

THE ROLE OF MENTORING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS: PROFILES OF EIGHT SUCCESSFUL
WOMEN

by

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ABSTRACT

A leadership crisis is not approaching; we are in the midst of it. At a time when community colleges are being called on to create a stronger nation through higher education, aging senior leaders retiring at above normal rates, in combination with a shallow pool of future leaders, is creating a critical gap for community colleges. According to a 2012 report by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), three-quarters of community college presidents surveyed planned to retire within ten years. Data showed the number of post-graduate degrees earned in community college administration had dropped significantly as well. On the verge of a leadership void, community colleges must focus efforts on rebuilding the pipeline.

Developing new talent by building leadership capacity is a critical component of addressing the needs of community colleges. Ensuring sufficient leaders, capable of enhancing both the quality and quantity of these centers of educational opportunity, is vital. Experts say successful colleges of the future will be the ones who are cultivating new generations of leaders at every level today. Throughout history, mentoring has proven to be an effective tool in the growth and development of future leaders and should be considered a viable option for creating a pipeline of future community college leaders, more specifically, female leaders.

This qualitative study was carried out in an effort to understand the role mentoring played in the development of current female community college leaders. Specifically, it examines the parameters of mentoring relationships through in-depth conversational

interviews with eight female community college leaders. Their mentoring relationships were both formal and informal, with male and female mentors of varying ranks, both internal and external to the protégé's institutions. Through an analysis of the interview text, data were organized into clusters; as a result five themes emerged: (1) opportunity, (2) trust, (3) confidence, (4) support, and (5) guidance.

There is much work to be done in order to prepare the next generation of female community college leaders. With the pending shortages in leadership community colleges will face in the coming years, information about mentoring shared by current female leaders is particularly useful as to those preparing to fill leadership roles in the future.

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DEDICATION

To my family, thank you for encouraging me to pursue my dreams,
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The pending retirements of the baby boom generation have been a concern for decades. Baby boomers, comprising the largest generation in American history, were born between 1946 and 1964. They outnumber the generation that precedes them two to one, and are just half as large as the generation that follows. On January 1, 2011, the oldest members of the Baby Boom generation celebrated their 65th birthday. In fact, on that day, today, and every day until 2030, more than 10,000 more baby boomers will cross that threshold, turning 65 years old (Pew Research Center, 2010). That means each month over a quarter-million Americans hit retirement age and the total each year is nearly four million.

Despite the staggering numbers, and the fact that the first Baby Boomers became eligible for retirement four years ago, this group still makes up a substantial portion of America's workforce. In fact, according to a recent Gallup poll regarding the percentage of each generation in the workforce (Harter & Agrawal, 2014), Boomers still constitute about one-third (31%) of the workforce, almost mirroring the percentages for millennials (33%) and Generation Xers (32%). This poses a challenge; as the aging Boomers continue to work, the potential for a sizable gap in America's workforce also increases. To compound the problem further, a considerable portion of these soon-to- retire Baby

Boomers are middle managers and senior leaders, making them valued sources of knowledge, skills, and expertise.

Like many industries, higher education, including community colleges, is in a predicament. According to the Higher Learning Commission, “Community colleges throughout the nation are and will continue to experience dramatic losses in senior leadership due to the massive retirements of baby-boomer-generation employees” (Rice & O’Keefe, 2014, para.1). Having grown exponentially in the late 1900s, presidents, senior leaders, and faculty members alike are retiring at alarming rates. Shults (2001) predicted this trend would continue for several years as Baby Boomers continued to age. According to the American Council on Education (ACE), in 2006, of current community college presidents, only 10% were 50 years of age or younger and by 2011 the average age had reached 60 (ACE, 2007, 2012). Weisman and Vaughan (2007) and Shults (2001) estimated the need for 700 new presidents and 30,000 new faculty members to fill the void left by retiring Baby Boomers. Similarly, a 2012 report from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2012) found that 75% of community college presidents planned to retire within the next ten years, resulting in a leadership gap unlike anything community colleges have seen in their history (Phillippe & Tekle, 2013).

Given the imminent situation, increased leadership development is necessary, not only to address this void, but to maintain consistent and reliable leadership during this looming crisis. Efforts to identify and develop the next generation of America’s leaders in order to fill gaps left by talented yet older workers in the community college sector and beyond will be critical. Preparation to deepen and widen the talent pool will take time, thought, and planning. All efforts to offset the effects of a mass exodus must be strategic.

There is no cure-all to solve this problem; leadership development practices such as formal coursework, cross-training, coaching, job shadowing, goal setting, and mentoring will be required to produce a robust group of seasoned professionals capable of achieving continuity in leadership.

Statement of Problem

At the turn of the 21st century, experts suggested a crisis was looming within community college leadership – unprecedented levels of turnover (Bumphus & Neal, 2008; Cohen, 2002; Shults, 2001). It was projected that, within the first decade of the new millennium, the community college sector would suffer the consequences of America’s aging workforce. With many community colleges being established by their founding fathers in the 1960s and 70s, Baby Boomers, who occupied a large number of the presidential and upper-level administrative positions, were steadily reaching retirement age (Shults, 2001). Findings from a 2001 survey conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reported nearly half of these leaders (45%) planned to retire by 2007, and almost 80% by the end of the first decade (Shults, 2001). Equally as startling, subordinates to the retiring president, possible successors even, were also approaching retirement age (Boggs, cited in Campbell, 2002). The most significant leadership transition in the history of America’s community colleges was closing in (Boggs, 2003).

Time did not bring positive change in the mounting crisis. Just over half way through the first decade, an updated report presented more concerning news regarding the leadership void; the number of CEOs planning to retire had increased. In 2006 an AACC study showed the percentage of community college leaders planning to retire by 2016 had

climbed to 84% (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007) and a more recent report revealed that, while the percent of projected retirements in the following decade had declined slightly, three-quarters (75%) of community college CEOs surveyed still planned to retire within ten years (Phillippe & Tekle, 2013). What's more, there were problems in the pipeline. A great need for up-and-coming leaders to step up to the challenges of community college leadership was growing and, according to AACC's 2012 report "Reclaiming the American Dream: Community College and the Nation's Future," a robust group of candidates to move into vacant leadership positions did not exist; the pool of potential senior leaders and presidents was shrinking (AACC, 2012). To further compound the problem, at a time when much attention was being given to the need for training future community college leaders, a 78% reduction in graduates with degrees in Community College Administration was projected (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). These once male-dominated institutions were need of a new and diverse group of leaders with the skills and competencies to lead them into the 21st century and beyond.

Leadership Profile

Community college leaders have changed over time. According to Shults (2001), Amey and VanDerLinden (2002), and Weisman and Vaughan (2002, 2007), studies of college presidents indicated that 89% were Caucasian in 1991, 89% in 2001, and 88% in 2006; 89% were male in 1991, 72% in 2001, and 71% in 2006; the average age was steadily increasing, from 51 in 1986, to 54 in 1991, 57 in 1998, 56 in 2001, and 58 in 2006; in 1984, 76% of presidents indicated they held a doctorate degree, that number rose to 89% in 1991 before dropping 1% in 2001 and 3% in 2006; historically, 71% of the presidents surveyed indicated some area of education as their field of study; in 1991 and

2001 approximately 40% said they attended a community college, 16% and 19%, respectively, reporting earning an associate’s degree in those years, the number dropped by 1% in 2006. The table below summarizes the profile of community college leaders in recent history.

Table 1: *Profile of Community College Leaders*

	DEMOGRAPHICS			EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
	Race: Caucasian	Gender: Male	Average Age	Attended Community College	Earned Associate Degree	Hold Doctorate
Year	%	%	Year	%	%	%
1984	ND*	ND	ND	ND	ND	76
1986	ND	ND	51	ND	ND	ND
1991	89	89	54	40	16	89
1998	ND	ND	57	ND	ND	ND
2001	89	72	56	40	19	88
2006	88	71	58	ND	18	85

*ND = no data

Source: Shults (2001), Amey and VanDerLinden (2002), and Weisman and Vaughan (2002, 2007)

Since 1984, the average tenure of a community college president in his or her current position has remained steady. Reports from 2001 and 2006 show the average to be seven years; however, more than half of the respondents reported being in their current position fewer than five years. Similarly, the percentages of new presidents remained steady. In both 2001 and 2006, reports indicated 10% of presidents with tenure of one year or fewer, and 17% of presidents with tenure of two years or fewer. Consistent with 1984 data, 40% of presidents came into the presidency from a Chief Academic Officer position in both 2001 and 2006, and approximately one-third indicated they were internal candidates for their first presidential position. Finally, projections of retirements were also on the rise. In 1996, 68% of presidents indicated they planned to retire within ten years and in 2001, 79% planned to retire by 2011. In 2006, 84% of presidents surveyed indicated they would retire by 2016.

While leadership is often exercised from the top, and much of the research regarding community college leadership focuses squarely on the presidency, being a leader does not just equate to being a president or CEO. Looking beyond community college presidents, Shults (2001), Amey and VanDerLinden (2002), and Weisman and Vaughan (2007) examined the backgrounds of other senior leaders as well. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) specifically researched chief officers in student and academic affairs, continuing and occupational education, and business and industry divisions. Their study was, in part, a replication of Moore, Martorana, and Twombly's 1985 study *Today's Academic Leaders: A National Study of Administrators*, which provided a comprehensive analysis of administrative positions at two-year colleges (1985). The study was rooted in the fact that a pending leadership crisis was on the horizon and successful colleges needed to cultivate new generations of leaders at all levels, not just the presidency. In addition to career paths and backgrounds, the study examined the tools used to develop these future leaders.

Regarding the role of Chief Academic Officer, which Weisman and Vaughan's (2007) in-depth examination of the presidency a year earlier suggested as the prominent pathway, Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) suggested that more than half Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) came into their position from the role of assistant or associate dean, while a smaller percent came from continuing or vocational education, student affairs, learning resources, development, and other non-academic positions. Interestingly, only 7% of CAOs were promoted from faculty ranks and 6% came from outside of the field. Furthermore, they posit CAOs were more likely to be promoted from within their

organization, rather than hired from another community college, and their tenure was relatively short, with 74% staying five years or less.

Senior Student Affairs Officers (SSAOs) typically joined the ranks after being promoted from within Student Affairs; 53% came from positions such as associate or assistant dean of Student Services, 19% from director of counseling positions, and 11% from other administrative areas ranging from continuing education positions to those in public schools. SSAOs were also likely to be promoted from within (almost two-thirds) and, unlike CAOs, were more likely to be retained longer, with 16 years being the average time spent at one institution.

Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) came predominately from the private sector and held positions such as bank managers, controllers, and auditors. Three-fifths were previously employed at community colleges, just over 10% in the private sector, and a handful came from other financial positions in public schools. Many held at least one position in the private sector within their professional career.

Directors in Continuing Education (CE) varied in their career paths. Most had roles such as director, coordinator, or manager of at least one educational program. Over half (58%) held their past positions at a community college and nearly 13% came directly from the private sector; they averaged seven years in their current CE position. Other prominent but less obvious positions leading to senior leadership roles included director of Occupational or Vocational Education and Business and Industry Liaisons.

In terms of gender, the roots of a male dominance in community college leadership can be traced back to the founding fathers who led the early junior colleges and during the growth period of the 1960s and 1970s (Eddy, 2008), and while women

have made some gains, the majority of community colleges continue to be led by males. Women were severely under-represented, accounting for just 3% of community presidents in the mid-80s and 8% by 1986. In the following 12 years, women began to gain traction; they accounted for 22% of community college leaders in 1998. The 21st century also brought progress, with the number of female presidents increasing to 28% in 2001 before leveling off at 29% in 2006 (Shults, 2001; Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). According to the American Council on Education (ACE, 2007), community colleges experienced the largest increase in the percentage of women presidents from 1986 to 2006. They increased even more, climbing to 33.3% two-year college presidents in 2011 (ACE, 2012) and 36% in 2014 (Phillippe & Tekle, 2014). Women in other senior leadership positions have also made great strides, having increased from just 16% of CAOs, 12% of Chief Business Officers (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002) in Moore, Martorana, and Twombly's 1985 study, to occupying 56% of community college's executive, administrative, and managerial staff positions (Phillippe & Tekle, 2014). According to the AACC paper, *Bridging the Leadership Gap*, (Phillippe & Tekle, 2014), except with regard to the presidency, females are well represented as campus administrators, despite the fact that they are still disproportionate to the ratio of female students or faculty members (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). Finally, in general, women tended to have spent less time in their current positions, were more likely to be promoted from within, and less likely to hold a doctorate degree.

Leadership Styles, Skills, and Competencies

As the profile of community college leaders has changed over time, so too have the leadership styles, skills, and competencies needed to successfully lead community

colleges. Sullivan (2001) grouped community college presidents into four distinct generations, each of which she said had a unique leadership style. In the 2001 article, “Four Generations of Community College Leadership,” Sullivan illustrated the changing role of each generation, from the leaders of today to those who forged the path before them by saying the following:

As their leaders near their 30th, 40th, and even higher anniversaries of service, many institutions are making a transition to a new generation of presidents whose leadership style is considerably different from that of their predecessors: (a) the first generation of founding fathers, who pioneered a new and democratic form of higher education; (b) the second generation of good managers, who led the colleges through a period of rapid growth and abundant resources; and (c) the third generation of collaborators, who have drawn disparate groups together to leverage scarce resources and make access to higher education truly universal. (p. 560)

The first two generations of presidents had similar characteristics. They were patriarchal, autocratic, and hierarchical; their leadership style mirrored that of industry. They were creative, daring, and unrestricted (Sullivan, 2001). As community colleges expanded immensely, early community college presidents, some with minimal amounts of top-level administrative experiences, were tasked with the stressful job of opening colleges. They started with minimal resources and built large, comprehensive community colleges. According to Weisman and Vaughan (1998), “Founding presidents were not that rare in the 1960s and early 1970s, a time during which, in some years, a new community college opened each week” (p. 2). Their role was stressful, “Sometimes almost no one in the area in which the college was located had ever heard of a community college” (Weisman & Vaughan, 1998, p. 10). Founding fathers had no history, experience, or credibility to draw from, but they possessed an undying enthusiasm for the community college mission and told the story of access and inclusivity

dutifully. Unlike the founding presidents, which were responsible for establishing community colleges, but influenced by them nonetheless, the second generation of leaders, or good managers, strived to maintain and build upon the mission, vision, and values that had already been established. They also led the community colleges through a period of rapid enrollment and financial growth (Sullivan, 2001, Weisman & Vaughan, 1998). Together, these two generations of leaders, most of whom had retired by the 1990s, created a form of higher education that was uniquely American, highly successful, and dominated by male leadership.

The third generation of presidents, Collaborators, which Sullivan (2001) called well prepared to face the challenges of the period, “built on the strong foundation laid by the two preceding generations, enduring recessions, pressures to be more accountable, public distrust, increasing numbers of underprepared students, and the explosion of the Internet” (p. 561). Collaborators were more diverse than their predecessors, understood the value of education a means of upward mobility, engaged in social activism, and had prepared themselves for the presidency by completing degrees or participating in leadership development programs that were specific to higher education administration. As Sullivan (2001) pointed out, collaborators “intentionally prepared for administrative careers and they bring to these assignments skills that were only gained on the job by members of the previous two generations” (p. 562).

