perhaps it can be assumed that materials provided to employees represent orientation and mentoring programs that encourage engagement through the shared understanding of the mission and support for employee participation in that mission.

Orientation and mentoring documents provided by CCe fully support the discovery that the institution's employees have an above average measure of engagement and preparedness to assist students. As stated earlier, the orientation materials represent a structured program that includes recognition of each employee's task significance to the mission. The mentoring program is robust with opportunities for discussion on a variety of topics that include how to participate in college planning processes, personal goal-setting as related to professional development, and inclusion in student success initiatives. Analysis of the documents supports the finding that employees at CCe are engaged and well prepared to provide students assistance as needed.

Cross-tabular comparison using Kendall's tau-b, the mean values for the CCSSE benchmarks, and the composite mean values for employee engagement and preparedness demonstrated modest but statistically insignificant associations between employee engagement and preparedness and the CCSSE benchmarks of active learning and student-faculty interaction and employee preparedness and the support for learners benchmark. The detected associations were primarily in areas where faculty have more influence on students than do other college employees. Although not generalizable to the those at all community colleges, from the survey and document analysis, it appears that faculty from the colleges in this study are more apt to participate in more highly structured and often required employee engagement programs such as orientation and mentoring. Of the four institutions providing orientation or mentoring documents, three identified either programs or materials that were faculty-specific amidst the other all-employee materials. None of the four indicated any other employee group-specific materials, though reviewers did note that all four suggested the existence of unit-specific orientations for which no materials were provided. The mentoring programs of CCb, CCc and CCe did provide evidence of being more fully developed and appeared to be available to all employees; but in the case of CCb and CCc, reference was made to deans or department chairs assigning mentors with no reference to how mentors were assigned to employees outside of academic areas. These findings support the idea that all four institutions had put more effort into formalizing faculty engagement strategies than possibly had been put forth in engaging other employee groups; thus, it may be understandable that higher engagement and preparedness values were found in associations involving faculty and students rather than other or all employee groups.

CCc provided evidence of a specific faculty handbook complete with information concerning all campus resources available to employees and specific information related to academic policies and student issues. That same information was not apparent in the general employee orientation materials. Both CCb and CCc indicated that faculty orientation programs were of a longer duration with more opportunities for faculty discuss orientation components than what other employee groups might have had available. In both cases, faculty had at least one full day of orientation followed by monthly meetings with the orientation group. Other employee groups had no more than one general group session. Departmental orientations were suggested, but the only group identified by any institution as requiring an orientation was the faculty group. CCe did not provide documentation that differentiated between faculty and staff orientation practices and provided a comprehensive guide to institutional resources, policies, procedures, and benefits that was intended for all employees. The guide did reference task significance and included detailed information about the mission and core values of the institution but did not include specific information on how to assist students. Still, it is interesting to note that the institution that appears, through document review, to provide similar information on task significance and mission to all employees rather than only to faculty is also one of the institutions with the two highest engagement scores in this study.

While the validity of the CCSSE instrument to measure student engagement and its linkage to student success has been demonstrated (Kuh et al., 2006; McClenney, 2007; Price & Tovar, 2014), much of the survey is devoted to classroom activities and student-faculty interactions. Research has demonstrated the impact that one individual can make on student engagement (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004; McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012) and that a shared, campus-wide responsibility for student success has a positive impact on success (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004; McClenney & Arnsparger, 2012; McClenney & Greene, 2005), yet there is currently not an instrument that emphasizes student perceptions of support for learners or with a companion instrument designed for employees other than faculty. Data from this study suggest there is a relationship between employee and student perceptions of engagement, which may positively influence student success. However, it is challenging to measure and compare student perceptions of inclusive and intentional campus-wide support with employee perceptions and therefore, even more challenging to identify and address gaps.

Phase III

Common Elements in Employee Engagement Resources That Exhibit Positive Relationships Between Organizational Strategies and Employees' Perception of Their Impacts on Student Success

As evidenced by the previous analysis of data from Phase I and Phase II of this study, document analysis from both public and internal materials available did reveal common elements in employee engagement resources (documents relating to employee orientation, mentoring, professional development, and evaluation) that impact the employees' understanding of the missions of the institutions and the significance of their individual jobs in relation to those missions. Public documents such as mission statements, strategic plans, goals, and core values were found to have a relationship with employee perceptions of the missions of the institutions and their beliefs that their jobs impacted those missions. The institutions with engagement scores above the mean, CCa, CCc, and CCb, all had strategic plans and goals that specifically addressed student success. Two of those institutions, CCa and CCe, included objectives that focused on including all employees in collaborative efforts to create institutional cultures of student success. CCa referenced student success 11 times in a 20-page strategic plan and centered two of their six goals on student success and employee collaboration. CCe presented an ongoing planning process that included employees in the design and focused objectives on a student-centered culture inclusive of all college employees. The three institutions with engagement values below the mean presented strategic plans with no specific mention of student success or identified student success as a priority but not indicate that all employees were included in the development of student success initiatives.

Orientation and mentoring documents reviewed for this study revealed that variations in frequency of programs and content, as well as whether exposure to the programs was voluntary or required, could have an impact on employee engagement and preparedness to assist students. Employee groups found to have greater access to engagement strategies were also found to be somewhat more confident in their abilities to assist students. Documents from three of the institutions providing orientation or mentoring materials indicated that faculty groups have greater access to structured orientation programs and most likely to long-term mentoring relationships than do employees in other groups. Likewise, faculty groups were found to be slightly more prepared to assist students, and the potential for students to be more aware of that level of support was suggested. Frequency and method of delivery may also play a role in the effectiveness of engagement strategies, as the institutions with engagement values above the mean were also the institutions that offered orientations with greater frequency and blended group sessions with monthly follow-up sessions and online components.

Content of engagement strategies and programs may play the greatest role. Mentoring programs were found to have an impact on preparedness to assist students. Institution CCe scored above average in nearly every dimension, and document reviewers as noted its content-rich mentoring program. A lengthy list of discussion topics and activities are provided to support the mentor-mentee relationships at that institution, with topics including roles and responsibilities of various offices on campus, strategies for working with students, avenues for involvement in college-wide planning, and opportunities for advancement through professional development. A second institution with above-average engagement scores, CCc, emphasizes goal-setting through the mentoring relationship. Documents from CCb, scoring just under the mean for engagement and preparedness, also identified a strong mentoring program that encourages frequent meetings between mentors and mentees with suggestions for discussion topics and opportunities to meet with other mentoring pairs for larger discussions. Documents for all three of these institutions, CCb, CCc, and CCe, indicated that training programs are in place for mentors.