Finally, the millennium generation, the fourth group of community college leaders, was technology dependent, collaborative, workforce focused, and more prepared than any of the other generation. In fact, according to Sullivan (2001), “Overall, these fourth-generation leaders appear to be more sophisticated and knowledgeable than their

predecessors as they step into the CEO role” (p. 570). Weisman and Vaughan (1998) posit that these well prepared millennium presidents were cultivated by the founding presidents; they have built upon the foundations laid by their predecessors; and they have adopted their philosophies and practices to meet the needs of today’s community colleges.

While each generation of leaders faced a unique set of challenges with different styles and skills, it is evident by their successes that leaders in every generation embodied a similar set of competencies required for successful leadership. That premise, in combination with urgency for well-prepared leaders who could sustain the success of community colleges and their students, was the impetus for AACC’s project, *Leading Forward*, which addressed the growing leadership gap at America's community colleges at the start of the new millennium. Through collaboration, research, and learning summits, the knowledge, skills, and values, or “core competencies” required of successful community college leaders were identified and recognized. AACC endorsed six competencies: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism. Their 2005 publication, *Competencies for Community College Leaders* (see Appendix A), presented them as a framework to help emerging leaders chart personal leadership development process and institutions shape the curriculum for Community College Administration programs (AACC, 2005). The competencies were based on five principles:

1. Leadership can be learned. While it can be enhanced immeasurably by natural aptitude and experience, supporting leaders with exposure to theory, concepts, cases, guided experiences, and other practical information and learning methodologies is essential.
2. Many members of the community college community can lead. The competencies will shift in importance depending upon the level of the leader.

For example, it is more critical that a president be able to communicate effectively with the board than for a staff assistant to do so. Both, however, can benefit from mastery of the communication competency.

3. Effective leadership is a combination of effective management and vision. Ideally, acquisition of management skills would precede vision. In reality the two skill sets often develop in tandem and are presented together in this competency framework.
4. Learning leadership is a lifelong process, the movement of which is influenced by personal and career maturity as well as other developmental processes.
5. The leadership gap can be addressed through a variety of strategies such as college grow-your-own programs, AACC council and university programs, state system programs, residential institutes, coaching, mentoring, and on-line and blended approaches. Important considerations that apply to all forms of delivery include sustaining current leaders and developing new ones. (AACC, 2005, p. 3)

AACC called the framework a "living document," and suggested it would evolve over time to keep up with the changing institutions and their leaders.

In 2013, in response to the ever-changing landscape of higher education, AACC revamped its leadership competencies and released the second edition of *AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders* in 2013 (see Appendix B). Building off the original work, the new framework, which is presented as a progression, starting with the most basic application for emerging leaders and evolving with career progression, drew the following conclusions:

1. Successful leaders move institutions to achieve high and improving student success rates.
2. We need dramatic steps—a greater sense of urgency and alignment—if we wish to change the student success results.
3. The expectations we have of our leaders are different from past expectations; priorities must shift to accountability for improving student success.

4. There needs to be deliberate preparation in order to produce leaders with the right competencies, particularly competencies in risk taking and change management. (AACC, 2012, p. 2)

The new framework was built on the notion that institutional transformation could not take place without the development and continual improvement of college leadership and that the expectations of emerging leaders differ than those of the past.

Leadership Development

If community colleges are to successfully address the challenges created by the current leadership crisis, particular attention must be paid to leadership development (Boggs, cited in Campbell, 2002), which can be defined as the teaching of leadership qualities an individual may need in a leadership position (Leadership Development, n.d.). With the majority of community college presidents planning to retire in the coming years, how and when emerging leaders are developed for career progression is more important than ever and much attention has been given to the training needed to prepare future community college leaders to succeed their predecessors in these vital leadership roles: “By thoroughly identifying the skills and competencies that community college leaders will need in the future and providing a wide range of strategies for developing those skills, the current leadership of America’s community colleges can feel confident that their successors will be well prepared for the challenges and opportunities that await them” (Watts & Hammons, 2002, p. 65).

The early generations had little formal preparation for their leadership roles. They acquired skills and honed their leadership capacity through on-the-job training. In fact, according to Weisman and Vaughan (1998), they gained the majority of their skills and perfected their craft while carrying out their jobs:

The early presidents who were successful were quick studies; they learned a great deal about the community college mission while they were shaping it. Just as important, they learned a great deal about being a president while functioning as one. Presidents read everything they could about the community college. Attendance at the annual meeting of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, as it was then called, became mandatory. There presidents met their counter-parts, shared experiences, and heard numerous speeches on the community college mission, governance, funding, and other aspects of this rapidly developing phenomenon in American higher education. (p. 6-7)

In contrast, presidents of today were able to lean on and learn from their forefathers. In fact, Weisman and Vaughan (1998) suggest “Many of today's presidents were influenced, mentored, and trained by founding presidents of the 1960s and 1970s, often adopting their philosophies and practices” (p. 1). They have prepared for leadership through formal education, leadership development opportunities, networking activities, and mentoring: “Tomorrow's community college presidents will resemble today's presidents and the presidents of five years ago in terms of career paths, educational background, and in various other ways” (Weisman & Vaughan, 1998, p. 147). They will move into the presidency from roles such as the chief academic officer, have a doctorate, have worked in community colleges previously, and will have many of the same experiences as their predecessors: “Tomorrow's presidents will work with, be influenced by, and, in many cases, be mentored by current presidents” (Weisman & Vaughan, 1998, p. 147).

Research suggests three key leadership development opportunities which can be used to develop tomorrow's leaders: (1) university-based graduate programs, such as doctoral programs in community college leadership; (2) short-term conferences, institutes, and workshops, which are often sponsored by local, regional, state, and national organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges

(AACC), the League for Innovation in Community Colleges, and the American Council on Education (ACE); and (3) in-house initiatives such as “grow your own” (GYO) leadership development programs (Cloud, 2010; Hassan, Dellow, & Jackson, 2010; McNair, Duree, & Ebbers, 2011; Reille & Kezar, 2010, Shults, 2001; Watts and Hammons, 2002). The latter, a method of succession planning, is specifically designed to prepare current employees for advancement within the institution.

According to Boggs (2012), “One leadership responsibility that is all too often overlooked is succession planning or helping to prepare the next generation of community college leaders” (p. 104). Succession planning, which, according to Sullivan (2001), is “somewhat in contrast to previous times of leadership transition, when generational change occurred without much planning” (p. 568) has become a topic of considerable discussion. According to Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005), succession planning involves considerable thought and retrospection, is common in the business world, has been acknowledged by community colleges as a valuable practice but has not been widely implemented, and includes the following steps: anticipating future challenges and developing a vision accordingly; reviewing existing long-term goals and questioning how they contribute to a diverse workforce; analyzing leadership positions at all levels of the organization from CEOs to faculty; critically examining the artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions in order to better understand the organizational culture; aligning the vision and long-term goals with the leadership skills and competencies necessary for future growth and success; reviewing in-house leadership development strategies and program; and involving the board of trustees when necessary, such as succession planning for a new CEO. Promising practices for

succession planning vary, and there is definitely not a blueprint for successful succession planning but, according to Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005), the following are considered best practices: forming a committee to provide oversight for the process; identifying key positions for which to implement a succession plan; establishing criteria for these positions by identifying the skills and traits necessary for future leaders in that role; identifying a diverse pool of interested and adept internal candidates; establishing a mentoring program for these candidates and selecting mentors who are capable of providing the required support; helping candidates clarify and articulate their personal development plan; and continually assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the mentoring component of the plan.

Mentoring is a key component of both formal and informal leadership development opportunities (Ebbers et al., 2010; McNair et al.; Reille & Kezar, 2010). According to Amey and VanDerLinden (2002), over half (56%) of senior level community college leaders had a mentor during their career and studies show the benefits to both the individuals involved as well as the organization are exponential. Mentoring is a way to increase social capital and is an investment in social relations, both of which have the potential to impact professional growth (VanDerLinden, 2005). According to Shults (2001), over half of the presidents who responded to the AACC survey indicated that a mentor had been valuable or very valuable in helping them obtain their current position.

Recommended Solutions

With great turnover on the horizon, leadership development is now an essential focus for community colleges: “Clearly, the impending leadership shortage is not limited

to the community college presidency alone. The leadership pipeline is also an issue, as the faculty leaders and senior leaders who have contributed so much to building community college programs and traditions have begun to take their leave” (McClenney, 2001, p. 25). According to McClenney (2001), “...the current leaders of America’s community colleges are pondering a daunting task — how to develop and prepare substantial numbers of future leaders who will possess the knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics to succeed in a future fraught with both enormous opportunity and unprecedented complexity” (p. 25). Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) echoed McClenney’s sentiments, saying successful colleges will be the ones preparing new leaders not only for the presidency, but all administrative levels — from administrators to faculty and staff. Furthermore, given the sobering statistics regarding the disproportionate number of female community college leaders, a focus on leadership development for future female community college leaders is also critical.

Leadership development is a continuous learning experience for community college administrators (Amey, 2005). From a competency framework to succession planning, much attention has been given to the training needed to prepare emerging leaders to succeed their predecessors. Simply identifying future leaders is not enough; building a pipeline of qualified successors, in order to ensure continuity in effective leadership, is essential. It also requires a systematic approach. According to Shults (2001), “In order to gain the skills and traits important to effective leaders, those in the community college leadership pipeline must have access to appropriate professional development” (p. 9). Leadership development, no matter what approach, is a crucial component in ensuring an organization’s future stability, vitality, and innovation.

Mentoring as a leadership development tool could be a key method to preparing future leaders at all levels. From accelerating the hiring and training process to aligning existing employees with new and upcoming leadership opportunities, mentoring provides key resources during these critical times of learning and adjustment periods. Many studies have been conducted on community college leadership, from traits and characteristics to career pathways, but little has been written about the role mentoring has played in the preparations of these leaders. Given this information, mentoring may fit as a leadership development strategy to develop a diverse group of emerging leaders ready to fill the voids created by the pending retirements of current community college leadership.

Significance of the Study

Given the lack of information regarding the role of mentoring in the leadership development of current community college leaders, the need to develop the next generation of community college leaders, and the lack of females in leadership roles at all levels, the purpose of this study is to determine the role mentoring has and/or could play in the leadership development and career achievement of successful female community college leaders. This information may help women in leadership roles as they prepare other women for upward mobility. Furthermore, the experiences of the women interviewed for this study may also help women seeking increased leadership responsibilities by teaching them how to create meaningful mentoring connections that allow them to grow as leaders in the field.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer two main research questions regarding the role of mentoring in the leadership development of female community college leaders. Interview

topics were created to uncover participants' experiences as mentors, assess the degree of learning that has happened through mentoring, the construct of mentoring, and insights regarding mentoring as a form of leadership development. The research questions are as follows:

1. What role does mentoring play in the success of female community college leaders?
 - What aspects of the mentoring relationship are most useful and why?
 - What are the underlying dynamics and frameworks/interactive processes that surround mentoring relationships?
2. What are the respondents' attitudes and perceptions of mentoring as it relates to leadership development, especially in terms of female leaders?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Administrative position: Those that entail responsibility for decision-making and policy implementation. This includes those individuals who report directly to the chancellor, president, CEO or board of trustees (cabinet level members). Used synonymously with the term leadership position.

Baby Boomer: A person who was born between 1946 and 1964 (Baby Boomer, n.d.).

Community College: Postsecondary institutions that provide associate degrees, certificates, and training (career/technical/occupational), in addition to preparing students to transfer to baccalaureate degree granting institutions (Eddy & Vanderlinden, 2006).

Competency: A cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organization) to act effectively in a job or situation (Competency, n.d.).

Mentor: A person with advanced experience and knowledge, whose role it is to provide upward mobility and support to the career development of a protégé (Ragins, 1997b).

Mentoring: Intentionally left undefined during this study's data collection in an effort to let participants construct means around the term mentoring, definitions could include "a developmental relationship that is embedded within the career context" (Ragins & Kram, 2007), or "a term generally

used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual, called a mentee or protégé, and a more experienced individual known as a mentor” (Wai-Packard, 2009).

Leadership: The ability to influence, shape, and embed values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors consistent with increased staff and faculty commitment to the unique mission of the community college (Rouche, Baker, & Rose, 1989).

Leadership Development: Teaching of leadership qualities, including communication, ability to motivate others, and management, to an individual who may or may not use the learned skills in a leadership position (Businessdictionary.com, 2014).

Community College President: The leaders of a college. Used synonymously with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chancellor.

Protégé: Used synonymously with the term mentee, a less experienced person who is guided and supported by an older and more experienced or influential person (Wai-Packard, 2009)

Summary

This chapter sets the backdrop for the qualitative study carried out in an effort to understand the role mentoring played in the development of female community college leaders. It begins by powerfully illustrating how the retirements of aging baby boomers will effect community college leadership, and presents the leadership profile of community college leaders from past to present, including their leadership styles, skills, and competencies. Suggestions are made regarding the development of future community college leaders. Community colleges have seen both growth and success since their inception in 1901. In the coming years leadership development for personnel in community college will be prompted not only by the aging work force and imminent retirements, but the changing landscape of higher education. The need for leaders with innovative ideas and the leadership competencies to guide community colleges through institutional transformation, as well as the need for women and minorities to be equally

represented at all levels of community college leadership, will be critical. Identifying how and where to find leaders who can guide community colleges to excellence in the twenty-first century is of the utmost importance. Mentoring, a practice which facilitates learning and skill development can be a key component of leadership development and succession planning, not only for new professionals entering the field but also more seasoned professionals who are ready to take on new and different responsibilities as well.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

Preparing for leadership roles through mentoring is not a new idea. Mentoring has long been known as a relationship between an instructor and protégé that uses both teaching and learning processes to enhance one's development and performance. However, with roots that extend as far back as Greek mythology (Carnell, MacDonald, & Askew, 2006; Murray & Owen, 1991; Berk, Berg, Mortimer, Walton-Moss, & Yeo, 2005; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Hansman, 2002; Mott, 2002), when Athena, goddess of wisdom, became the mentor for Telemachus, mentoring has been characterized differently throughout history (Valeau, 1999). Despite varying depictions of the transformational relationship, interest in mentoring continues to gain momentum.

Definition

While mentoring may be easy to recognize, it is rather difficult to define. The timeless relationship has been explored across a number of disciplines and, according to the literature, there are numerous definitions of mentoring. Mentoring has been widely used, taken on numerous meanings, and been applied in a variety of contexts since its origin over 2,600 years ago (Berk et al., 2005). "Mentoring is a slippery concept," said Patricia Cross in the forward to Daloz's (1999) *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*. "Indeed, a search through the mountains of literature and research concerning mentoring reveals differing definitions for the term," said Catherine A. Hansman, editor

of *Critical Perspectives on Mentoring: Trends and Issues*, who used general terms such as Greek god, coach, teacher, guide, pathfinder, leader, pilot, advisor, supporter, counselor, director, sponsor, conductor, caretaker, and friend to reflect the numerous definitions that surround the term and concept of mentoring (2002, p. 1). Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) also used synonyms to explain the concept, defining a mentor as a “teacher, advisor, or sponsor” (p. 97) decades before Hansman. Mott (2002) said it best: “Whatever the term, a mentor usually represents the superior characteristics, accomplishments, skills, and virtues to which the protégé aspires as a result of the mentoring relationship” (p. 12).