Content such as goal-setting, professional development, and task significance were found to be relevant in the analysis of the documents and the comparison with Phase I data. As suggested by research in the field of organizational theory, the inclusion of components that increase employees' understanding of the meaningfulness of their roles in an organization can make a difference in how satisfied they are in their jobs and how engaged they are in the work of the institution. Likewise, the inclusion of components that encourage them to set goals in order to increase the impacts they have on the mission, and that encourage them to participate in professional development that will assist them in achieving those goals, also has the potential to increase engagement. Finally, the inclusion of components that provide information beyond the standard job or benefit-specific employee orientation can increase engagement and success on the job. In the case of community colleges, where the mission centers on assisting students, information related to how an employee can assist students in the context of a specific job, coupled with an understanding of how that job meshes with all jobs on campus, can increase the employee's feeling of preparedness to assist students.

Based on Findings, It Is Possible to Identify Best Practices in Employee Engagement Strategies in Order to Suggest a Model for Other Institutions to Use in Increasing Employee Participation in Student Success Initiatives

Using the components found to be relevant to increase levels of employee engagement, it would not only be possible to design employment engagement strategies focused on increasing employment engagement and preparedness to assist students, but also doing so may be a key factor in enhancing student engagement and success. By looking at frequency and accessibility of programs and considering the possibility of requiring exposure to such programs, institutions can begin to develop employees' perceptions of their roles in the mission of their institutions. Through careful development of content that increases job meaningfulness and demonstrates task significance to the mission, colleges can foster a greater sense of commitment to those tasks. Time spent helping employees understand how the values of their institutions match or support their individual beliefs and values can increase long-term commitment to the institutions. By focusing on content that teaches employees what they need to know to assist and support students and encourages them to want to succeed in supporting students, it would be possible to develop engagement strategies that can increase the potential for student success.

Data from this study support the notion that employee engagement programs enhance employee engagement and preparedness to assist students, and thus, enhance student engagement and success. Based on programs at the most engaged schools from this study and public documents and literature from community colleges nationwide, it is possible to identify strategies of engagement and components within such strategies that could be adopted by institutions in an effort to increase employee engagement and preparedness.

As cited earlier in this study, employee engagement can be linked to an employee's perception of task significance in conjunction with the compatibility of the employee's value system and the values and mission of the institution at which he or she is employee. The combination of the dimensions of task significance and meaningfulness, as evidenced by the shared values, results in a greater expenditure of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy toward job performance, hence job engagement (Kahn, 1990). The works of first Davenport and Prusak (1998) and later Christian, Garza, and Slaughter (2011) supported the importance of task significance as a component of engagement strategies, and results from Phase I, II and II of this study revealed that institutions that made an effort to help employees see the significance of their jobs to the institutional mission and goals did see an increase in the level of employee engagement and their preparedness to assist students.

Analysis of results from the first three phases of this study also supported the findings of Zeffane (2006), in which it was demonstrated that the inclusion of employees in institutional planning, and opportunities to create personal goals related to the institutional mission, were predictive of greater employee engagement. Strong networks for communication, often supported by mentoring relationships, were suggested by Vorhauser-Smith (2013). Analysis of data from the first three phases of this study confirmed that mentoring programs, particularly those in which time was devoted to specific topics such as task significance, goal-setting, professional development, and student assistance, were more likely to result in higher levels of employee engagement.

Recall that Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) developed *The Competing Values Framework*, which identified values of human resources, professional growth of employees, planning and goal-setting, information management and communication, conflict, cohesion and morale, and quality and productivity as constructs occurring most frequently in discussions of employee satisfaction as related to organizational effectiveness. Data from this study did indicate the likelihood that employees exposed to orientation and/or mentoring programs through which they could gain the information and support needed to participate in professional development and goal-setting related to student success are more likely to perceive higher levels of engagement in the institutional mission and feel more prepared to assist students in completing their own goals.

Organizational socialization, defined as the process through which individuals learn and adjust to their roles within the organization, is considered by some researchers to have six factors that must be addressed before the employees can begin to understand the significance of their tasks in relation to the organization and before they can appreciate the value they have to the mission of that organization (Chao et al., 1994). Chao et al. (1994) identified these factors to be history, language, politics, people, organizational goals and values, and performance proficiency. Of the four institutions providing employee orientation documents, three of the four included information concerning the history and culture of the institution. All four indicated that organizational goals and values were components of orientation, though the depth at which those were discussed with new employees was unknown. All six institutions did make goals and values public, so it can be assumed the information was readily available for employees should they search for it. Document reviewers found that only one of the four indicated there was any discussion of the evaluation process in the general employee orientation. Information regarding individual unit orientation, if any, was not provided, so there is no evidence that the factor concerning performance proficiency was covered in any manner.

Data from Phase I revealed mentoring to have a slightly greater impact on the employees' perception of preparedness to assist students. Two of the six institutions provided documents demonstrating relatively strong mentoring programs that included materials related to all of the factors of organizational socialization identified by Chao et al. (1994). Mentoring seemed to provide greater opportunity for individual discussion related to the culture and language of each institution, though neither orientation nor mentoring documents indicated any direction to introduce new employees to the terminology, acronyms, or dialogue common to the community college. Mentoring documents did imply that the role of the mentor was to introduce the mentee to people in the institution and, presumably, to assist the mentee in building a network of individuals who could assist as needed.

The knowledge that others in the organization are there to help may be instrumental in retaining employees who are aware of their roles in their organization's mission and are committed to that mission. Studies have shown that employee engagement and job satisfaction are related to perceptions not just at the start of a job, but as time on the job progresses, knowledge of the organization grows, and uncertainty of one's role diminishes (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005). Productivity increases over time with the average employee reaching full productivity anywhere from 8 weeks for clerical positions to 26 weeks for professional and administrative positions (Williams, 2003). The support that is needed through employee engagement strategies should be considered in terms of how long it takes to determine that employees are fully cognizant of the goals of the organization and their connections to those goals. Communicating task significance, particularly in institutions such as community colleges that involve some tasks that occur only at certain times of the year, should be seen as an ongoing strategy. Data from this study indicated considerable variation in the duration of engagement strategies and accessibility to those strategies for the various employee groups. While faculty might have been provided with socialization and engagement support for a full year, other employees may have only had brief meetings with supervisors or benefits reviews with officers in human resources. Allocating time and human resources to more formal methods of orientation and mentoring across all employee groups may be a costeffective way for community colleges to increase student success through increased employee engagement.

A 2005 study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that 83% of private-sector companies reported the use of formal orientation programs for new employees, which represented a 34% increase in investments in orientation or "on-boarding" programs in just one year (Lockwood & Tai, 2006). Lockwood and Tai reported that the most frequently used formats for orientation were group-based and individual, often with a combination of both. Only 11% of the companies surveyed by SHRM in 2005 were using a computer-based format for orientation. One of the most significant increases in on-boarding programs appeared to have occurred at the management level where new supervisors were oriented to their roles in introducing new employees to the culture and mission of the institution. In this study of six community colleges, frequency of strategies was addressed, and variations were seen across employee groups. Consideration not only of length of orientation and mentoring programs but also the need for formalization in all employee groups is needed. Likewise, colleges need to consider the importance of formal orientation for employees who are new to a position if not to the organization. Task significance at the managerial level may be different than for the entry-level employee, and mentoring a faculty member newly minted as an administrator may mean the difference between an effective leader and one who is uncertain how to motivate faculty and staff.

Content of orientation and mentoring programs should be the primary concern of institutions, as indicated by the review of literature and the analysis of this study; but follow-up and assessment are equally important. In a review of the orientation programs from the companies reporting in the 2005 SHRM study, Lockwood and Tai found that internal follow-up with employees to determine if orientation content had been covered and if the employees had gained understanding from that content was often lacking. That study suggested that follow-up sessions, preferably roundtable discussions, between managers and peer groups, occur periodically in order to discuss factors associated with engagement strategies. It was also suggested that relevant individuals, participants and planners, be given questionnaires at the end of employee or mentoring programs and again at strategic times throughout employment, to assess the increasing value of the programs and changes that might be needed. A formal method of assessment and open opportunities for all employees to strengthen their engagement can increase the effectiveness of the programs by not only identifying areas for improvement but also by inviting all employees to participate more fully in the process—hence engaging them.

Combining knowledge from past studies in organizational theory and employee engagement with more recent reviews of engagement and on-boarding strategies from private-sector companies, it is possible to see the analysis of data from this study in the light of what community colleges could do to increase employee engagement in order to support the mission of student success. The last chapter of this study will propose methods for developing employee engagement strategies that have the potential to increase engagement and preparedness to assist students, thereby increasing student success. This study will then conclude with thoughts for future research in this area.

CHAPTER 6: PROPOSALS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Data from this study support the understanding that employee engagement programs are becoming more prevalent in the private-sector and some institutions of higher education. While engagement programs may be on the rise, literature suggests that there is a greater focus on professional development than orientation. The private-sector is far ahead in the implementation of orientation, organizational socialization, and on-boarding; and those colleges that are embracing orientation strategies tend to focus more resources on faculty despite studies that emphasize collaboration and a campus-wide culture of shared responsibility for student success.

This study found that employee engagement programs have a positive association with overall perceptions of engagement and preparedness, and there is a positive correlation between engagement and preparedness. Furthermore, targeted and structured programs resulted in higher levels of employee engagement, which was reflected in student perceptions of engagement. Exposure to engagement programs increased goal-setting among employees as well participation in professional development opportunities. The employee engagement benchmarks of orientation, mentoring, task significance, goal-setting, and participation in professional development, as established in Chapter 1, are indeed representative factors in employee engagement. When considered together, these findings support the notion, as suggested in Figure 1, that student and employee engagement are both important factors in promoting student success.

The document analysis revealed that most orientation strategies focused on benefits, IT training, and specific tasks rather than mission and collaboration across college units. It was revealed that even the most engaged employees do not perceive themselves as prepared to assist students, a finding that suggests the content of engagement strategies needs to include more information related to how employees should be interacting with students and in what ways they might assist those students to be successful. Mentoring was found to have a greater overall impact on preparedness to assist students than did orientation, so it is possible that information concerning how to assist students is more likely to be communicated through mentoring relationships than in current orientation programs. Data indicated that mentoring is not currently offered as frequently as orientation, so it will be imperative for colleges to consider increasing mentoring opportunities in order to increase employee preparedness values, thus increasing their abilities to assist students and foster their success.

Organizational socialization calls for the employee to be introduced to the mission, values, goals, and strategic plan of the institution at which he or she is employed. Employees should understand their roles in that mission and the impact they can have on student success. They should be encouraged to set goals for themselves, which will allow them to increase their impacts on student success, and they should be encouraged to participate in organizational planning, which will foster greater engagement. Professional development should be encouraged, which will provide opportunities for greater understanding of the significance of each employee's role in an institution's mission. Orientation and mentoring should be seen as channels through which an institution can communicate messages intended to foster engagement and collaboration across the college. Many institutions included in this study had developed some of the five benchmarks found to be related to increased levels of employee engagement, but those elements were not offered consistently across employee groups, nor had any of the institutions fully embraced the idea that a culture of student success would need to include clear, consistent messages across formal strategies developed for all employee groups. Formal engagement strategies should provide opportunities for networking between college units so as to include all employees in discussions of engagement, task significance, and student success initiatives.

Engagement strategies should be structured, formalized, and supported by the institution for all employees, not merely academic services. Strategies should be frequent and ongoing with opportunities for group engagement programs in conjunction with unit-specific sessions. Increased use of goal-setting in professional development and evaluation processes is needed. Continual assessment of an employee's understanding of the significance of his or her role to the mission of student success should be incorporated into discussion of goals, professional development, and introduction to new initiatives. Employees should have input into the planning and the ability to assess engagement strategies in order for institutions to determine what elements are proving most helpful and what elements are needed to foster greater engagement. Training of facilitators and mentors is imperative, and college-wide and unit-specific materials and resources should be developed to ensure consistency of messages. Multiple channels, including face-to-face, print, and online, should be used in order to make resources accessible and to maximize exposure to engagement strategies.

Mentoring should be formalized with designated opportunities for interaction between mentor and mentee but should remain flexible enough to allow for the development of natural relationships based on trust and common experiences rather than mandated activities. Providing suggestions for discussion topics, as well as encouraging mentors to invite mentees to college events and committee meetings and encouraging them to introduce their mentees to key people at the college, are some of the more formalized elements of a robust, yet flexible mentoring program. Structured meetings in which mentor and mentee pairs meet together to share experiences and ideas allow all mentees to benefit from a larger base of institutional knowledge.

Finally, engagement strategies should not be limited to only new employees but should be ongoing to assist employees advancing to new positions or to reinvigorate engagement of longer-serving employees. The use of goal-setting strategies, professional development opportunities, or mentor "reunion" sessions can reconnect employees to the significance of what they do in relation to student success and encourage engagement in new initiatives or foster work relationships with newer employees. Organizational socialization does not end with the employee's first annual evaluation. Organizations that are ever-changing in response to the needs of the students and communities also need to assist employees in adapting to cultural changes through ongoing engagement and socialization processes.

Proposals

Orientation, mentoring, an understanding of task significance, goal-setting, and continued professional development are all necessary elements to fully engage employees and create a culture of student success on community college campuses. Orientation and mentoring programs for all employees are the first steps in the achievement of a holistic campus-wide *ethos* of employee engagement which may in turn foster student engagement and success. These engagement programs serve not only as methods of introducing an employee to the mission and culture of an institution and how his or her role supports the mission but also as communication venues to emphasize the importance of task significance and continued goal-setting and professional development.

Development of Employee Engagement Programs

The scheduling and details of the programs will depend on the nature and structure of individual organizations. It is recommended that institutions form a cross-functional team to develop and implement employee engagement programs with well-defined goals. Early considerations should include determining

- in which unit and with whom the responsibility for maintaining the programs shall reside,
- at what levels of employment and at which milestones in advancement engagement strategies are needed,
- goals and assessment measures,
- who will facilitate and how will they be trained, and
- a timeline for development, communication, and implementation.