Some definitions of mentoring are more in depth than others. John C. Crosby, an American politician, is often quoted as saying simply that mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction. According to *Management Mentors* (2013), “Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee or protégé) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person’s professional and personal growth” (p. 2). Becky Wai-Packard (2009), of Mount Holyoke College, whose primary research centers on mentoring, provides a similar definition, saying “Mentoring is a term generally used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual, called a mentee or protégé, and a more experienced individual known as a mentor” (p. 1). Kay and Hind (2005) also refer to the mentor/mentee relationship in their definition, but note that the parties are not connected within a line management structure. They add that the aim is for the mentor to guide the mentee through a period of change and towards an agreed-upon objective. Alternatively, in *The Roots and Meaning of Mentoring*, Ragins

and Kram (2007) suggest that a mentor could be employed in the same organization or be in the protégé's chain of command or profession. Darwin and Palmer (2009) call mentoring a "process of influencing and fostering the intellectual development of students and career aspirations of staff" (p. 125), while Pennington (2004) contends that the intent of mentoring is to be supportive to the mentee and occurs "at need," adding that the emphasis is on access, or having a "critical friend" to bounce thoughts and ideas off and who will respond in the form of advice. Berk, et al. (2005) focus their definition on the role of mentorship with regard to faculty, building on previous definitions while at the same time allowing for flexibility in the relationship. They propose the following definition:

A mentoring relationship is one that may vary along a continuum from informal/short-term to formal/long-term in which faculty with useful experience, knowledge, skills, and/or wisdom offers advice, information, guidance, support, or opportunity to another faculty member or student for that individual's professional development. (p. 67)

They add a caveat, stating that the relationship is initiated by the mentee. Carnell, MacDonald, and Askew (2006) add to these definitions, suggesting that though similar skills may be used in mentoring relationships, it is important to remember that mentoring is not counseling. More general definitions allude to the belief that mentoring is a developmental partnership, noting that one person shares knowledge, skills, information, and perspective to foster the personal and professional growth of someone else. Other, more off-beat, definitions include Daloz's (1999), which adds the element of mystical powers, saying "mentors give us the magic that allows us to enter the darkness; a talisman to protect us from evil spells, a gem of wise advice, a map and sometimes simply courage" (p. 18).

Regardless of the definition, the purpose of mentoring is clear: “Although the definition of mentoring has been refined over the years, a core feature that defines mentoring relationships and distinguishes it from types of personal relationships is that mentoring is a developmental relationship that is embedded within the career context” (Ragins & Kram, 2007, p. 5). Thus, while learning, growth, and development may be a byproduct of these relationships, mentoring focuses primarily on career and professional enhancement through teaching and learning. Ragins (1997b) concurs, suggesting mentors are willing and committed to advancing the careers of their protégés. Sands, Parsons, and Duane (1992) agree that mentoring is a professional duty, and add the element of nurturing into their definitions, defining a mentor as a “professional guide who nurtures and promotes the learning and success of his or her protégé” (p. 124). Likewise, Caffarella (1992) adds that mentoring is an “intense caring relationship in which persons with more experience work with less experience persons to promote both professional and personal development” (p. 38). Eddy (2008) says, “The role of mentoring is a two-way street. Senior administrators should look to selecting individuals to encourage, and individual women should seek out a variety of mentors to provide a range of advice on skills” (p. 63).

Typology

There are multiple types of mentoring relationships. Traditionally, mentoring in higher education institutions occurs in two ways: formally, as a planned program where junior staff is matched with experienced staff members in a prescribed one-to-one program, or informally (Darwin & Palmer, 2009, p. 125). Hansman, et al. (2002) notes “the differing definitions of mentors reflect the various characteristics that seem to define

informal and formal mentoring relationships” (p. 1). Many researchers differentiate between the two types, saying that informal mentoring is psychosocial while formal mentoring is more career related (Hansman, et al., 2002; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Wai-Packard, 2009; Noe, 1988, and Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). Kram and Isabella (1985) explain, “Informal mentoring relationships are psychosocial mentoring relationships, enhancing protégés’ self-esteem and building confidence through interpersonal dynamics, emotional bonds, mutual discovery of common interests, and relationship building” (cited in Hansman, et al., 2002, p. 1). Formal mentoring relationships, on the other hand, “are generally organized and sponsored by work places or professional organizations; a formal process matches mentors and protégés for the purpose of building careers” (Hansman, et al., 2002, p. 1). Some argue that these formal programs lack the benefits seen in organic relationships. In fact, research by Chao, Walz, and Gardner (1992), found that formal mentoring relationships were less beneficial than informal ones.

Alternative forms of mentoring exist within these typologies, and have their own set of unique advantages and disadvantages, characteristics, and outcomes. In their book *Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Protégés Get the Most out of Their Relationships*, Ensher and Murphy (2005) introduce and elaborate on many types of mentoring relationships, including but not limited to the following:

Table 2: *Types of Mentoring Relationships*

FORM	PURPOSE	BENEFITS
Boss mentors	Provide emotional and career support to the subordinate protégé formally and informally within the boundaries of the relationship	The chance to groom or be groomed: for the mentor, this can be the ultimate way to gain loyal cadre of supporters; for the protégé, it can be an easy way to move ahead. A keen sense of loyalty and trust.
Group mentoring	A senior-level mentor provides ongoing coaching small group of junior-level protégé	A greater number of individuals can benefit as opposed to the limitations of traditional mentoring. The opportunity for protégés to develop valuable relationships with peers, share information, advice, social support, coaching and counseling.
Inspirational mentors	Act as a role model and source of inspiration; provide a model of excellence without having a direct relationship with the protégé	A standard of excellence to look up to and a litmus test of "what would so-and-so do in this situation?" A vision, identity, and sense of purpose.
Family member mentors	An immediate or extended family member who provides emotional, career, and role modeling support to the protégé from an early age; often a person of considerable influence and accomplishment within their own family circle and/or community	Self-esteem from an early age. The ultimate in love and loyalty.

Source: Ensher & Murphy, 2005, p. 45-65

Darwin and Palmer (2009) mention yet another type of relationship — mentoring circles, which Bird and Didion (1992) refer to simply as a network of multiple mentors.

Psychosocial and career-related mentoring are both important as on-the-job relationships are critical to career development, but Ragins and Kram (2007) suggest that there are different types of learning relationships, and individuals may provide similar functions without necessarily being mentors. For example, a manager or colleague may offer career functions to his or her employee without either seeing the other as part of a

mentoring relationship. They also call attention to the importance of discerning between exhibiting mentoring behaviors and participating in a mentoring relationship.

The Role of the Mentor and Protégé

According to Allen (2007), “A mentoring relationship is an inherently dyadic and complex process, with the mentor and the protégé each enacting different roles and responsibilities in the relationship” (p. 123). The role of the mentor and protégé vary greatly depending on the type, focus, structure, and participants. These roles may also differ over the course of the relationship. The role of the mentor may span from teacher, advisor, or sponsor (Levinson et al., 1978) to pathfinder, leader, or pilot (Hansman, 2002). Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) say a mentor “serves as a guide, cheerleader, challenger, and supporter during the learning process” (p. 138), and Daloz (1986, 1999) gave a colorful description of the mentor’s role, noting that as guides, mentors “lead us along the journey of our lives.... They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way” (1986, p. 17). Mentors are critical in development and learning, they seem to “have something to do with growing up” and “the development of identity” (Daloz, 1886, p. 19). Ragins (1997b) believes mentors are people with advanced experiences and knowledge; thus, their roles are to provide upward mobility and support to the career development of their protégés. Berk, et al. (2005) suggest the role of the mentor is to be accountable for the following:

Commits to mentees; provides resources, experts, and source material in the field; offers guidance and direction regarding professional issues; encourages mentee’s ideas and work; provides constructive and useful critiques of the mentee’s work’ challenges the mentee to expand his or her abilities; provides timely, clear, and comprehensive feedback to mentee’s questions; respects mentee’s uniqueness and

his or her contributions; appropriately acknowledges contributions of mentee; and shares success and benefits of the products and activities. (p. 67)

Kram (1983) notes the mentor's role is to "provide a variety of functions that support, guide, and counsel" (p. 608) the protégé as he/she develops him/herself, his/her career, and his/her family. Some argue, however, that the role of the mentor's role changes based on what the protégé is looking to obtain from the relationship and evolve over time. Valeau (1999) identifies several roles a mentor may play in relationships including the following:

(a) a teacher, coach, trainer uses basic skills and content training; (b) a protector role arises when mentees are ready to take on new roles and risk; (c) a role model relies on shadowing — the mentee is able to watch the mentor in action during hands-on live work situations; (d) a developer of talent involves giving special assignments such as serving on a task force representing the college to outside groups; (e) an opener of doors helps to position a protégé with opportunities for visibility, such as key committee appointments, conference attendance, and paper presentations; and finally, (f) a provider of inspiration motivates the protégé while encouraging personal and professional development. (p. 33)

The role of the protégé is much less talked about in literature but generally likened to that of a student or learner. According to Gannon and Maher (2012) the role of the protégé is that of personal awareness, self-reflection, and active listening, while Ragins and Kram (2007) suggests the it is to guide the relationship, noting "the range and degree of function provided by the mentor may be driven by the needs of the protégé, the mentor's ability to meet those needs, the mentor's needs, the 'chemistry' in the relationship, and the organizational context" (p. 36). They contend there are four phases of mentoring relationships, and the roles change depending on the state of the relationship. Kram (1983) conceived these "predictable, yet not entirely distinct" (p. 614) phases, which she called initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition.

Terms like “guide,” “teacher,” and “sponsor” are commonly used synonymously with “mentor,” but Kram (1985) and others have clearly discerned the difference between their meanings. Based on Kram’s seminal work (1983; 1985), much of the research on mentoring builds on her model, which suggests there are two basic functions of mentoring: career and psychosocial. Kram’s recent work, in collaboration with Ragins (2007), also suggests that role of the mentor is two-fold: providing these career functions, which help the protégé learn the ropes and prepare to advance within the organization; and the psychosocial functions, which help the protégé develop personally and professionally by connecting with a social environment (p. 5). Mott (2002) also echoes Kram’s model, saying “Career mentoring involves promotion and visibility, sponsorship, socialization, and coaching; psychosocial mentoring is more general in its role of friendship, affirmation, modeling, counseling, and support” (p. 13). Likewise, Wai-Packard adopted the same philosophy, but changes the vernacular to describe the mentor’s role as simply “psychosocial” or “career-related” (2009). Her definition is a bit more in-depth, utilizing Noe (1988), and Ragins and McFarlin’s (1990) explanation, likening the role of a psychosocial mentor to that of a counselor or friend, and the role of a career-related mentoring to a coach or sponsor. Mott (2002) points out that, “Although a mentor may indeed serve as a role model and sponsor, persons in these roles often have no emotional bond with the protégé and their assistance may be purely functional, without an affective component for concern for the protégé’s psychosocial development” (p. 12). Daloz (1999) noted that the development guided by a mentor is holistic and adds that the relationship as reciprocal (1999), as did English, Fenwick, and Parsons (2003).

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring

It is not the definition or the terms used synonymously to define or describe mentors and/or mentoring that are important (Levinson, et al., 1978), instead, it's the "character of the relationship and the functions serves" (p. 98). The problem is, "Over the past 25 years, there has been a lack of clarity about the characteristics and outcome of mentoring relationships despite the growing body of research" (Berk, et al., 2005, p. 66). Mott (2002) adds, "There are a few guiding principles for effective mentoring" (p. 6).

One way to provide meaning to the construct of mentorship is to identify the basic elements or function of the mentoring relationships. Berk, et al. (2005) compiled a list of five elements in mentoring relationships, noting that mentorship:

(1) focuses on achievement or acquisition of knowledge; (2) consists of three components: emotional and psychological support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and role modeling; (3) is reciprocal, where both mentor and mentee (aka protégé) derive emotional or tangible benefits; (4) is personal in nature, involving direct interaction; and (5) emphasizes the mentor's greater experience, influence, and achievement within a particular organization. (p. 66)

Noller (1982) also identified several important characteristics of an effective mentoring including "...a positive attitude, valuing, open-mindedness, creative problem-solving, awareness, discovery, flexibility, and confidence" (cited in Valeau, 1999, p. 34). Mott (2002) points to a climate that includes "mutual trust, respect, autonomy, care, and appreciation" (p. 6), suggesting these characteristics are necessary for growth. She goes on to say motivation is critical, as is praising positive growth, modeling appropriate conduct, and providing opportunities for self-reflection. Daloz (1986) adds that mutual trust and nonjudgmental listening are both key to effective mentoring relationships.

Outcomes of Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships can deliver a number of critical benefits to both mentors and protégés. Adult development and career theorists have long been proponents of the benefits of having a mentoring relationship for both personal and professional reasons (Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977; Hall, 1976; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Kram, 1985; Levinson, et al., 1978). Mott (2002) stressed, “A person new in a career field or life stage, for instance, can benefit from the encouragement, counsel, and shared experiences of a more experienced person who can share perspectives, ask critical questions, and provide opportunities for reflection and growth” (p. 6).

As the definitions, characteristics, and roles of mentoring suggest, “the relationships formed and the processes involved in mentoring can facilitate not only one’s career but psychosocial development in adulthood as well” (Mott, 2002, p. 5). “At its best,” Ragins and Kram (2007) said, “mentoring can be a life-altering relationship that aspires mutual growth, learning, and development. Its effects can be remarkable, profound, and enduring; mentoring relationships have the capacity to transform individuals, groups, organizations, and communities” (p. 3). In fact, research regarding mentoring in higher education has linked the mentoring to promotion and higher salary (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Kram, 1983; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001; Hansman, et al., 2002) career and job satisfaction (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Tenenbaum, et al., 2001; Hansman, et al., 2002) and opportunity for advancement (Kram, 1983; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Hansman, et al., 2002) for protégés. Erikson (1982) adds that mentors gain from their relationships with protégés as well. Benefits such as improved job performance, career success and revitalization, recognition, and a loyal following, personal fulfillment,

and satisfactions are just a few of the rewards (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Wai-Packard (2009) posits “Each structure of mentoring may be better suited to support particular mentoring functions or desired outcomes” (p. 2). Ensher, Thomas, and Murphy (2001) agree, noting that that peer mentoring may be better suited for improving psychosocial functions, while supervisory mentoring may improve career functions.

Mentoring in Higher Education

While few studies focused on mentoring in higher education, particularly in comparison to discussion of mentoring in business or other industries, research specifically on mentoring within community colleges is even less prevalent. Furthermore, much of the research that does exist regarding mentoring in higher education relates specifically to faculty development (McDade, 2005). According to the research (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Shults, 2001; VanDerLinden, 2005) community colleges do find value in mentoring as leadership development tool. In fact, according to Shults (2001), over half of the presidents who responded to the AACC survey indicated that a mentor had been valuable or very valuable in helping them obtain their current position. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) also found that over half (56%) of senior level community college leaders had a mentor during their career and studies show the benefits to both the individuals involved as well as the organization were exponential

Similar to the aforementioned studies, literature regarding the role of mentoring in higher education from the past decade relies heavily on questionnaires and surveys. While informative, the complexities of these multifaceted relationships are often absent in quantitative research. The opportunity to analyze both sides of the mentoring relationship simultaneously, as opposed to viewing the role and experience of the mentor

and protégé exclusively lends itself to using quantitative methods for data collection with regards to mentoring.