Based on the agreed-upon goals, mode of delivery, materials, and duration can be decided upon. Defining outcomes, the ability to effectively measure those outcomes, and the discovery or development of instruments to measure and align employee and student perceptions are fundamental to the success of engagement programs that foster student success. Though the planning and implementation should be left to the employees, it is critical that the entire campus, including the institutional leaders, be committed to and supportive of employee engagement programs.

Orientation

The colleges from this study that had the highest composite mean scores of engagement and preparedness delivered orientation via multiple methods. Employees were exposed to face-to-face group orientations with follow-up sessions and supplemental materials available online. Delivery through multiple vehicles, such as orientation sites on the learning management systems or designated areas in employee portals, is recommended so employees can reference materials online at a later date and can receive clarification and more detailed information during follow-up sessions. A case can be made for initial all-employee orientations, with follow-up sessions specific to various units of the college with materials available online via employee portals or learning management systems. Though advancement in an organization may warrant additional orientation and mentoring as responsibilities and tasks change, the introductory session should foster a sense of community among all employee groups and an appreciation for shared goals and responsibilities.

The information below will provide all employees an overview of an organization, its values, mission, structure, and how they perform a vital role in the fulfillment of the mission of student success. Perhaps the goal of the initial session is for all employees to understand and recognize the following information about the college:

- mission, vision, and values;
- strategic goals and special initiatives;
- environmental scanning data;

- organizational chart;
- governance system;
- policy and procedures;
- methods of communication;
- primary units for employee and student assistance;
- a list of student FAQ and the answers or where to direct students to get assistance;
- individual task significance to the college and student success;
- opportunities for professional development;
- how to make suggestions;
- methods for becoming involved in college processes and activities;
- time for socialization and networking.

The initial group session should also include explanations and information on

- Human Resources and benefits;
- safety and emergency protocols and alert systems;
- required trainings (such as FERPA, sexual harassment, etc.);
- information technology support and resources.

Survey results revealed that special emphasis should be placed on task significance and preparedness to answer student questions.

Subsequent orientation sessions held by individual units will allow for the reinforcement of task significance as it relates to student success and the delivery of specific information pertaining to professional development opportunities, performance evaluation, and goal-setting. These additional sessions will also provide new employees with additional exposure to ways in which they can assist students and the opportunity to ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of the structure and function of the institution.

Mentoring

Employees surveyed indicated that mentoring programs were very effective in helping them understand institutional mission and their roles in student success and in preparing them to assist students. This was despite the fact that they reported wide variations in the length and structure of the mentoring programs and that most participants were from Academic Services/Faculty and Student Services. As demonstrated by the works of CCe, the impact of mentoring could be strengthened for all employees by the development of more comprehensive programs with targeted goals and schedules for mentor and mentee sessions.

Careful consideration should be given to how mentees are paired with trained mentors and will likely depend on the desired outcomes of the programs. However, it is essential to ensure mentees are not paired with direct supervisors or persons in positions to evaluate their job performance. To enhance the experience and foster campus-wide cultures of inclusion and student success, it is suggested that programs include opportunities for all mentors and mentees to come together at certain points during their programs to connect and share observations and experiences. This opportunity to share and view employee-student interactions from many lenses will benefit mentees and mentors alike. Additionally, recognition of the mentees may add meaning, incentive, and value to the programs and mentor-mentee relationships (Blunt & Conolly, 2006).

As previously stated, program specifics will largely be dependent on outcomes. However, developing programs with guidelines and intentionality, as was done by CCe and suggested by Hopkins and Grigoriu (2005), will result in stronger programs. It is recommended that a broad list of required and optional mentor and mentee activities be developed. Suggestions include:

- reviewing the college calendar with an emphasis on relevant due dates;
- job shadowing, when relevant, to increase awareness of task significance;
- including opportunities for mentors to introduce mentees to contacts in other units of the college and to facilitate discussions on how their tasks are related;
- mapping professional development;
- discussing campus organization and structure;
- preparing for job evaluation;
- goal-setting;
- attending regional or national conferences;
- attending professional and extracurricular college activities.

Goal-Setting, Professional Development, and the Evaluation Process

Research concerning employee engagement and commitment emphasizes the importance of each employee feeling a sense of empowerment and participation in aligning his or her job with the institutional mission and the need to keep employees apprised of new developments and initiatives to meet the dynamic demands placed on community colleges. The desire to see his or her task as significant to the mission and meaningful to the community is paramount in allowing the employee to make a commitment that merits expenditure of time and energy beyond the minimum required to receive a paycheck. Only two of the institutions participating in the study provided documents related to professional development and evaluation, and only one actually referenced the evaluation process in its orientation materials. Both CCb and CCc provided detailed lists of professional development sessions and topics and identified evaluation processes that included goal-setting for all employee groups. The mentoring programs of both CCb and CCe suggested professional development and evaluations as topics for discussion between mentors and mentees.

Inclusion of professional development and goal-setting through the evaluation process would be indicative of the performance proficiency factor identified by Chao et al. (1994). In formalizing employment engagement strategies within an institution, it would be beneficial to not only include discussion about these opportunities in the context of orientation and mentoring programs, but to develop guidelines for all college units to follow in implementing strategies that encourage continued development and goals related to improving student success through each individual's job performance. Suggestions to consider include:

- opportunities for employees to suggest topics for professional development on campus;
- occasional scheduled times for employees to spend on professional development during work hours;
- campus-hosted professional development opportunities for all levels of employment and all units of employees;

- campus-wide and unit-specific sessions for all employees to share what they have learned through professional development; presentations for conferences or training sessions;
- campus-wide and unit-specific sessions on personal goal-setting;
- expectation that all college units set goals for increasing the unit's impact on student success—and that all unit employees have avenues for participation in developing those goals;
- expectation that all employees set annual goals aimed at professional development and job improvement designed to increase individual impact on student success;
- campus-wide and unit-specific recognition of goal achievement by individuals and by units.

Recognizing the impact that participation in professional development, as well as college-wide and personal goal-setting, can have on the employees' commitment to the mission of student success, community colleges can begin to develop further initiatives aimed at increasing employees' involvement in institutional planning and their appreciation for the importance of their jobs.

It is critical that institutions provide employees with comprehensive engagement programs that include well-designed, outcomes-based orientation, mentoring, and professional development with messages of task significance and goal-setting woven throughout. Programs with all five elements will provide the greatest potential to impact student engagement and success through increased employee engagement.

Future Research

While this study endeavored to assess community college employees' perceptions of their impacts on student success in relation to their exposure to specific employee engagement strategies, it can be seen as merely the first step in looking at this important issue. Studies on organizational socialization, employee engagement, and job satisfaction have been on the rise in the business sector, but little is yet known about how community college employees are socialized to their jobs or how such socialization impacts their understanding of their roles in fostering student success. Most current studies have focused on faculty engagement in student success with a recent rise in studies related to the employees of student-services units in colleges. This study has attempted to look at all employees across colleges and relate their perceptions of orientation and mentoring programs with actual documents from their institutions and known measures of student engagement in order to determine what elements of those engagement strategies might have contributed to greater perceptions of task significance, engagement, and preparedness to assist students. There is strong evidence to suggest that community colleges should place a greater emphasis on employee engagement programs in order to increase student success. Given what is now known about the increased levels of engagement and preparedness to assist students among employees exposed to well-structured programs of orientation and mentoring, the resources of time and materials needed to implement such programs would be well spent in engaging all employees in student success initiatives.

This study was limited by the relatively small number of schools willing to participate, though that did allow for a more thorough analysis of documents than might have been possible with a larger number of participants. The study generated a vast amount of data that, in many cases, raised more questions than were answered. While the researchers were able to confirm that exposure to employment strategies such as orientation and mentoring does increase the likelihood of employees feeling more engaged in the mission of student success and more prepared to assist students, the strength of that engagement and the level of preparedness cannot be determined without significantly more knowledge concerning the content of unit-specific orientations or a more thorough survey of what occurs in mentoring relationships. When compared with employee survey results, document analysis did reveal that specific content seems connected to higher levels of engagement. However, all institutions providing documents indicated that some employees may be exposed to different orientations than others depending on the units in which they are employed. Those variations across colleges may warrant further exploration.

The suggestions for models of employee engagement strategies included in this study present opportunities for institutions to analyze their own employees' perceptions of their impacts on student success and also provide a framework through which colleges may assess the effectiveness of either their current orientation and mentoring programs and how employee perceptions compare with student perceptions, or the effectiveness of any strategies they may choose to adopt. Based on the apparent relationship between employee engagement and student engagement, which may ultimately have a positive influence on student success, this study may serve as a foundation for future exploration on the importance and effectiveness of engagement strategies for all community college employees.

Larger-scale studies of employee perceptions of engagement are needed in order to determine if variations across size, region, and type of institutions occur. More in-depth studies of unit-specific orientation and mentoring relationships could provide additional insight into what content is currently offered in such programs. That, in turn, would help identify content areas not currently being addressed and also provide opportunities for increasing employee awareness of individual task significance.

Research that explores employee values for engagement and preparedness as related to actual student success rates at institutions would be another important avenue of study. This study was able to identify strategies common to institutions that exhibited both higher than average levels of employee engagement and preparedness to assist students, and higher than average levels of student engagement. The next step could be to determine if those higher levels of engagement across both groups are related to higher success rates among students. Such information would help institutions focus on those engagement strategies that would have the greatest impact on student success. In addition, there is a need to develop an instrument that will effectively measure and align students' perceptions of engagement with that of all college employees. Current instruments focus only on faculty perceptions of student engagement, which does not accurately reflect the overall culture of engagement in institutions.

Institutions should consider using the discoveries from this study to encourage development of models of employee engagement that would meet the needs of their particular employee groups. Case studies of institutions using pre- and posttests of both employee and student engagement coupled with exposure to robust engagement strategies could be integral to greater understanding of which strategies or combination of strategies are most likely to increase success rates at particular institutions.

Lastly, research is needed that looks at community college organizational socialization strategies from job-posting through hiring, training, orientation, and evaluation processes. Understanding the importance of task significance and the alignment of the employees' values to the values of the institutions should give colleges pause when seeking individuals to fill available positions. While this study has focused on engaging all employees in the mission of student success, there are implications for community colleges concerning how to first seek out and hire individuals most likely to embrace that mission and help the institution increase the potential for success.

REFERENCES

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). (2012). *Reclaiming the American dream: Community colleges and the nation's future*. Retrieved from http://www.aacc21stcenturycenter.org/resources/21stcenturyinitiative/

Bakker, A. B. (2005). Flow among music teachers and their students: The crossover of peak experiences. *Journal Vocational Behavior, 66*, 26-44.

Bellanca, R. B. (2002). Professional development for a new age. In *Perspectives on the Community College: A Journey of Discovery* (Chapter 6). Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED463808

Blunt, R. J. S., & Connolly, J. (2006). Perceptions of mentoring: Expectations of a key resource for higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 20*(2), 195-208.

Boggs, G. R. (2010). *Democracy's colleges: The evolution of the community college in America*. Prepared for the White House Summit on Community Colleges. Retrieved from https://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/whsummit/Documents/boggs _whsummitbrief.pdf

Boon, C., Den Hartog, D. N., Boselie, P. & Paauwe, J. (2011). The relationship between perceptions of HR practices and employee outcomes: Examining the role of person—organisation and person—job fit. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 22*(1), 138-162.

Borden, V. M. H. (2001). *Measuring quality: Choosing among surveys and other assessments of college quality*. American Council on Education. Washington, DC: Association for Institutional Research.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27-40.

Bradley, A. P., & Blanco, C. D. (2010). *Promoting a culture of student success*. A report for the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Retrieved from http://publications.sreb.org/ 2010/10E02_Promoting_Culture.pdf

Bruce, K., & Sutton, N. (2014). *Community college employees' impact on student success: A study of organizational culture and employee engagement as related to* *developing consistent beliefs and messages about student success.* Unpublished manuscript, Extended and International Operations, Doctorate in Community College Leadership Program, Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan.

Calder, W. B., & Gordon, W. (1999). Institutionalizing college networks for student success. *Journal of College Student Retention*, *1*(4), 323-333.

Cameron, K. (1978). Measuring organizational effectiveness in institutions of higher education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *23*, 604-632.

Cameron, K., & Quinn, R. E. (2006). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework.* Beijing, China: Renmin University Press.

Castellano, W. (2015). *A new framework of employee engagement*. Centre for Human Resource Strategy, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Retrieved from http://smlr.rutgers.edu/new-framework-of-employee-engagement

Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCSSE). (2015). *Community College Survey of Student Engagement national results: College profiles.*Retrieved from http://www.ccsse.org/survey/profiles.cfm

Chao, G. T., O'Leary-Kelly, A. M., Wolf, S., Klein, H. J., & Gardner, P.D. (1994). Organizational socialization: Its content and consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*(5) 730-743.

Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2011). Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology, 64*(1) 89-136.

Cooper-Thomas, H. D., & Anderson, N. (2005). Organizational socialization: A field study into socialization success and rate. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 13*(2), 116-128.

Corbin, S. (2001). Role perception and job satisfaction of community college faculty. *Inquiry*, *6*(1).

Cullen, R., & Harris, M. (2008). Supporting new scholars: A learner-centered approach to new faculty orientation. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 2*(1), 17-28.

Daily, B. F., Bishop, J. W., & Maynard-Patrick, S. (2013). Practicing what we teach: Applying organizational behavior theory to academic success. *Journal of Managerial Issues, 25*(1), 8-25.

Davenport, T. H., & Prusak, L. (1998). *Working knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* New York: Aldine.