Women and Mentoring

Mentoring can be critical to the career success of women. In the article “Effects of Mentoring on the Employment Experiences and Career Satisfaction of Women Student Affairs Administrators,” Blackhurst (2000) suggests that, despite the lack of empirical data, mentoring has been considered a potential solution for a number of concerns facing women, from job satisfaction to career development. Blackhurst’s study, a survey of over 300 female student affairs administrators, found that mentoring did have positive effects. In fact, having a mentor helped reduce the respondents’ conflict regarding their job expectations and actual demands and increased commitment to the organization, though it did not increase satisfaction regarding the career as a whole. Other researchers propose mentoring impacts women’s careers by increasing chances for advancement and upward mobility (Eddy, 2008; Hamrick & Carlisle, 1990; Twale, 1995; Twale & Jelinek, 1996). Eddy (2008) suggests that “Knowing how women advance in their careers may aid other women in mapping out their pathways to the highest level campus office” (p. 50). Her 2008 phenomenological study looked at the role of mentoring as it pertained to six women presidents, both in their own leadership development and how they were encouraging emerging leaders who would eventually be their successors. “Mentors have a critical role in the advancement of women in the community college,” she said. “Support via advice, opportunities to acquire diverse experiences, and access to leadership development provide critical career skills. Some women may not consider upper level positions on their own, adding increased importance to the well placed

suggestions by mentors” (p. 63). Likewise, Brown (2005) found that mentoring played a critical role in the career advancement of female presidents.

In terms of access, Tenenbaum, et al. (2001) cite research that suggests women have similar opportunities for mentors as their male counterparts (Burke, 1984; Cox & Nkomo, 1991; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Ragins, 1989, 1997a, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1991; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1990; Steinberg & Foley, 1999; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1992), while Ensher and Murphy (2011) suggest it is more difficult for women to find mentors than it is for men, citing research that suggests white males in high level positions may be hesitant to engage in mentoring relationships with female protégés for a number of different reasons (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007; Ragins & Cotton, 1996; Thomas, 2001; Young, Cady, & Foxon, 2006). Tenenbaum, et al. (2001) also notes some researchers (Ragins, 1997b; and Thomas, 1990) suspect inequities in terms of the return on investment for female protégés, particularly in comparison to their male counterparts. Ensher and Murphy (2011) noted that female protégés reported more psychosocial support than their male counterparts. Tenenbaum, et al. (2001) also cite research that suggests gender plays a significant role in mentoring, referencing McGuire’s 1999 survey which found that male mentors provide more career-related help while the support female mentors provided was more psychosocial. Allen and Eby (2004) concurred, and Sosik and Godshalk’s (2000) study of over 200 mentor/protégé relationships from a number of different industries echoed the findings of their peers. Twale and Jelinek (1996) concluded that, “although female mentors were described somewhat differently than male mentors, mentoring relationships with both male and female mentors were viewed as

rewarding, beneficial, and ‘deeply regarded’ by female protégés” (cited in Blackhurst, 2000, p. 584).

Burke and McKeen (1997), O’Neill, Horton, and Crosby (1999), say women are much more likely to engage in cross-gender mentorships than males. Specific to this make-up of mentoring relationships, Kram (1985), and Clawson and Kram (1984) worry, suggesting that when linked, the female protégé and male mentor may assume stereotypical roles and that the female protégé may become less autonomous while the male takes on a protective role (cited in Tenenbaum, et al., 2001). Ragins (1997b) and Thomas (1990), also note that challenges tend to arise because of incompatible expectations when the mentor and protégé have different backgrounds (cited in Tenenbaum, et al., 2001). While same-sex mentoring may be beneficial, Blackhurst (2000) points out that “Given the relative shortage of women in senior administrative positions, it is particularly important that men in such positions commit to mentoring women who are in the early stages of career development” (p. 583).

Data Analysis

The research regarding mentoring is primarily exploratory in nature and relies heavily on qualitative methods of research. There are several types of qualitative research. In fact, Patton (2002) calls them “theoretical traditions” and suggests there are sixteen of them; Cresswell (2007) details five approaches; Tesch (1990) denotes forty-five, which he breaks into three categories; Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Merriam (2009) present six strategies. Though the amount, names, and descriptions are numerous, according to Merriam (2009), “These types of qualitative research have some attributes in common that result in their falling under the umbrella concept of ‘qualitative’” (p. 22).

She goes on to say “each have a somewhat different focus, resulting in variations in how the research question might be asked, sample selection, data collection and analysis, and write-up” (Merriam, 2009, p. 22). A common characteristic in all types is that “individuals construct reality in interactions with their social worlds”; they strive to provide an understanding of how people make sense of their lives and their experiences. Furthermore, “the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis, the process is indicative, and rich description characterizes the end product” (Merriam, 2009, p. 19). This means that the qualitative researchers collect data themselves; often using multiple methods, such as reviewing pertinent documents, observing participant’s behavior, and conducting interviews (Cresswell, 2013). Data collected by the researcher are analyzed and arranged into categories or themes found in all data sources (Cresswell, 2013); the researcher then focuses on the emerging patterns and themes that recur and are supported by data (Merriam, 2009).

Phenomenological research seeks to examine people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of a situation or phenomenon. Phenomenology is rooted in philosophy and psychology (Merriam & Associates, 2002). It is the “study of people’s conscious experience of their life-world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). It addresses the essence and lived experiences of the participants (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Langdrige (2007) says it "aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them" (p. 4), or as simplified by Schram (2003), their “everyday life and social action” (p. 71). Thus, phenomenological studies seek to describe “the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of

a concept or a phenomenon” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 57). In a phenomenological study, the essence or basic underlying structure of the experience is illustrated.

Data are used to describe meaning in phenomenological studies: According to Merriam (2009), “data are nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment” (p.85). Cresswell (2007) adds, “data are collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Often data collection in phenomenological studies consists of in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants” (p.61). DeMarrais (2004) defined an interview as “a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study” (p. 55), and Merriam (2009) notes that most interviews involve a “person-to-person encounter in which one person elicits information from another” (p. 88). Moustakas (1994) notes that in interviews, participants are asked to answer two main questions: What they have experienced in terms of the phenomenon being studied, and what circumstances have influenced their experience with said phenomenon. Cresswell (2007) also notes, “Other open-ended questions may also be asked, but these two, especially, focus attention on gathering data that will lead to a textural description and structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants” (p. 61). “The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information” (Merriam, 2009, p. 88), which includes direct quotations detailing participant’s thoughts, feelings, opinions, experiences, etc. The goal is to draw out what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 2002, p. 341).

After data are collected, they are then analyzed. The process of data analysis is, as Merriam (2009) notes, “perhaps the only facet of doing qualitative research in which

there is a preferred way” which she says is “simultaneously with data collection” (p. 171). Cresswell (2007) agrees, suggesting data analysis steps are generally similar for all phenomenological studies. Merriam (2009) calls qualitative design “emergent” and suggests that the researcher typically does not know who will be interviewed or exactly what questions that might be asked ahead of time. Instead, she suggests this happens when the data are analyzed as they are collected: “Hunches, working hypotheses, and educated guesses direct the investigator’s attention to certain data and then to refining or verifying hunches” (Merriam, 2009, p. 169). Merriam (2009) calls the collection and analysis process both “recursive” and “dynamic” and notes the analysis phase is not complete once collection has concluded, but rather, it becomes more intensive. (p. 169). According to Cresswell (2007), “Building on the data from the first and second research questions, data analysts go through the data (e.g., interview transcriptions) and highlight ‘significant statements,’ sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (p. 61). This process is commonly referred to as horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994, Merriam, 2009). Horizontalization, according to Merriam (2009), “is the process of laying out all the data for examination and treating the data as having equal weights...these data are then organized into clusters or themes” (p. 26). This was done by coding data, or “assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces” (Merriam, 2009 p. 173). Coding is used when interpreting results and writing up findings. Since there may be a lapse in time between data collection and writing up final reports, Merriam (2009) suggests it is important to code data “according to whatever scheme is relevant to your study” (p. 174) as a researcher collects data. Furthermore, Merriam

(2009) notes that it is important to “create an inventory of your entire data set” (p. 174), in order to know where you are at in terms of the richness and completeness of data. Open coding, or jotting notes in the margin is used to start the process of constructing categories (Merriam, 2009).

All qualitative data analysis is inductive and comparative according to Merriam (2009). A constant comparative method, as introduced by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s, is used as a means of analyzing the coded data. This means that the researcher is constantly comparing data to find common themes and areas of congruence between participants. Finding significant amounts of different data would have suggested a different collection method was needed. Making meaning and identifying segments of data sets that were responsive to the research questions and coding them accordingly was the focus of the data analysis.

Validity and Reliability of Research Methods

In any research study validity and reliability are of concern. In fact, the accuracy, dependability, and creditability of the study depend on it. According to Merriam (2009), a researcher may use several approaches in an effort to ensure reliability and validity of a study, including but not limited to the following:

- Researcher’s position or reflexivity: Conducting a critical analysis of personal worldviews, biases, and theoretical orientation, which allowed the researcher to understand how these factors may have affected the investigation.
- Peer Review/Examination: Discussing the study, including the process, data, findings, and interpretations with colleagues in the field.
- Audit trail: Maintaining, as a researcher, a detailed account of the processes used to come to the findings, including methods, procedures, and decision points of the study.

- **Maximum Variation:** The researcher seeks out diversity in the sample including but not limited to age, race, gender, education level, and title or position.
- **Triangulation:** Using multiple theories to confirm emerging findings in data sets.
- **Member Checks:** After conducting interviews, the researcher compiles and interprets the data, then takes the data back to the participants individually and asked them to verify the accuracy of the interruptions.
- **Rich Thick Description:** Providing an intense description of the study, including the date, time, location, and information about the participants as finding.

Ensuring the validity and reliability increase the rigor and trustworthiness of a study; without it, research is of little value.

Summary

Mentoring has roots back as far as Greek mythology and is commonly thought to be a developmental relationship between a less experienced person, called a protégé, and a more experienced person, called a mentor. A review of the literature regarding mentoring revealed the absence of a widely accepted operational definition; numerous types of mentoring relationships, from those with a colleague or superior to family member mentors; a variety of descriptions regarding the role of the mentor and protégé, the characteristics of effective mentoring, and the outcomes of mentoring relationships. It also revealed that mentoring is much more common in business and other industries than it is in high education, and even more specifically the community college sector. It can, however, be a critical component in the career success of women. The research also revealed that literature regarding the role of mentoring in academia relies heavily on quantitative research methods such as questionnaires and surveys. Qualitative research, which strives to provide an understanding of how people make sense of their experiences

and uses the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, may, however, be a better, more useful, fit.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This qualitative study examines the role mentoring plays in the leadership development of female community college leaders. This chapter describes the purpose of the study; research design and rationale, including the researcher's role; selection and description of participants; data collection; and data analysis procedures.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to answer two main research questions: (1) What role does mentoring play in the success of female community college leaders, and (2) What are the female community college leaders' attitudes and perceptions of mentoring as it relates to leadership development, especially in the development of female leaders? The interviews are also intended to provide a better understanding of what aspects of the mentoring relationship were most useful and why, and what the underlying dynamics and framework/interactive processes were that surround mentoring relationships. Answering these questions may help women in leadership roles as they prepare other women for upward mobility. Furthermore, women seeking increased leadership responsibilities may learn from the experiences of the women interviewed for this study. A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews proved to be the best framework to examine these objectives and answer the aforementioned research questions.

Research Design and Rationale

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry employed in several disciplines from social to behavioral and health sciences: “We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 48). According to Merriam (2009), “A central characteristic of qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds,” (p. 22). She goes on to say researchers conducting a basic qualitative study are interested in three elements: (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. “The overall purpose,” Merriam says, “is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences” (p. 23).

As Merriam (2009) stated, “All qualitative research is interested in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their worlds. The *primary* goal of a basic qualitative study is to uncover and interpret these meanings” (p. 24). Furthermore, Cresswell (2007) notes, that the product of a phenomenological study is a “composite description that presents the ‘essence’ of the phenomenon” (p. 62), and Polkinghorn (1989) explains that after reviewing a phenomenological study, the readers should have a greater understanding of the participant’s experiences (cited in Cresswell, 2007, p. 62). As such, a phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study because it provided the researcher with significant information: (1) the shared experiences of female community college leaders as it relates to the role mentoring played in their leadership development; (2) a deep understanding of a phenomenon

experienced by several individuals (Cresswell, 2007); (3) a deeper understanding of “what” and “how” these individuals experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994); (4) the meaning and essence of the individuals’ experiences (5) and rich, in depth, descriptive interpretations of their lived experiences.

The phenomenology process began with the researcher exploring personal experiences (or lack thereof) with the phenomenon, a step Moustakas (1994), Marshall and Rossman (2006), and Cresswell (2007) suggests involves the researcher writing about his/her own experiences as well as the context and situations that have influenced his/her experiences. Merriam (2009) adds that, in this step, “the researcher usually explores his or her own experiences, in part to examine dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints and assumptions” and calls the process *epoche*, a Greek word introduced by Moustakas (1994), which means “to refrain from judgment” (p. 33). The researcher then *bracketed*, or “temporarily set aside” as Merriam notes (2009, p. 26), those prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions. Bracketing allows, the researcher, to “examine consciousness itself” (p.26) to the extent anyone can put aside his or her own bias or assumptions and examine their own consciousness.

Participants

A total of eight interviews with current female community college leaders were conducted between March and May 2014. Merriam (2009) notes that there is no magic number for how many people to include in a study sample: “It always depends on the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, the resources you have to support the study” (p. 80). Thus, the sample size was not predetermined before

data collection; instead the minimum number of participants was established prior to the start of the study. According to Patton (2002) the minimum sample size is “based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon give the purpose of the study” (p. 246). For the purpose of this study, the pre-determined minimum sample size was six. The completeness of the study, however, was determined by the information collected during the interviews rather than by the number of interviews. Completeness was achieved when the researcher reached a point of saturation and had information redundancy (Merriam, 2009)

Participants were not chosen randomly, but rather selected by the researcher using specific selection criteria. Participants were identified through various methods, including recommendations of program faculty and colleagues, as well as personal contact with the participants’ affiliation with the Ferris State University’s Doctorate in Community College Leadership program and professional work. The participants made up a stratified purposeful sample. Patton (2002) argues that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in the selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling” (p. 230).

According to Merriam (2009), “To begin purposive sampling, you must first determine what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people or sites to be studied” (p. 77). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) call purposeful sampling *criterion-based selection*, and noted that the importance of identifying the attributes that are most important to your study and then finding participants to match said criterion. The criteria, according to Merriam (2009), “directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the

identification of information-rich cases” (p. 78); thus, it is important that the researcher explain the significance of said criteria. In this study, baseline criteria used to select participants included (1) having achieved senior-leader status, meaning participants are the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), which may also be called the president or chancellor, or report directly to the CEO; (2) serving in this leadership position for a minimum of one year. These criteria were set to ensure the participants are leaders in the field and have served in the senior-leadership position long enough to understand how her background and experiences with mentoring may have contributed to her leadership development.

Eight women meeting the aforementioned criteria were chosen for one-on-one interviews. They represented a wide range of upper-administrative positions, from chancellor of a community college district to vice president for Academic Services, with half of the subjects being in the field over thirty years and the other half ranging between eleven and twenty-five years. A geographically diverse group of women, four from community colleges in Illinois, and one each from Michigan, Florida, California, and Wisconsin, were included in the sample. Using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the leading framework used in the study of higher education, respondents represented rural, urban, and suburban colleges, ranging from small to large, with both single to multi-campus institutions included. In addition, these female community college leaders had between zero and more than twenty-five employees who directly reported to them. In age, the eight participants ranged between mid-thirties to seventies; seven were Caucasian, and one was African American. Each of the participant’s highest level of education was a doctoral degree. The following table summarizes the demographic information collected from the participants in this study.