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). New York: Wiley.

Durso, T. (n.d.). *Trends with benefits*. Retrieved from http://www.universitybusiness.com/article/trends-benefits-0

Eddy, P. L., Chakraborty, R., Hancks, J., Lorensen, J., Smythe, T., & Browne, S. V. (2004). Creating resources for community college staff. *Academic Exchange Quarterly, 8*(3), 188-196.

Eisner, E. W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice.* Toronto: Collier Macmillan Canada.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5*(1), 80-92. Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5_1/pdf/fereday.pdf

Fink, L. D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Friesen, K. (2002). Classified staff development: An integrated model. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2002*(120), 43-50.

Gallo, A. (2011). Making sure your employees succeed. *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from http://blogs.hbr.org/2011/02/making-sure-your-employees-suc/

Garrison, C. P. (2005). Exploring new faculty orientation: The good, the bad, and making it better. *Essays in Education Online Journal, 13*. Retrieved from http://www.usca.edu/essays/vol13spring2005.html

Glisson, C., & Durick, M. (1988). Predictors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in human service organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *33*, 61-81.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R.(1976). Motivation through design of work. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance, 16*(2): 250-279. Retrieved from http://world.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/1319789168_Hackman-Oldham-1976.pdf

Harris, B. W. (1998). Looking inward: Building a culture of student success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 22*(4), 401-418.

Hopkins, R. A., & Grigoriu, E. (2005). Mentoring community college faculty and staff: Balancing contradictions of informal program components and formal program structure. *Community College Review, 32*(4), 40-59.

Huang, T., & Hsiao, W. (2007). The causal relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 35*(9), 1265-1275.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). (2014). Available from http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/

Jenkins, D. (2007). Institutional effectiveness and student success: A study of high- and low-impact community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 31*(12), 945-962.

Jones, A. (2008). Preparing new faculty members for their teaching role. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2008*(143), 93-100.

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(4), 692-724.

Kennedy, K., & Moore, M. (2008). The community college and customer relationship management. *College and University, 84*(1), 63-65. Retrieved from https://aacrao-web.s3.amazonaws.com/files/QYmVwoKLTsGdlNaa3KiB_summer2008.pdf

Kezar, A. (2007). Creating and sustaining a campus ethos encouraging student engagement. *About Campus, 11*(6), 13-18.

Kezar, A. J., & Kinzie, J. (2006). Examining the ways institutions create student engagement: The role of mission. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*(2), 149-172.

Kinzie, J., & Kuh, G. D. (2004). Going DEEP: Learning from campuses that share responsibility for student success. *About Campus, 9*(5), 2-8. Retrieved from http://nsse.iub.edu/institute/documents/Kinzie%20&%20Kuh%20article.pdf

Kuh, G. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning: Inside the National Survey of Student Engagement. *Change*, *33*(3), 10-17, 66. Retrieved from http://cpr.iub.edu/uploads/Assessing_What_Really_Matters_To_Student_Learning_%28Kuh,%202001%29.pdf

Kuh, G. (2003). How are we doing at engaging students? *About Campus, 8*(1), 9-16. Retrieved from http://cpr.iub.edu/uploads/Shroeder%20&%20Kuh%20%282003%29%20How%20Are%20We%20Doing%20at%20Engaging%20Students.pdf

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2006, June). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) Commissioned Paper.

Labuschagne, A. (2003). Qualitative research: Airy fairy or fundamental? *The Qualitative Report, 8*(1), Article 7. Retrieved January 5, 2009, from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-1/labuschagne.html

Lee, C. (2004). Creating a collaborative campus culture. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 28*(6), 503-511.

Lockwood, N. R., & Tai, B. (2006). Organizational entry: On-boarding, orientation and socialization. *Society for Human Resources Management.* Retrieved from http://www.shrm.org/research/articles/articles/pages/organizationalentryonboarding,orientationandsocialization.aspx

Lunceford, C. J. (2014). It takes a village: The role of the individual, organization, and profession in preparing new professionals. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2014*(166), 13-20.

McClenney, K. M. (2007). Research update: The Community College Survey of Student Engagement. *Community College Review, 35*(2). Retrieved from https://www.ccsse.org/center/resources/docs/research/Research_Update_2007_CCR.pdf

McClenney, K. M., & Arnsparger, A. (2012). *Students speak: Are we listening? Starting right in the community college.* Austin, TX: Center for Community College Engagement.

McClenney, K. M., & Greene, T. (2005). A tale of two students: Building a culture of engagement in the community college. *About Campus, 10*(3), 2-7. Retrieved from http://profj.us/student-success/culture.pdf

McClenney, K. M., Marti, C. N., & Adkins, C. (2007). *Student engagement and student outcomes: Key findings from CCSSE validation research: Report on validation research.* Austin, TX: Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Available from http://www.ccsse.org/center/publications/#nationalreports

McGrath, D., & Tobia, S. (2008). Organizational culture as a hidden resource. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2008*(144), 41-53.

McLeod, W. B., & Young, J. M. (2005). A chancellor's vision: Establishing an institutional culture of student success. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 2005*(125), 73-85.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. (2015). *Survey information*. Retrieved from http://www.nchems.org/services/surveys/

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Noel-Levitz. (2014). *Noel-Levitz institutional priorities survey*. Retrieved from https://www.noellevitz.com/upload/Student_Retention/IPS/Samples/IPSFormA2yrPaperandPencilSample.pdf

Papandrea, D. (2015). Outlook on enrollment: Perfect storm of challenges ahead. *University Business.* Retrieved from http://www.universitybusiness.com/article/outlook-enrollment-perfect-storm-challenges-ahead

Price, D. V., & Tovar, E. (2014). Student engagement and institutional graduation rates: Identifying high-impact educational practices for community colleges. *Journal of Community College Research and Practice, 38*(9), 766-782.

Quinn, R. E., & Cameron, K. S. (1983). Organizational life cycles and shifting criteria of effectiveness: Some preliminary evidence. *Management Science, 29*(1), 33-51.

Quinn, R. E., & Rohrbaugh, J. (1983). A spatial model of effectiveness criteria: Towards a competing values approach to organizational analysis. *Management Science, 29*(3), 363-377.

Rapley, T. (2007). *Doing conversation, discourse and document analysis*. London: Sage.

Savage, H. E., Karp, R. S., & Logue, R. (2004). Faculty mentorship at colleges and universities. *College Teaching, 52*(1), 21-24. Retrieved from http://www.uwplatt.edu/files/tlc/Mentoring/Faculty%20Mentorships.pdf

Smart, J. C. (2003). Organizational effectiveness of 2-year colleges: The centrality of cultural and leadership complexity. *Research in Higher Education, 44*(6), 673-703.

Smart, J. C., & Hamm, R. E. (1993). Organizational culture and effectiveness in two-year colleges. *Research in Higher Education, 34*(1), 95-106.

Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

SurveyMonkey. (2013, September 9). *Security statement*. Retrieved from https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/security/

Thomas, K. W. (2000). *Intrinsic motivation at work: Building energy and commitment.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Tinto, V. (2005). *Student success and the construction of inclusive educational communities.* American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Tinto, V., & Pusser, B. (2006, June). *Moving from theory to action: Building a model of institutional action for student success.* National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.

Trahant, B. (2008). Six communication secrets of top-performing organizations: Through better communication, government executives and human capital professionals engage employees to improve organizational performance. *The Public Manager, 37*(3), 68-75. Retrieved from http://faculty.cbpp.uaa.alaska.edu/afgjp/PADM610/Six%20Communication%20Secrets%20of%20Top%20Orgs.pdf

Troller, K. T. (2002). College of DuPage Teaching and Learning Center: A comprehensive professional development program. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2002*(120), 67-73.

Troy, D. (2013). Engagement in a community college setting. *Community College Enterprise, 19*(1), 45-54. Retrieved from http://www.schoolcraft.edu/cce/19.1.45-54.pdf

Umbach, P. D. (2004). Web surveys: Best practices. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 2004*(121), 23-38.

Vanwagoner, R. J., Bowman, L. S., & Spraggs, L. D. (2005). Editor's choice: The significant community college. *Community College Review, 33*(1), 38-50.

Vorhauser-Smith, S. (2013). How the best places to work are nailing employee engagement. *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/sylviavorhausersmith/2013/08/14/how-the-best-places-to-work-are-nailing-employee-engagement/

Walker, W. J. (2013). The new work contract: Mitigating the negative effects on work attitudes. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 17*(2), 121-136.

Watts, G. E., & Hammons, J. O. (2002). Professional development: Setting the context. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2002*(120), 5-10.

Welch, G. F. (2002). A new faculty orientation program: Building a core of new faculty to shape the future of the college. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 2002*(120), 11-16.

Williams, A. (2009). At the U. of Minnesota, one big happy orientation. *The Chronicle of Higher Education 55*(43), 15. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/At-the-U-of-Minnesota-One/47528/

Williams, R. (2003). *Mellon Learning Curve Research Study*. New York: Mellon Corp.

Yates, D., Moore, D., & McCabe, G. (1999). *The practice of statistics*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Zeffane, R. (2006). Factors affecting preferred sources of information: Exploring the impact of trust, job satisfaction and communication effectiveness. *Management: Journal of Contemporary Management Issues, 11*(2), 93-110. Retrieved from http://hrcak.srce.hr/19149?lang=en

APPENDIX A: FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Ferris State University

Institutional Review Board (FSU - IRB)
Office of Academic Research
Ferris State University
1201 S. State Street-CSS 310 H
Big Rapids, MI 49307
(231) 591-2553
IRB@ferris.edu

To: Dr. Roberta Teahen, Dr. Diane Chaddock, Kathy Bruce and Nancy Sutton
From: Dr. Stephanie Thomson, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application #140907 (Title: *What is the relationship between organizational strategies on employee engagement and employee perceptions of their impact on student success?*)
Date: October 3, 2014

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, *"What is the relationship between organizational strategies on employee engagement and employee perceptions of their impact on student success?"* (#140907) and determined that it meets Federal Regulations *Exempt-category1C.* This approval has an expiration date of three years from the date of this letter. **As such, you may collect data according to the procedures outlined in your application until October 3, 2017.** 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 protocol has been assigned a project number (#140907), which you should refer to in future correspondence involving this same research procedure.

We also wish to inform researchers that the IRB requires annual follow-up reports for all research protocols as mandated by Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46) for using human subjects in research. We will send a one-year reminder to note the continuation of this project or to complete the final report. The final-report form is available on the IRB homepage. Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let us know if the IRB can be of any future assistance.

Regards,

S. Thomson

Ferris State University Institutional Review Board
Office of Academic Research, Academic Affairs

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important. The purpose of this survey is to better understand organizational strategies that employees believe enhance their role in student success. Participation in this survey is voluntary and your responses are anonymous. No attempt will be made to connect individual employees with their responses and you have the option of refraining from responding to any questions you choose. It is our hope that you feel comfortable in answering all questions as that will provide the greatest level of understanding the relationship between organizational strategies and student success.

By selecting the next button you are verifying that you have read the email letter that led you to this link, the information above, are at least18 years of age and agree to participate in Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success. This will serve as your electronic signature of consent.

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

1. Student success is one of the primary missions of your institution.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

2. You believe your job has a significant impact on student success.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

3. The college provides you with support and tools you need to do your job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

4. You are encouraged to make suggestions as to how your job can better support student success.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

5. Your institution emphasizes these items as important factors in student success.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Safety in the college	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Cleanliness of facilities	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Well-maintained physical environment	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Friendliness of employees	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
College reputation	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Contact with faculty outside of the classroom	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Accessibility for students with disabilities	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Services for under-prepared students	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Affordability	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Use of technology in the classroom	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

6. You are encouraged or required by the college to develop annual performance goals that include continued professional development and training to help you better support student success.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

7. The college offers you on-campus opportunities for professional development/training.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

8. The college offers you sessions on new college initiatives and updates on current initiatives.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

9. How are opportunities for training, professional development, and new college initiatives communicated? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Mail/flyer
- ☐ Online employee portal
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ No communication, I have to ask

Other (please specify)

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

10. How often do you take advantage of opportunities for professional development, continued training and to learn about new initiatives?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
○	○	○	○	○

11. The college encourages you to seek professional development and/or training outside the institution.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

12. The college recognizes or rewards its employees for continued professional development and/or training.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

13. Continued professional development/training is an important component of your employee performance evaluation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

14. How often do you interact with students?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
○	○	○	○	○

15. How often have students asked you for help with the following?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Academic or course selection advice	○	○	○	○	○
Career advice	○	○	○	○	○
Directions	○	○	○	○	○
Financial advice	○	○	○	○	○
Personal advice	○	○	○	○	○
Registration Information	○	○	○	○	○
Safety/Security assistance	○	○	○	○	○
Technical/Computer assistance	○	○	○	○	○

16. Indicate how prepared you believe you are to answer student questions about the following:

	Not at all Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Well Prepared	Very Well Prepared
Academic or course selection advice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Career advice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Directions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Financial advice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Personal advice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Registration Information	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Safety/Security assistance	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Technical/Computer assistance	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

17. If you could not directly answer students questions, how prepared were you to direct them to the appropriate place/person for assistance?

	Not at all Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Well Prepared	Very Well Prepared
Academic or course selection advice	○	○	○	○	○
Career advice	○	○	○	○	○
Directions	○	○	○	○	○
Financial advice	○	○	○	○	○
Personal advice	○	○	○	○	○
Registration Information	○	○	○	○	○
Safety/Security assistance	○	○	○	○	○
Technical/Computer assistance	○	○	○	○	○

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

18. Did your job require an orientation (a mandatory activity or series of activities to introduce you to your job and the mission, values and culture of the college)?