Table 3: *Participant Demographics*

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	PARTICIPANTS							
	Cameron Brunet-Koch	Alice Jacobs	Annette Parker	Kathleen Plinske	Lori Sundberg	Linda Thor	Charlotte Warren	Kristine Young
AGE								
31-40				x				x
41-50								
51-60	x		x		x	x	x	
61-70		x						
RACE/ETHNICITY								
Black/African American			x					
White/Caucasian	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT								
Doctorate	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
YEARS IN HIGHER EDUCATION								
11-15				x				
16-20					x			x
21-25			x					
26-30								
30+	x	x				x	x	

Data Collection

Relationship building is an important aspect of the data collection process because, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) note, relationships built on trust ensure that participants share experiences that are genuine. In an effort to establish a relationship with each participant, thus ensuring high quality data, the researcher began by contacting thirteen women, each a leader at her respective community college. This was done through an introductory email introducing the study and asking participants to consider contributing to the field through participation in this study (see Appendix C). The email was followed by a telephone call the following week. Of the thirteen leaders contacted by email, twelve responded. An attempt to reach the thirteenth potential participant was

made by telephone without success. A total of ten women agreed to participate in the research study; however, schedule and timing conflicts prevented two volunteers from participating. Each participant was sent an email thanking them for their consideration or willingness to participate, and interviews were scheduled for the eight women who agreed to participate.

Interview Structure

In an effort to gather in-depth data about the phenomenon, participants were interviewed individually regarding the role mentoring played in their development as community college leaders. A total of eight semi-structured interviews were conducted, meaning the interview was guided by a list of topics to be covered, but the exact wording and order were not pre-determined (Merriam, 2009). In these semi-structured interviews, the participant's demographics, which included age, race, and ethnicity; place of employment and position; years of in position and field, as well as credentials were collected in writing and a series of open-ended questions were posed regarding the following:

- Personal Experience including previous positions, experience with mentoring, the framework of mentoring relationships, and knowledge gained through mentoring, thoughts on mentoring such as the role of having a mentor, the importance, and the characteristics of a good mentor;
- The impact of mentoring, including the advantages and disadvantages of having a mentor; and finally, the participant's role as a mentor.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) noted that trust increases when both parties can find a commonality. As such, each interview began with a brief introduction and a review of the scope of the research study. Each leader was reminded of her rights as a

participant and provided with the informed consent form (see Appendix E), which was signed and collected by the researcher. Participants were reminded that sensitive or confidential information provided during the interview could be excluded upon request.

Five of the eight interviews were conducted in person, at a neutral location, and three were completed by phone. Each interview ranged in length from fifty minutes to just over one hour. With the participants' permission, the interviews were recorded to ensure data was "preserved for analysis" (Merriam, 2009, p. 109). Some pertinent information was also recorded in the form of notes during interviews in order to increase accuracy during data analysis. Each conversation was transcribed immediately following the initial interview.

Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews with two women were conducted in order for the researcher to practice interviewing techniques and to review, refine, and reword interview questions to ensure that the interviews yielded the desired information. While the pilot interview subjects also met the baseline criteria for the study, their comments are not included in the final discussions.

Data Analysis

Interviews with each of the eight participants were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. QSR International's NVivo 10, qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, was used to categorize the unstructured data in an organized format and find insights into reoccurring themes presented in the interviews. Several "nodes," or containers for gathering references about a specific theme, were created in NVivo. Raw data from the

interviews was reviewed, sorted, classified, and placed in the appropriate node. Nodes were then reviewed and duplicate categories were merged. The most common reoccurring themes are presented in chapter five.

Research Questions

The purpose of the interviews was to address the following research questions:

1. What role does mentoring play in the success of female community college leaders?
 - a. What aspects of the mentoring relationship are most useful and why?
 - b. What are the underlying dynamics and frameworks/interactive processes that surround mentoring relationships?
2. What are the respondents' attitudes and perceptions of mentoring as it relates to leadership development, especially in terms of female leaders?

Summary

Community college leadership is becoming increasingly complex. Furthermore, current community college leaders and administrators are retiring at vast rates. It is important that colleges take action now to identify and develop leaders who can transition into these positions in the future. In an effort to understand the lived experiences regarding the role mentoring played in the leadership development of female community college leaders, leading to a better understanding of how to effectively prepare the next generation of leaders for senior-level positions, this study applied a comprehensive methodology, which addressed the demographics, educational backgrounds, and leadership development experiences of participants who were selected based on a fixed criterion. Semi-structured interviews encouraged participants to talk about the experiences that best prepared them for their current leadership roles. Interviews were

recorded, transcribed, and sorted into thematic categories. The following chapters describe the data gathered as a result of the aforementioned methods.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This in-depth investigation into the role of mentoring in the leadership development of female community college leaders began in early 2014. Interviews with each of the eight leaders provided rich data for the study. The following standard topics were discussed with each leader:

1. Demographics
2. Personal Experience
3. Thoughts on Mentoring
4. The Impact of Mentoring
5. The Participants' role as a mentor
6. Other Aspects pertaining to Mentoring

Each participant's story is synthesized and presented in this chapter. Common themes and patterns emerged as interviews were collected and analyzed. These themes are discussed in Chapter 5.

Seeing What Others See In You: Dr. Cameron Brunet-Koch

Dr. Cameron Brunet-Koch is president of North Central Michigan College (NCMC), in Petoskey, Michigan. The college serves just over 2,500 students annually. Dr. Brunet-Koch has been NCMC's president since 2001. She earned a Master's degree in college student personnel from Michigan State University and acquired a doctorate in guidance and counseling from the University of Michigan. Dr. Brunet-Koch worked at Oakland University in Student Services and later became Dean of Students at West Shore Community College. In 1997, she took the Dean of Students position at NCMC and was appointed president four years later; she is in her thirteenth year as president.

Dr. Brunet-Koch did not always aspire to be a community college president. In fact, prior to starting her Master's degree in college student personnel at Michigan State, she was pursuing a degree in English. Brunet-Koch planned to teach English and was preparing to begin student teaching when Oakland University's Director of Residence Halls encouraged her to consider working in higher education. Two weeks later, she was a Michigan State Spartan. While she was in the higher education program, Brunet-Koch worked full-time at Michigan State University in Residence life and also at Oakland as Coordinator of Student Organizations while teaching Leadership Development. While working at Oakland, Brunet-Koch worked on her doctoral degree at the University of Michigan and was fortunate to gain promotion to a new position every two years. She moved from the Coordinator of Student Organization to Assistant Director of Residence Halls, Director of Campus Information Programs and Organizations, and finally to Assistant Dean of Students at Oakland before completing her doctorate degree. She then

took a Dean of Student position at West Shore Community College in Scottsville, Michigan, where she stayed for ten years before moving to the same position at NCMC.

In terms of the role that mentoring played in her own career success, Brunet-Koch attributes her change in career plans and many opportunities to mentoring. Referring to the Director of Residence Life at Oakland University, she said “Had she not had that conversation with me, I would probably be teaching English at some high school in southern Michigan” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). Speaking from her personal experience, Brunet-Koch said mentoring doesn't have to be a formal relationship; rather, it is more about following the lead of people who take you under their wing. People who make you question your sense of direction during very pivotal moments are effective mentors, people who have a strong influence on where you will eventually land (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

Dr. Brunet-Koch has had many people who fit this definition of a mentor throughout her career, including the Director of Residence Halls at Oakland University. On discussing a specific mentor, she says, “probably the most formal one I had was the ten years I was at West Shore. I worked for a president, his name was Dr. William Anderson, and he was extraordinary. The man, he was like a machine” (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

Dr. Brunet-Koch said she learned a lot from him and called him not only her supervisor, but also a teacher, mentor, and friend. Dr. Anderson, she said was, “very instrumental in teaching me about community colleges and why what we do is so important” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). When asked about a piece of profound knowledge or advice she had received from her mentor, Dr. Brunet-Koch said

she can always hear him saying, “Cameron, the way you treat people on campus and the way you treat your kids, there’s lots of similarities. I believe you have to keep both in your pocket” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). When she asked him what he meant, she recalls him saying, “Well, you have to know where the people are at all times” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). Brunet-Koch said this is a philosophy she has carried with her, both in her personal and professional life. “You just have to know where people are spending their time, whether they are employees or family,” she said (personal communication, April 16, 2014). She joked that she knows everyone at the college’s children and even many of their pets, attributing her open relationship with employees to her visibility and presence on campus. Dr. Brunet-Koch attributes much of what she learned about her leadership style from her mentor, not just what to do, but also what not to do as a leader. On the importance of staff interaction, she said, “That was a lesson that I learned from him, but not one that he intended to teach me” (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

Dr. Brunet-Koch noted that none of her mentors were formal. She states, “All of my relationships have been because of the work environment and they were my supervisors. I just took advantage of learning from really, really good people” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). She wasn’t paired up with a mentor through a formal leadership development program, such as the program at NCMC, which Dr. Brunet-Koch currently leads. Instead, it was the work-related, informal mentoring experiences that prepared her to assume the presidency upon the retirement of her mentor and boss, Dr. Anderson. “I think everyone can benefit from having contact with someone who is in a position one or two levels above where you are currently working,” she said. “One, you

get to see that they're really human first, and then you start to think, well if he or she can do that, I'll bet you I could. And I think that that is really important, because I think our own thinking limits what we allow ourselves to do" (personal communication, April 16, 2014). Sometimes we don't believe in ourselves as much as other people believe in us, or think that we may be good candidates for something; this is the kind of role the mentor needs to play, to make people see what's out there.

Having had mentors who were both male and female, Dr. Brunet-Koch doesn't think that a mentor necessarily needs to be of a certain gender in order to be powerful: "I think it's the relationships that develop between the individuals." She also thinks everyone can benefit from having a mentor, not only women: "It's the relationship that develops the synergy and the value or the benefit of having a guide or a person to kick around ideas or thoughts or to challenge, and I think that's important for both men and women." She added, "I don't think it's really gender specific for benefiting just females, because I really believe men need it also" (personal communication, April 16, 2014). She speculates that women may not have had the benefits of having coaches throughout their lives unlike their male counterparts have: "Women may not have played sports where you can really develop a relationship with someone who is trying to develop a skill, and in sports it would be the specific skills associated with that sport" (personal communication, April 16, 2014). With regards to coach and athlete type mentorship, Brunet-Koch said, "I think that the boys have many more opportunities to develop that coach/mentor relationship that young girls didn't have in the past" (personal communication, April 16, 2014). These relationships, she concludes, teach us to "speak out to people who are in a position of authority, who appear to have knowledge and

experience that could be beneficial and to ask for that assistance” (personal communication, April 16, 2014), which is something we don’t always do when seeking out opportunities.

When asked about the most important factors of mentoring relations, Dr. Brunet-Koch replied emphatically, “trust.” Expounding on the topic of mutual trust, she said, “A trusting relationship in that I’m not going to intentionally steer anyone down the path that I think would not be good or healthy for them” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). She went on to say “I also have to trust that the person I’m working with or supervising is going to be truthful and honest to say, ‘you know, no, I really don’t want to explore that’ or ‘that’s really not of interest to me’” (personal communication, April 16, 2014). She gives the example of being a widget maker:

I really don’t ever want to be a widget maker, and I would say, ‘but you would be the best widget maker on earth.’ If that’s not what your interests are, then I have to trust that they’re making the best decision for them, because they have to trust me that they can say ‘no I don’t want to do that’ and our relationship will be preserved. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

She also noted that, as a mentor, she never wants the responsibility of forcing someone to pursue a path they have no interest in pursuing. Trust, she said, is really the core of the relationship.

Support, feeling supported, and increased confidence are important outputs Brunet-Koch believes are associated with mentoring. Brunet-Koch infers, we don’t believe in ourselves as much as other people believe in us or think that we may be good candidates for a new opportunity. That is the role of the mentor, to make people see what’s out there. She paints another picture of effective mentoring, sharing the following hypothetical situation:

I think if all you think that you can do is be a director of financial aid, and that is all you've allowed yourself to think, then that's probably pretty much all you're going to do. But let's say the Dean of Students or the Dean of Business Services starts spending time with the Director of Financial Aid, and lo and behold, there is a position of Director of Business Services in the Business Office that is higher than the Director level of Financial Aid, and the business person says, 'You know, have you ever considered leaving Financial Aid world and going into the financial aspect of the college, which is much more broad than just Financial Aid?' I think those are the kind of conversations that trigger people to reconsider other options, and so then the Financial Aid person can say, 'You know, heck no, I don't want to leave financial aid.' Or, they could say, 'I have never thought about that, and I'd never seen myself in any other role but Financial Aid.' (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Visualizing yourself in a role other than the role you're currently in is according to Dr. Brunet-Koch, really, really positive. "Even after you look at it and think, 'I don't want to consider that,' you can say 'Yeah, that's pretty exciting. And I already had one person who believed in me or thinks that I can do this, and that is pretty cool, so I will throw my hat into the ring.' I think that's very positive" (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

With all these positive influences in her past that lead her to where she is today, it's no surprise Dr. Cameron Brunet-Koch is passing this experience to the next generation of leaders. When asked what she is doing to promote the upward mobility of other women she noted that she mentors several women at North Central Michigan College. She added that through her participation in Ferris State's Doctorate of Community College Leadership program, she is mentoring and "showing them that a woman can be a college president, while also having a family, children, and not go completely crazy doing that" (personal communication, April 16, 2014). Beyond those more informal roles, this community college president also takes on a mentor in a formal program through the Chamber of Commerce called Leadership Little Traverse, helping them identify steps and a leadership plan.

Dr. Cameron Brunet-Koch has learned many lessons from mentors in her time, and noted that each was good at pointing out both the positive and negative, and were all an important part of the learning process.

The Power of Role Models: Dr. Alice Marie Jacobs

Dr. Alice Marie Jacobs is president at Danville Area Community College in Danville, Illinois. The college, nestled in a small town of about 34,000, serves about 9,000 students annually. Dr. Jacobs has been president since 1999. Prior to her presidency at Danville, Dr. Jacobs was president at Kaskaskia College in South-Central Illinois for five years.

Dr. Jacobs didn't start her career as a top-level administrator or even in education. In fact, she was working as an executive secretary to a plant manager for a truck factory in Lansing, Michigan, when her husband's job was transferred. She was giving up her job, and they were relocating to the Battle Creek/Kalamazoo, Michigan area. Searching for employment, Jacobs responded to a blind advertisement for an executive secretary, a job where she had past experience. "I remember putting down the phone and being really excited, saying, 'It's for the president of a college,'" Jacobs recalled (personal communication, May 13, 2014). She was, in fact, offered the job and worked as the executive secretary to the president of Kellogg Community College for several years. Jacobs, who had an associate's degree at the time said, "I was greatly influenced by all of the adults that I saw who were going to back to college" (personal communication, May 13, 2014), something she too was fully capable of doing. She recalled, "I had always loved going to school, and so I knew that I saw other adults who were working and had families, and they're going to school, and I thought, 'I can do this, too'" (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Jacobs decided to go back to school. She applied and was accepted at Western Michigan University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Business Education in

just three short years before immediately enrolling in a master's degree program in the same area. She said, "I loved being in a community college, and I knew that if I wanted to teach in a community college, I needed a master's degree, so I immediately enrolled in the master's program" (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Working full time and going to school part time, Jacobs completed her master's degree in two years. By then, Jacobs had been going to school part time for five years and she recalls saying to herself, "Why stop there?" (personal communication, May 13, 2014). She worked for a president who was "very supportive of his administrators earning advanced degrees, and while she was there "a number of administrators earned PhDs" (personal communication, May 13, 2014). She also stated that "the college had 100% reimbursement for courses, and I had always taken advantage of opportunities. So for me, I loved going to school, so why wouldn't I take advantage of taking classes when the college was going to pay for them?" (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Jacobs recalls someone advising her not to get all of her degrees from one institution, so she began her PhD coursework at Michigan State, which was within driving distance for her. "At some point," she recalled, "I had the chance to teach part-time in the secretarial education program" (personal communication, May 13, 2014), but while at Michigan State, Jacobs was promoted to the position of administrative assistant to the president. "It was a union environment, and I was responsible for all the support staff, as well as being his assistant.... Then I had the opportunity to become a faculty member, and the coordinator of the secretarial education program," she recalled (personal communication, May 13, 2014). It was then that Jacobs remembers realizing what she really got the most satisfaction from was the administrative portion of her work. With

that in mind, after a successful application she was named Dean of Business. She was later promoted to Dean of Business Trades and Technology and then Dean of Occupational Education. In 1986, Jacobs earned her PhD.

After completing her doctoral degree, Jacobs realized she was ready for her next career move, taking on the challenges of being Chief Academic Officer. Having spoken to the new president, who recommended she pick the brain of the faculty union president, she realized that because of her previous role and relationship with the president, the possibility of achieving her goal at her current institution would be slim. Jacobs started applying elsewhere and got the first job she was interviewed for, Dean of Instruction at Rochester Community College, in Minnesota. Jacobs stayed in this role for one year before getting a call and applying for a job at Cape Fear Community College in North Carolina, her native state. Jacobs stayed in her job at Cape Fear for two and half years, and applied for the position of president when it was vacant, but she did not get the job. Jacobs considers the application when she states, "They were intent on hiring a sitting North Carolina president and there were no women leading any of the fifty-eight community colleges" (personal communication, May 13, 2014). "I'll seek my fortunes in the mid-west," she thought, a place where she had already spent a good portion of her adult life, so she started applying. "I think I interviewed six times before I got a presidency, and that's when I was appointed president of Kaskaskia College," Jacobs said (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

When asked about the role of a mentor as she worked her way through these positions and degree programs, Jacobs recalls several people playing a pivotal part in her

journey, from those she worked both for and with to those who touched her during her educational journey:

Dr. Whitmore was the president of the college, and he was certainly a mentor to me. I would definitely not be where I am today. The other thing, it was an amazing experience, because not only did I have the president who was mentoring me, I had a faculty and administrators. I had so many people who were really interested in my progress. All through my coursework, it seemed like I interviewed every person, every administrator at the college, I would write a paper and I would have an interview with somebody at the college, and that would be part of the writing of the paper. (personal communication, May 13, 2014)

Jacobs recalls the encouragement that came from those mentors, telling a story to the head of the faculty union regularly coming up to her at her secretarial desk, asking how her coursework was going. “There was just a lot of encouragement there,” she reminisced (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Jacobs noted Dr. Whitmore was certainly the most influential: “I can tell you that I never, ever aspired to be the president until he suggested it to me. That thought had never crossed my mind that I would be a president of the college, but he suggested to me that I was capable of doing it” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Dr. Whitmore also told her she would need further experience to prepare for this role, and he certainly opened doors that would provide Jacobs those opportunities. “Women,” Jacobs said, “often don’t necessarily aspire to more advanced leadership roles without someone suggesting it to them” (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Beyond the mentoring opportunities presented to Jacobs through her positions in the community college, she also talked about those afforded through involvement with local, regional, and national organizations. For example, she spoke about the American Association for Women in Community Colleges starting a leadership program called

Leaders for the Eighties. She recalls the power of hearing other female leaders talk about their own experiences. At the time, working as the Coordinator of the Secretarial Education program, she simply aspired to be an academic administrator, but this experience, she said, really made her realize “I think I could do that” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Being part of the Battle Creek chapter of Business and Professional Women (BPW) was another positive experience: “I joined it because my office mate, the secretary for the vice president, had a leadership role” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). She was the statewide president for BPW, and she encouraged Jacobs to join. She also encouraged me to take on leadership roles within the organization. Speaking on the topic of public speaking, Jacobs admits, “When I joined, I couldn't speak in front of groups. After I had been a member for a few years, I was the secretary, and I can remember standing up and having to read the minutes, and I was kind of petrified” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). But it was there she got experience speaking in front of groups, a skill she would rely on heavily as college president.

There were others who were influential in Jacobs’s life as well. Not necessarily as a formal mentor, but as a role model. “Someone I greatly admired and paid attention to was the Chairman of the Board, a Trustee for Kellogg Community College. I paid attention to how she spoke. When she spoke to groups, she was very poised,” Jacobs recalled (personal communication, May 13, 2014). “I also paid attention to the executive vice president in terms of how he spoke before groups,” she said (personal communication, May 13, 2014), attributing her own style of addressing groups to those two individuals, who she admits she paid great attention to while learning her own

leadership characteristics. “I’ve always been fascinated by people who are responsible for running organizations, and when they speak, I pay attention to their speeches, how they talk, what they do,” Jacobs said (personal communication, May 13, 2014), talking about her experiences from business and industry to higher education. “I am not a person who asks a lot of questions. It’s just not my nature, but I’m paying attention to what is going on,” she admits (personal communication, May 13, 2014). “There were also leadership characteristics of some of the people that I worked for that I wouldn’t model,” she admits (personal communication, May 13, 2014), confirming that mentors not only teach us how to lead, but sometimes they also teach us how *not* to lead as well. “I can remember one female would get exasperated, and it wasn’t what she said; it was her body language,” Jacobs recalls (personal communication, May 13, 2014). “That’s not something that I have ever done, or that I want to do. I may get exasperated with someone, but I am always in control so that they don’t see it when I’m talking to them,” Jacobs said of her own leadership style, “I think people in leadership roles have so much more impact on subordinates,” she explained as her rationale for consistently trying to keep calm under pressure (personal communication, May 13, 2014). “I can remember that when Dr. Whitmore would get annoyed or exasperated at a board member, he never, ever demonstrated that. He was always very calm, but the tops of his ears would get red,” she joked of her role model and boss (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Beyond a lesson in how to interact with subordinates, Jacobs said one of the most important lessons she learned from one of her role models was that of persistence. She spoke of a Dean of Arts and Sciences who was particularly supportive and influential as Jacobs worked her way through school as a part-time student and full-time executive

secretary. “Even though I wasn't her secretary, I remember she would say, ‘No matter how tired you get, register for the next class. Every semester, make sure you take a class. Don't ever say I'm just going to take a semester off,’ she recalls the Dean saying, “‘because if you register, you'll do everything you need to do’” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). This lesson doesn't just apply to registering for classes, though, but rather every project, initiative, or job — keep moving, keep going on it. Once you commit to doing it, you will see it through. That is just what Jacobs did as she worked her way up from the executive secretary to president of a community college.

A mentor, Jacobs said, is “someone who supports the individual, who encourages them, who facilitates, who paves the way, if possible” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). “The core of these unique relationships,” Jacobs said, “is trust.” “A mentor is someone who will give you advice you know will be good for you,” she explained. “If you select the wrong mentor, you won't have anyone to help you grow and use your strengths in a different role” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). A mentor is someone who can provide opportunities as well. She talked about her own mentoring experience with Dr. Whitmore, saying “He was providing opportunities for me to grow, so that when it came time, when there was an opening and I applied for it, I was certainly much more prepared to take on additional responsibilities” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). She went on to say “There are always jobs that need to be done in organizations, and he provided opportunities for me to assume additional responsibilities even though I was still in somewhat of a support position” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). These opportunities, she said, enabled her to evolve into a true administrator and less of a support role (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Concerning mentors, Jacobs states that they “aren’t just people you go to for advice in really tough situations, but people you can go to for the little things too” (personal communication, May 13, 2014), and sometimes these people aren’t colleagues at all. “I do have to say there's another individual that has been a constant in my life, who I would have to say has been a mentor, and that's my husband,” she concluded (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Jacobs believes that people are more likely to be interested in mentoring others when they are more advanced in their career, when they are thinking about their own legacy, and what they will leave behind (personal communication, May 13, 2014). When asked if she was a mentor to others, she said, “I have people tell me that I'm their mentor,” but she admits that she doesn’t feel she has been nearly as effective as she thinks Dr. Whitmore was at mentoring others. As to whether or not he even knew what Jacobs thought of such an important role model, she said he may not have thought of himself as my mentor; however, when she received AACC’s award for the Central Region’s CEO of the year and had to give a one-minute speech, she certainly credited him. “I know that I would not have been a college president, and I certainly wouldn't have been effective as a college president if I hadn't worked for him,” she said (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Regarding the impact of role models while preparing for her own career progression, she said, “Of all the positions I had at a community college, being the secretary of the president and the board was the best preparation; I knew exactly what I was getting into” (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Paving the Way for Others: Dr. Annette Parker

Dr. Annette Parker is president of South Central College (SCC), a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. Prior to taking the presidency at SCC, Parker served as Executive Director for the National Center of Excellence in Advanced Automotive Manufacturing, and System Director for Workforce Education at the Kentucky Community and Technical College (KCTCS) System. Prior to KCTCS, she served as Department Chair for Manufacturing Engineering Technologies at Lansing Community College in Michigan, where she had previously been a faculty member. She worked at General Motors for eleven years before entering academia. Parker has an Associate of Applied Science degree in Industrial Drafting from Lansing Community College in Lansing, Michigan; a Bachelor of Science degree in Technical Teaching and a Master of Science degree in Career and Technical Education from Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Parker did not start her college career right out of high school; instead she went to work at General Motors where she worked for eleven years. “I saw the downturn of GM and went back to Lansing Community College (LCC) and got an associate degree in Applied Science from LCC,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker excelled in her studies at LCC and was offered two student worker positions before graduation. While processing her paperwork, Human Resources realized Parker had two different work-study jobs and called to tell her she could not work both, but offered her a different position — a promotion to Lab Tech. Parker worked the Lab Tech job for about six months when she was asked to sit in on a class and provide emergency coverage. It

was this opportunity that made Parker realize her true passion was teaching, which led her to Ferris State University where she completed her Bachelors degree in Technical Education and started her Masters degree in Career and Technical Education. Parker was a Woodbridge Scholarship recipient, a scholarship that paid for her housing in the summer. She spent three summers at Ferris working on her Master's degree and completing her student teaching requirement.

Parker, who was teaching at LCC at the time, recalls that the institution was building an M-TEC facility in Lansing when administration encouraged her to apply for a job leading the faculty through the process; this included building the new campus, developing modularized-competency based curriculum, and even passing a millage. "I went to administration and got to be a part of building a 270,000 square foot-campus. It was a \$48 million facility that we had lots of industry partnerships in. We had over \$50 million in donations in the building and partnerships," she recalled (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker stayed in that role for five years, which well prepared her for the next journey working with KCTCS, as they were envisioning a National Center of Excellence in Advanced Automotive Manufacturing, a partnership between the Kentucky System and Toyota. "After working with them for about six months, they asked me if I was interested in coming to Kentucky and leading that effort. In 2007, I took off to Kentucky where we funded the center in 2008," Parker noted (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Parker saw great success in Kentucky: "I was the principal investigator that received the national award as a National Center of Excellence" (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She was traveling globally — to Germany, India, and

China — developing partnerships all over the world. “We were selected by the National Governors Association as a National Best Practice and those types of things. We were getting quite a bit of attention,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). When Parker arrived in Kentucky she recalls the Chancellor saying, “you’re going back to school” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker started a doctoral program at Western Kentucky University and was fortunate enough to receive free tuition from the state. She completed the Doctorate in December of 2012 and, within weeks of defending her dissertation, she got a call from a search firm in Minnesota. The search firm encouraged her to apply for two positions, which she did, and was successfully moved forward as a finalist in both. Parker was also approached by the US Department of Education to be Deputy Assistant Secretary. “I was going through that vetting process and some of my mentors encouraged me not to do that, but instead to be president. So I went to Minnesota,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Mentors were present throughout her career in higher education, Parker admitted. “Some,” she said, “might even be defined differently” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Her first was the president at LCC. “When I was student there, she was faculty. She came out of the faculty ranks. She was a visionary leader. Her talks, her speeches to the college inspired me. They were motivational,” Parker reminisced. “She wanted to make sure that I also had good experiences. I think she wanted to grow me as an individual,” she continued (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker recalled her mentor giving her things to do, assignments that stretched her to a point where she sometimes questioned if her mentor even liked her, but all in all, she showed her what it was all about. Without her, Parker said, she wouldn’t know how to do time management.

“The farther you move up in administration,” she said, “the more hectic your schedule becomes. I had to manage my time, and I was very successful. Of course, I think that now being a president, I understand that my success was her success. She encouraged that,” Parker said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). One way her mentor encouraged success was by providing Parker opportunities to work outside of the normal scope of work:

She would ask me to do strategic, important things that had a positive impact on the college. I was doing a few big things at once; I mean really big things like developing an alternative energy curriculum for the whole state of Michigan while making sure that our school was a test bed for alternative energy. I was doing that at the same time as trying to manage getting that campus built and getting all of the programs curriculum developed. It was a lot for me. It really challenged me to do those things and to be successful. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Parker noted that, while she and her mentor shared many favorable interactions, helping others to be successful meant not all exchanges would be complementary, though they could be constructive. “There was one time that she called me in her office, and she kind of let me have it. She walked me to the door and said, ‘Now, give me a hug,’” Parker recalled (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Parker had mentors during her time in Kentucky as well. Dr. Keith Bird, Parker’s chancellor, was one such person. Parker recalled one of her first encounters with Bird:

I had one of the most amazing things that happened to me that when I left Lansing. I had just been to the doctor and was misdiagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. I had already put in my resignation letter at Lansing and had called Dr. Keith Bird, my chancellor in Kentucky. I said, ‘I can’t come, Dr. Bird.’ I felt like I needed to stay in Michigan. He said, ‘Oh, Annette, just get here; we’ll take care of you. Just get here.’ You’ve got to know him. He is one of the true leaders in higher education, in community college education in this country today. He’s extremely intelligent. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Parker recalls going to the fitness center, which they called the “West Wing” to join Bird in his daily workout and pick his brain. Many of the directors did that, she said, and he loved it (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She said there were many times Bird would share thoughts about an idea or direction and she did not initially buy in to it, but she would ponder it, and a couple of days later she would realize he was right. Parker admitted she still calls on Bird to this day. They talk about the national agenda, “So my depth of [knowledge about] what's going on nationally, what are the trends, what are the things to look at [are enhanced]. Even when I go to an interview, [I know] what are the things to talk about that a board or a chancellor is going to be interested in” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Those are the things that Parker says she has learned from Bird, whom she refers to as a mentor, friend, and family member.