- Yes
- No

19. The orientation was:

- ○ Face to face with a supervisor or mentor
- ○ Face to face in a group setting
- ○ Online only
- ○ Blended online and face to face sessions

Other (please specify)

20. How frequently were orientation sessions held?

- ○ Once
- ○ Weekly for one semester
- ○ Monthly for one semester

Other (please specify)

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

21. The orientation:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Helped you understand the college's mission, values and culture of student success	○	○	○	○	○
Helped you understand your role in student success	○	○	○	○	○
Prepared you to answer student questions	○	○	○	○	○
Prepared you to direct student to the appropriate place/person if you could not directly assist	○	○	○	○	○
Helped prepare you for your employee performance evaluation	○	○	○	○	○

22. Overall, the orientation was helpful to you.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

23. Did you have a mentor to introduce you to your job and the mission, values and culture of the college?

- Yes
- No

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

24. How often did you meet with your mentor?

- Once
- Weekly for one semester
- Monthly for one semester
- Other (please specify)

25. Your mentor:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Helped you understand the college's mission, values and culture of student success					
Helped you understand your role in student success					
Prepared you to answer student questions					
Prepared you to direct student to the appropriate place/person if you could not directly assist					
Helped prepare you for your employee performance evaluation					

26. Overall, the mentoring program was helpful to you.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

27. In what unit of the College do you work?

- Academic Services/Faculty
- Administration and Finance
- Institutional Research/Advancement/Grants/Contracts
- Marketing/Community Relations
- Physical Plant/Grounds/Maintenance
- Student Services
- Foundation/Fundraising

Other (please specify)

28. What is your employment status at the College?

- Full-time
- Part-time

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

29. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- High School Diploma
- GED
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

30. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- I prefer not to respond

31. What race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic American
- White / Caucasian
- Other
- I prefer not to respond

Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success

32. What is your age?

- Less than 18
- 18-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 or over
- I prefer not to respond

33. How long have you been employed at this institution?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 5 years
- 6 -10 years
- 11 – 15 years
- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 25 years
- More than 25 years

34. Please add any additional information that you believe may be helpful.

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY

Dear Participant:

By way of introduction, we are Nancy Sutton, Department Chair of Fine and Applied Arts at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois and Kathy Bruce, Dean of Math and Science at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. We are in the final stages of the Ferris State University Doctorate in Community College Leadership (DCCL) program and would like to invite you to join faculty and staff at community colleges across the Midwest by participating in a research project entitled: ***Employee Views on Organizational Strategies and Student Success.*** The purpose of this survey is to identify employees' roles in student success initiatives and to gather information on institutional strategies that may be related to those roles.

At the end of this email is a link to a survey regarding your job as it relates to student success. It is our hope that this information can assist in determining institutional best practices to better engage employees in student success initiatives.

The survey is anonymous. Participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate without consequence. The survey consists of several multiple choice questions and will take only a few minutes to complete. You will receive no compensation for participating in the research study. Individual responses to the survey will only be reported in aggregated form to protect the identity of respondents. The results will be the basis of our dissertations to fulfill the requirements of the DCCL program. Neither the researchers nor the University has a conflict of interest with the results. There are no identified risks from participating in this research, which has been approved by Ferris State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as the IRB at your institution. The data collected from this study will be retained in a locked cabinet for three years.

To insure safe and proper research procedures, auditors of the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board and regulatory authority(ies) will be granted direct access to the research data without violating the confidentiality of the participants. Further information regarding the research, or the final results, can be obtained from the principal researchers Kathy Bruce, brucek4@ferris.edu, Nancy Sutton, suttonn4@ferris.edu or our faculty advisors, Dr. Roberta Teahen, Assoc. Provost, Academic Affairs/Director, DCCL, Ferris State University, robertateahen@ferris.edu, (231) 591-3805 or Dr. Diane Chaddock, Retired Executive Vice President/COO, Southwestern Michigan College, dkchadock@gmail.com. If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board, 220 Ferris Drive, PHR 308, Big Rapids, MI 49307, by phone at (231) 591-2553 or by email, IRB@ferris.edu

When you begin the survey you will be asked to indicate that you have read the above information, are at least 18 years of age and agree to participate in the survey by checking a box, which will serve as your electronic signature of consent.

Please click on the following link to begin the survey (link to be inserted here).

We appreciate your willingness to help us with this project and value your time and consideration in assisting us in exploring new ways to engage one another in our shared mission of student success.

Kathy Bruce
Nancy Sutton

APPENDIX D: KEY TO DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document Analysis Key

	Mission Statement	Strategic Plan	Goals	Core Values	FT Orientation Packet	Mentoring Program	Professional Development Program	Evaluation processes
CCa	x	x	x	x				
CCb	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
CCc	x	x	x	x	x	x		
CCd	x	x	x	x	x			
CCe	x	x	x	x	x	x		
CCf	x	x	x	x				

Descriptive	Student success initiatives apparent	Student success initiatives apparent	Student success initiatives apparent	Student success initiatives apparent	Type of orientation	Type of mentor	Type of programs available	Type of evaluation
Inclusiveness		Plan indicates involvement of all employees or specific groups of employees	Goals directed toward all employees or specific groups of employees	Values address all employees or specific groups of employees	Available to all employees	Available to all employees	Available to all employees	Available to all employees
Goal setting					Identifies goals	Encourages discussion of goals	Sessions available on goal setting	Employee gets to create own goals
Task Signifi-cance & value					Task Significance to mission	Encourages discussion of Task Significance to mission	Sessions specific to Task Significance to mission	Evaluates understanding of Task Significance to mission
Providing resources for assisting students					Includes info on how to assist students	Includes info on how to assist students	Includes sessions on how to assist students	Includes discussions on how to assist students
Contribution to processes		Indication that employees participate in planning process	Indication that employees participate in institutional goal setting process		Evaluation process for program	Evaluation of program	Level of employee input into options for development	Employee opportunity for suggestions in process
Frequency of strategy implemen-tation					Length of program	Length of program	Frequency of sessions	Frequency of evaluation

APPENDIX E: OPEN-ENDED ORIENTATION QUESTIONS

Open-ended responses on frequency of orientation, categorized.

Category	Number of Responses
Monthly for one year	20
One session	5
Unknown/Don’t remember	5
One week	4
Two day session	4
As needed	4
Once per semester	2
Periodically throughout one semester	2
Four sessions	2
Monthly	1
Twice per semester	1
Multiple days	1
Weekly for one year	1
Weekly for six months	1

APPENDIX F: OPEN-ENDED MENTORING QUESTIONS

Open-ended responses on frequency of mentoring sessions, categorized.

Category	Number of Responses
As needed	21
Daily	14
Informal	12
Biweekly	6
Occasionally	6
Weekly for one year	5
Frequently/Often	4
Monthly for one year	2
Never	2
Rarely	1
Regularly during the three year tenure process	1
Ongoing	1
Several times per year for two years	1