Besides Bird, Parker had others she considered to be mentors while in Kentucky. Dr. Christine Johnson McPhail, another legendary leader in higher education is one such mentor. Parker and McPhail worked together when KCTCS hired the Community College Research Center out of Columbia as a third-party evaluator for the National Center award; McPhail was given the assignment. “You’re going to be a president,” Parker recalled McPhail telling her. “She helped me make sure that I was doing something big with the center, of national significance, and became a good mentor,” Parker said of their relationship (personal communication, April 6, 2014). McPhail, along with others, helped Parker as she prepared for her first presidency. Parker started the Lakin Insitute while in Kentucky, around the same time she was being mentored by McPhail. The Thomas Lakin Institute for Mentored Leadership is sponsored by the Presidents' Round Table, National Council on Black American Affairs, which is an

affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). According to the website, “The Institute is designed to prepare senior-level executives for positions as community college chief executive officers and has graduated the highest number of African Americans who have gone on to CEO positions over any other leadership institute in the United States” (About Lakin Institute, n.d., para. 1). Through membership in the Lakin Institute, Parker was assigned two formal mentors: Charlene Newkirk, JD, South Campus president at the Community College of Allegheny County, and Dr. Charlene Dukes, president of Prince George's Community College. Parker said her formal mentors at Lakin did help her clean up her resume, but told her they were unwilling to act as references initially: “Dr. Dukes told me I didn’t know her that well or for that long.” Parker recalls Dr. Dukes saying, “I’m not going to be a reference; we haven’t even known each other that long” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Once they got to know each other better, Parker said, they were more aware of her and knew she would live up to the high standard that Lakin expects of its participants; thus, they were later willing to be a reference. Going back to her relationship with McPhail, Parker said she taught her a valuable lesson that she missed at the Lakin Institute — you don’t just apply for a presidency, you are nominated. “I didn’t know that,” she said, “If you just go apply, you probably don’t stand a great chance” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). “You need people around you, who will vouch for you,” Parker said, “...people that have been there, the leaders that came before us” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Those people can’t all look like you either, she said, speaking about the diversity of your references.

Having the support of mentors during the process of applying for a presidency is essential, Parker said, as she recalled preparing her own presidency with the help of her mentors. “It’s a grueling process and you’re getting asked certain things, ‘How do I do this and how do I dress for this and what do I say when I go to the community forum or what should I be thinking about?’ The type of mentorship, she said, “where others are helping you work through life changing processes” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker shared another example of this powerful mentoring in actions.

I was here during that process right after I found out that Minnesota was interested in me and so was the US government. I was all enamored with the government job. ‘Oh, I’m going to go to Washington. I’m going to work for Barack Obama. Wow!’ I just thought that was the coolest thing. Jennifer Wimbush, who is another one of those presidents who used to be my provost for ten years.... I have lunch with her and another colleague from Lansing Community College, who is also a different type of mentor. I told her and she says, ‘Well, you know, I’m getting ready to go have a meeting with Helen and Charlene.’ Dr. Helen Benjamin is like a larger-than-life leader with the Presidents’ Round Table. ‘I’m going to ask them and see what they think.’

So, they had a meeting somewhere here in this hotel, but Jennifer didn’t call me until I got home a couple of days later. It was late at night; I was surprised. It was Jennifer on the phone and then she says, ‘I’ve been meaning to call you. I just had to call you because I talked to Helen and Charlene. Remember I told you I would talk to Helen and Charlene? And I told them that you were thinking about going to this government job and they said, ‘Now, what is Annette thinking? Does she really want to go to Washington and sit in a cubicle?’ Things that I hadn’t thought about. I’m like, ‘Wow!’ Then I told Christine, ‘It’s cold in Minnesota,’ and she said, ‘You know you like the designer purses, right?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ She says, ‘Well, go buy a couple and get your butt up to Minnesota.’ (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Parker likened her mentors to pioneers, saying they’ve paved the way and there is a whole cohort of up-and-comers they serve through this type of mentorship. Nothing, she said, was off limits. Parker said, “They’re going to tell you if you’re not dressed appropriately... there are no boundaries” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Nothing is off limits, and there is complete confidentiality, Parker said. “They let that be known. That’s part of being an institute,” she explained (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Your mentors are telling you things for your own good, she said, sharing another example of how McPhail helped her learn how to “work a room” a few years back at an AACC conference.

Parker said mentoring was critical in her ability to achieve a presidency. “I wouldn’t be where I’m at today without the mentors that I’ve had in my career” she noted. To Parker, a mentor is “Somebody that cares about you in a way that they’re concerned for your wellbeing; they can tell you things that others can’t” (personal communication, April 6, 2014), whether it is about how to prepare for a job search or that you have food on your face. Honesty and openness, she said, are the most important aspect of any mentoring relationship. “You’ve got to be able to be honest and say what you have to say,” she believes. In terms of the advantages of mentoring, she said, “I think it gives you a heads up on what the expectations are. You don't have to learn by trial and error. You've got somebody who came before you who can really talk about what you're doing, how you're going to be successful” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Now in her second year of her presidency, Parker finds herself paving the way for others, mentoring two young women who have gone through the Lakin Institute for Mentored Leadership as they progress through a presidential search. “We talked and I understand their emotions too because I was just there. I've been really giving them advice, giving them all the information to be successful,” she said of her role as a mentor, “I've spent numerous hours with them in the last few months or so, talking to them and giving them all the information. Now, they've got to use it” (personal communication,

April 6, 2014). She is always working with an employee at her own institution who aspires to be a college president. Parker feels paving the way for aspiring leaders is an important role; a role several people such as Drs. Bird, Newkirk, Dukes, and McPhail have played in her life as mentors.

What Would You Do If You Weren't Afraid: Dr. Kathleen Plinske

Dr. Kathleen Plinske is campus president of Valencia College's Osceola and Lake Nona campuses. Prior to her position at Valencia, Plinske served in a number of positions at McHenry County College in Illinois. During her nine years at McHenry, Plinske rapidly took on greater responsibilities as she moved through the leadership ranks, serving as a coordinator, director, executive director, associate vice president, vice president, and ultimately as the interim president. Plinske has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Physics from Indiana University (IU), a Master's degree in Spanish from Roosevelt University, and a Doctorate in Educational Technology from Pepperdine University. She began her first presidency at twenty-nine years old.

Unsure what to do with her recently earned undergraduate degree in Spanish and Physics, yet extremely interested in working in her hometown community college, Plinske took a job at McHenry County College as an Instructional Media Specialist the week after graduation. With a dream to teach Spanish, she immediately started working on her Master's degree and was soon teaching part-time in the evenings while working full-time. She was progressing with her Master's degree when, she says, "people started leaving the college or retiring at the right time," which allowed her to work her way up to coordinator, director, executive director, assistant vice president, associate vice president, and then vice president. Plinske had only just completed her Doctorate degree in 2008 when she became interim president in 2009. The Board of Trustees was going through an interesting time and terminated the then-president without a clear succession plan. "They went through five interim presidents in a period of six months. I was the fifth," she noted (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske was interim president for roughly nine

months and says, “Near the end of that position, I recognized it was probably a good time to look at a different institution, I found the campus presidency position open at Valencia and applied for that” (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske has now been campus president at Valencia for four years.

Plinske had one formal mentor, but admitted she has had a dozen, if not more, along the way. Her formal mentor was the president who was let go from McHenry County College. “The college had a formal mentoring program, where administrators could mentor faculty and staff. Plinske was in her first year of doctoral studies and reported to the vice president of Human Resources, who knew she aspired to being a community college president. Plinske recalled the following conversations:

She (the VP of Human Resources) said, ‘You need to ask the president to be your mentor.’ I said, ‘I can't do that. I'm 25. What's a twenty-five year old going to be doing asking the president to be her mentor?’ She said, ‘Well you have a choice. Either you can ask him, or I'll ask him for you. So, pick.’ I thought it would be all together embarrassing to have her ask him for me, so I went ahead and asked him, and he said he'd be delighted to. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

Plinske’s mentoring relationship with her college president was formal. They conducted hour-long meetings on a monthly basis. He asked her to set the agenda in terms of what to talk about. Discussions often centered around specific questions she had, articles she had read and wanted to discuss, or items happening at the Board of Trustee level that she wanted to better understand. “Then of course, he would make suggestions of things that were along my line of interest, in terms of authors I might want to take a look at or specific topics that he thought might interest me,” she said. “It was a dialogue in that way” (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Carol Twigg’s work on developmental math models such as emporium math and the community college

baccalaureate were specific examples of current issues that were discussed, Plinske recalled. “That, I think, helped prepare me for one of my positions, which was the executive director of institutional effectiveness,” she said (personal communication, April 7, 2014). In that role, Plinske was responsible for overseeing the institution’s regional accreditation and became a peer reviewer. This was “a really important outcome of her mentoring relationship,” she mentioned (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

Plinske had other, less formal mentors as well. She recalled writing her essay when she applied to the doctoral program, “I think in my essay I sort of wrote, I want to be a vice president. I thought it was too crazy, too bold, to say I want to be a president,” she said (personal communication, April 7, 2014). But in the first semester leadership course her instructor, who really became a mentor to Plinske, posed the notion of being willing to be unreasonable with your expectations. “Even though everyone else might think something is crazy, you ought to go for what you really want to do,” she said. “He posed the question: what would you do if you're not afraid? Through that process, I think I became more comfortable actually saying, yeah, I want to be a president” (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske was twenty-six when she had that epiphany. She added,

I believe that a lot of people are limited by their own beliefs about what's outside of their realm of possibility in terms of what they might be able to achieve or what they might be able to accomplish. I think one of the most important things a mentor can do is sort of help the individual identify what might be holding them back and figure out why that is. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

Plinske wasn’t short mentors who helped her look outside of herself and recognize her potential to become a community college president.

Another mentor who Plinske recalled supporting her as she prepared for her first presidency was the interim president who immediately preceded her at McHenry. He was a seasoned community college president who took much the same path as her, she recalls. "He became the community college president at the age of thirty-one," she said (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske credits him for the opportunity to serve as interim president. "I think he actually had a lot to do with convincing the Board of Trustees to give me a chance at the interim presidency," she said, "Basically saying, 'Look, yeah, she's twenty-nine; I get it, but I was a president at thirty-one. Look at the career I [have] had'" (personal communication, April 7, 2014). She admits to calling on him for advice in bizarre situations. He had, after all, been president at nine different institutions and interim at probably a half-dozen more, she said.

On my ninth day on the job, we missed payroll. That is not a good way to start. Obviously, it wasn't anything that I did, but I had to deal with the aftermath. On the same day, our online registration system went down. I'll never forget walking in, seeing a line of like five hundred students standing outside of student services, standing in line. I went up to them, I'm like, 'what are you all doing?' And they're like, 'well, the online registration system's down so we can't register for classes next semester.' They were ditching class to stand in line to register for the next semester. As I'm talking to the students, the employees are coming up to me saying, 'Something's weird, we usually have a direct deposit thing in our bank by now, but nothing's showing up.' Then I realized that was happening on top of everything, and then, particularly on our third shift, folks were living paycheck to paycheck.

I stayed; I pulled an all-nighter that night, and talked to the third shift custodians in particular, and said, 'We'll make it right. We'll pay back the bank fees that you might experience if you're overdrawn because you got automatic payments or whatever happening.' I also happen to speak Spanish and a lot of the custodians only spoke Spanish so I felt it was important to deliver that message directly and to apologize for it directly rather than have that message sent through a number of layers, and be there to answer questions. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

This was one of the times Plinske called the interim president for advice as she was unsure how to deal with it or what the right thing to do was. She had so many questions running through her head she recalled.

Despite her success in academia, one of Plinske's most influential mentors wasn't in education at all. In fact, he never even went to college, but that didn't stop Plinske from following in her grandfather's footsteps. Plinske's grandparents lived within five minutes of the college, and she recalls going over for lunch or dinner. "I'd just sort of share my path and my story. He'd always give me good words of encouragement or advice, just keep hanging in there," she said. "He was definitely a mentor" (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske wanted to honor her grandfather by involving him in her dissertation. "He was going to be so proud of me getting that doctorate," she said. She just wanted to find a way to engage him in the process. Plinske had her grandma and grandpa help put stamps on the letters to trustees as she was working on her dissertation. Her grandfather is not the only family member she considers a mentor. "I think my father was as well," she said. He never went to college either. He was in sales. "He was never interested in being in a leadership role at all," she said, "He was just happy doing his job." He worked hard and took pride in his work, she said. Plinske is confident she learned her work ethic from him (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

Plinske had other non-family mentors as well. A full-time faculty member at her first full-time job with whom she shared an office was one. She helped set expectations, and Plinske learned a lot of lessons not only from her, but also from all her mentors (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Speaking of lessons, doing the right things for the right reasons is something Plinske said echoes as she faced difficult decisions. "If you

make a decision with the hope of making someone happy, you're never going to win because in almost any decision you make, someone's going to be unhappy about it," she said (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske believes that as long as you use your moral compass and make decisions for the right reasons, you can deal with the consequences of your decisions better than if you were doing it just to satisfy others. Finally, Plinske said she was advised to not worry about being too young for the job because everyone else was going to worry about that for her and to "fake it till you make it" — advice Plinske feels can often be misconstrued:

I think a lot of times you have to recognize that presidents are going to be in a situation for the first time quite often in their career. Even if you aren't a president till you're fifty-five or sixty, there's going to be a situation, even at that age, that you're going to face for the first time in your life and how do you know how to deal with it until you've already dealt with it once, right? I think a lot of times just being open and almost being able to forgive yourself, like, 'Hey, you haven't had this experience yet.' You've got to have the confidence in yourself that you'll be able to improvise in such a way to make the most of the situation. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

One of the things Plinske admits struggling with when she first became interim president was the concept of how a president is supposed to act in certain situations, dress, or even say. "It was exhausting," she admitted, to try living up to expectations when you didn't even know what they were. "Maybe three or four months into it I sort of realized I just have to be me. I can't be putting on an act to be what a president's supposed to be. I have to be me. I am the president" (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske said that it made her feel freer in the way she made decisions and interacted with stakeholders. She concluded by stating, "I wasn't trying to live up to other's expectations" (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

Expectations are something Plinske says she is confronted by. In Illinois, she feels people are more surprised by her gender, whereas in Florida, the focus is on her age. “It happens more than I'd care to admit, that I introduce myself as the president and the assumption is that I'm the student government association president,” she said (personal communication, April 7, 2014). “It used to bother me, it doesn't bother me anymore. I've guess I've owned it. It's like, yep, I got it. I understand I look young. I am young, and that's okay" (personal communication, April 7, 2014). At her age, Plinske feels she can make a positive impact on her students. She explains, “I've heard from students at the campus that they appreciate it because they see someone who's pretty close to their age who's in this leadership position” (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske hopes that the students believe they can make an impact in their community, despite their age or experience; that they can do something big within the next couple of years.

In terms of mentoring these younger students, Plinske feels that because she has had so many great mentors, both formally and informally, she is obligated to help others. “I meet very regularly with our student government association. I think the gift I can give them is to help them believe in themselves and believe that they can accomplish anything that they want to do,” Plinske said, noting that last year the whole group of officers met with her monthly, while this year it is primarily just the president. Even when the calendar looks impossible, and she wonders how she can possibly fit in another hour-long meeting, she says she feels compelled to help. “Unto whom much is given, much is expected,” she said. “I have been given so much that I think it's only right to give back in whatever way that I can” (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Plinske is currently involved in a formal mentoring relationship:

That's an individual who is in the college's professional development leadership program. Probably similar to what I experienced at McHenry. He doesn't know what he wants to do in terms of his career path. He's committed to making a difference in his community. I think that in our mentoring relationship I can help make connections between where his interests lie and where the needs are in the community. If I can help bring those two things together, than that's a victory. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

She believes that a mentoring relationship is about providing opportunities for others to identify their passion, set goals, and work toward fulfilling them. In her words, she explains, "I can't imagine telling him, here's what you need to do" (personal communication, April 7, 2014). Instead, she says, she listens to him talk about the impact he wants to make in the community and presents him opportunities so he can choose whether or not to take them. "I think a mentor can almost be a relationship broker in terms of helping an individual make the right connections and meet the right people and just get a broader sense of the landscape," she said. If someone is interested in something, and has a connection in the community, helping make the link to someone who is deeply engaged in the work, she believes, is one of the best things you can do for her mentees.

I really think that that's the power of the mentoring relationship, not having your mentees, so to speak, do the work that you're passionate about, but rather listen very carefully to where their passions are to help the individual more clearly define what they're passionate about and how that translates into a difference they can make in the community. If that's clear, I think a lot of the time, mentors can help make those connections to community resources, people, or to other individuals that share the same passions or are doing the same work. Or in other words, almost just sort of being like a soul coach, like, 'Hey, I've been through some pretty difficult or crazy times and I know you're going through those too and I'm telling you, you can make it. You can do it. You can be successful.' (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

Plinske basically thinks that people just need encouragement. "They need to hear that somebody else has been through something just as difficult, and that they've persevered and been successful too. They need to hear that if they do make a mistake or

have a crisis along the way, that later in life they will look back and appreciate that experience as a learning moment” (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

When asked the single most important aspect of the mentoring relationship, Plinske said it was trust.

I think it’s knowing that you have someone that you can trust and that you can ... I think just knowing that you're not alone. That there's someone that you can turn to, that you don't know what situation's going to present itself... when you're completely lost or you don't know what to do next, or you're just dreading the next thing that's going to happen; knowing that there's someone there that you can either call or visit in their office, or what have you, I think that that, to me, was tremendously important. I think all the other stuff was amazing, but just knowing that there's someone, that you've got that rock that you can count on. Someone who's there that you can trust and that you can be yourself with, I think is really important. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

She said she can’t imagine discovering someone she was mentoring breaking trust: “I don’t know how I could continue in that sort of relationship. I think that’s the absolute bare minimum that you have to have” (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

Plinske credits trusting mentor relationships as one of the keys in her leadership development; from her roles at McHenry to the campus presidency at Valencia.

In my particular case, I think the mentoring was strategic on the college's part because I think they saw a number of retirements that were on the horizon and there was no way, in the positions that I had, that I would be ready to take on one of those positions. However, through various strategic targeted mentoring, I was able to learn things about accreditation and board relations that I needed to know for that, and the executive director job in particular. That was made possible specifically because of these mentoring relationships and then based on the experiences I was able to acquire in that position, that sort of prepared me to be ready when called for that first interim presidency. Then, of course, the Valencia position never would have happened if I didn't have the experience at McHenry. So, the dominoes all fell in place. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

She also said she finds it odd that you never see mentoring explicitly listed as an expectation of presidents or top administrators. It’s important, she says, “I don’t believe

that a path to leadership is one that you can walk alone” (personal communication, April 7, 2014). She thinks an expectation of giving back ought to be set, because others have helped current leaders get where they are today. “In a selfish way, I think it helps the institution because you help develop leadership capabilities within your ranks,” she said. Current leaders should really reach out and help others in any way they can, she believes.

Leading the College You Grew Up In: Dr. Lori Sundberg

Dr. Lori Sundberg is president at Carl Sandburg College, a small, rural, multi-campus community college, located in Galesburg, Illinois, which serves approximately 4,500 students annually. Dr. Sundberg, the sixth president and first female president of Carl Sandburg College, is also the first Sandburg graduate to serve as the college president. She was a first-generation college student when she started her educational journey at Carl Sandburg College, earning a Cosmetology Certificate. She continued on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Economics and History from Knox College, a Master's of Business Administration degree from Western Illinois University, and a Doctor of Business Administration with a concentration in Management degree from St. Ambrose University. Sundberg has been at the institution for nineteen years and prior to being the college president, she served as the first female vice president — vice president of Academic Services. In this role, Sundberg was the college's first female cabinet officer, and she was acting president in the absence of the former president. As vice president of Academic Services, she had responsibility for all the instructional areas across the college's three campuses. During her nineteen-year tenure, she has also served Carl Sandburg College as vice president of Administrative Services, where she was responsible for overseeing the Finance and Business Offices, Human Resources, grant writing, and research. She also served as the chief negotiator for the Board of Trustees, dean of Human Resources and Organizational Development, director of Institutional Research, and the coordinator for Institutional Research. Her first role at the institution was as an adjunct instructor in Economics, in 1995.

Sundberg, who was an internal candidate, is completing her fourth year as president. “My career path really let me see the institution from lots of different angles,” she said of her nineteen-year professional journey from adjunct instructor to college president (personal communication, April, 6, 2014). “It is interesting for people who have grown up in their institution to go on to lead it,” she said. “It’s an interesting dynamic. In many respects, it allows you to hit the ground running because you know the institution so well; on the other hand, all of the relationships change very dramatically overnight” (personal communication, April, 6, 2014). You have to employ creativity, she said, because you cannot just look for another job and leave the institution if things don’t go well. It’s not as easy as just starting over when work gets tough. You have to figure out how to make things work (personal communication, April, 6, 2014).

As the first woman to be part of the president’s cabinet, and the first female vice president and president, it is clear Sundberg has been given opportunities that have prepared her to advance in her professional career. “It doesn’t matter how good you are if you don’t have someone who’s going to give you a shot,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Carl Sandberg’s former president was someone Sundberg noted as giving her an opportunity. She calls him an “informal mentor” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Sundberg believes her mentor saw potential, and gave her the opportunity to be in positions that set her up for future positions including first female cabinet officer or vice president. “I was able to experience all of those things that maybe other people wouldn’t have the opportunity to experience. Without him, I’m not sure I would’ve been able to experience it,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Her mentor was a bit older and had been at three or four different community colleges. She had spent her entire career at Carl Sandburg and had no intention of leaving the institution. Sundberg knew she would need a depth of knowledge that can only be gained through practical experience so she gained this experience by stretching herself — taking opportunities that would develop for future experiences. “I think he knew that I was interested in being a president, so he gave me other experiences to help me in that,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). One example would be putting her in the role of acting president when he was away. “It was an opportunity to try it,” she said. “He gave me lots of those little opportunities” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Some of the experiences, she noted, weren’t ideal, but she knew they were good experiences. “It was a very conscious choice of mine to take jobs that were definitely outside my comfort zone,” she said, referencing her move from institutional research, which is extremely black and white, to Human Resources, where everything is gray. Then there was the Chief Negotiator job, which she said was less than desirable. “I’ve taken jobs that nobody else wanted because I thought they would provide me with experiences that would be valuable,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). “You have to be willing to take a risk. You have to be willing to take jobs that you’re not comfortable with. You don’t know how to do them and you’re going to have to learn and you have to be comfortable with that,” she continued. The Chief Negotiator job was that position for Sundberg, who admits that her personality lends her to be a quick thinker and make decisions rapidly. “I want resolution,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), a trait that is not always constructive to a negotiator. Her mentor, who had previously held the position, gave her some advice, “It’s not a sprint. You’re a sprinter and it’s a

marathon,” she recalls him saying. He encouraged her to get ready for a marathon because she would get very frustrated when she wanted to make a decision and it wasn’t going to happen (personal communication, April 6, 2014). “It kind of set the framework for me so that I didn’t feel disappointed along the way or frustrated. I did, but I was able to come back to those words that kind of helped me understand,” she said of her mentor’s advice (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Sometimes you have to be willing to be uncomfortable for a long period of time, she said, because things just won’t resolve themselves right away. You have to be prepared to go the distance.

Her mentor also gave her another piece of valuable advice, to “find a Lori,” meaning someone in the institution she could count on, who had her back, who would share valuable information, and would help her be a good president, just like she had done for him. She also learned other leadership lessons from him as well. “He was very top-down, very directive,” she said. A style that Sundberg didn’t feel worked well. “I’m more collaborative,” she said of her own leadership style (personal communication, April 6, 2014), noting that women are held to a different standard than men. Sundberg admits being called a “pit bull” by her former boss and mentor, because of her tenacious character, but knows that tenacity is not a trait that would serve her well as a president.

Sundberg’s former boss was not her only mentor. “I have some female presidents who, after I took over, have helped me too,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014) of her own personal experience with mentors. “I’ve called on them for different issues that have come up. I would consider them unofficial mentors as well” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Sundberg recounts calling one of her unofficial female mentors early on, within the first six months of her presidency, for advice and

encouragement. She had a long tenure as a president. “I called her and asked if I could just tell her what was going on, and also if I could tell her what I had done. I went through the whole thing and she said ‘you’re absolutely on track,’” Sundberg said. At that time, she also had a formal mentor who is currently assigned to her through the Illinois Community College system, but that she had not called him. Sundberg believes there are variances in same and different gender mentoring relationships. “I’m able to talk to her about issues women face that my male counterparts can’t respond to; things about being aggressive and being assertive, and how that’s viewed,” she said, noting that “Women are viewed differently by the board and by employees, and she’s going to be able to help more with that” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Mentoring is important to Sundberg. She tries to mentor within the organization and has, in fact, mentored one of her direct reports. She also tries to work outside the organization, doing things like leadership panels and sessions at various conferences. “I try to do it that way because I don’t have anyone directly in my institution that is really ready to do something else,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She hopes that, in the absence of women in her institution, she can mentor women in doctoral programs or professional organizations. “I think I’ve learned some things along the way so I can help people avoid some of the landmines that I of course didn’t avoid,” she joked. “I think it’s very important. But I think there’s many ways to achieve it. I mean, I feel that from my standpoint, I have an obligation to help those coming up behind me because I didn’t have that help” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Under her leadership as president, Carl Sandberg College has developed a formal mentoring program for faculty and staff, which has multiple objectives, from acclimating

new employees to helping grow and develop current employees for advancement. For Sundberg, it was important to forge her own path, but she realizes most people don't figure it out on their own, particularly in larger organizations. She expands this idea further: "If you don't work for the right person or you don't have someone to help you with those talents going unseen" (personal communication, April 6, 2014). The Carl Sandberg mentoring program is formal; mentors are recruited and paired with mentees from different departments. "You would think we would pair them with someone from their department, and we don't. We don't want them to only understand how their department works; we want them to understand how everything works," Sundberg stated (personal communication, April 6, 2014), using the example of a Social Science faculty member being paired up with a faculty member from Humanities. Gender, race, ethnicity, and age are not taken into consideration; instead, the committee looks for a pairing that would be a good match. The role of the mentor, Sundberg says, is "trying to ensure that the person is able to fulfill their job and their goals within the institution, and they understand how they fit in" (personal communication, April 6, 2014). For new faculty members they help with everything, from where the copiers are and who works in the mailroom to pedagogy. "Our goal really is just to help them become integrated into the institution, to understand where we're going, the culture, the mission, our strategic plan, and then to help them in the classroom and anything else that comes along," she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), noting that while the focus tends to be on career development, it can include personal development if the faculty member is having some challenges. "I can think of one instance where a faculty member was very introverted, very shy. He was clearly having difficulties in front of people. The mentor

did some research and really tried to offer some strategies for that,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). The most important aspect of the mentoring relationship, according to Sundberg, is to understand and meet the needs of the mentee.

Beyond her role as a president and mentor, there is other way Sundberg is helping develop other women. For example, she is also currently working on a book deal with Jossey-Bass, for their journal, *New Directions for Community Colleges*, where she is collecting and editing the stories of eight female community college presidents about their path and how they managed the presidency. “I think it is important that women help other women get there, because without being given a chance, I wouldn’t be here. If my former boss hadn’t given me an opportunity, I wouldn’t be where I am. As women, we have to provide those opportunities,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Lasting Relationships Grow Organically: Dr. Linda Thor

Dr. Linda Thor is the Chancellor of Foothill-De Anza Community College District and past president of Rio Salado College. She received her Bachelor's degree in journalism from Pepperdine University, a Master's degree in Public Administration from California State University, Los Angeles, and a Doctor of Education degree in Community College Administration from Pepperdine University. Thor has worked at community colleges for forty years, twenty-eight of them as Chief Executive Officer. In 1986, after turning thirty-six years old, Thor became the youngest college president in the state of California, an opportunity she admits would not have been possible without her mentor.

After earning a Bachelor's degree in journalism, Thor went to work for the Los Angeles Community College District as a Public Information Officer in the District Office. "Being young, energetic, passionate, and probably a little naïve, I just jumped into my new job and started changing all kinds of things. I was in charge of the employee publications, and I started changing the looks of them and started pumping out a record number of news releases and those kinds of things. That caught the attention of the chancellor who wanted to know what had changed over in the Public Information Office that all of this activity was going on," Thor said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). At the end of her first year, at age twenty-five, she was promoted to Director of Communications, making her the youngest director in the Los Angeles Community College District and the only female director. In her new role, Thor reported directly to the Chancellor, Dr. Leslie Koltai, whom she now calls her mentor. Koltai, a Jewish Hungarian refugee who had survived the Nazis and the Communists, had fled Hungary

during the Hungarian Revolution with his wife and young children with nothing but his degrees. He broadcast for Radio Free Europe before he had the opportunity to come to the United States and begin working as a part-time faculty member. According to Thor, Koltai had a very quick rise himself. He became Chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District and, with his background, was a real champion of the underdog. Both the women's movement and the civil rights movement really resonated with Koltai; he really went out of his way to help promising women and minorities get a break. "I could name several others who would not have progressed as fast as they did, or at all, had it not been for him and the opportunities that he provided," Thor said (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Thor's new position as Director of Communications gave her an opportunity to sit in on chancellor's cabinet meetings with college presidents and vice chancellors. "It turned out to be wonderful training ground because I was able to actually sit on the sidelines and watch decisions being made. Some of them good and some of them not so good but all of them good learning experiences," she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). After becoming a director at age twenty-five, Thor quickly realized this if she was going to advance within the organization she needed to get her Master's degree. She went back to school in a special program for working adults through Cal State Los Angeles. She attended classes on Saturdays and earned her Master's degree in Public Administration. She wrote her thesis on Communication for Collective Bargaining at California Community College, a concept that had just been introduced. Just four months after finishing the Master's degree, Thor gave birth to her son. Soon after completing her Master's degree and the birth of her newborn son, Thor realized that she needed a new

challenge; she was ready for a career move. Thor arranged a meeting to talk with her mentor, Chancellor Koltai, about her future. Her intent was to tell him she was interested in being a president. Thor sat down with her mentor, and before sharing her own aspirations Koltai told her she would be a great college president. She was shocked! Thor expressed her interest, and the two started devising a plan to help her reach her new career goal.

There were steps to take: Koltai said Thor would need a doctorate and more experience in the instructional side of the organization. “Having a mentor in a position of power made these things easy to accomplish,” she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Thor was given a special assignment: she was to conduct a study of the status of technical education in the Los Angeles Community College District, which aligned with Koltai’s aspiration to establish a Technical Institute. Thor worked on the study for a year, collaborating with a number of advisory committees made up of powerful people from business, industry, and unions. She forged relationships, and ultimately secured \$3 million, the largest grant that the Los Angeles Community College District had ever received, to set up computer-assisted training workstations in the workplace. Thor was named the Director of High Technology Centers and Services and grew worksite training into \$24 million in state, federal, and private grant dollars. Two years later she got another promotion; she was named Senior Director of Occupational and Technical Education for all nine colleges. She provided district-level coordination. Thor was also working on her Doctorate in Community College Administration at Pepperdine University at the time. Two weeks before defending her dissertation, the Board of

Trustees removed the president of West Los Angeles College and appointed Thor as acting president. She was just thirty-six years old at the time.

Being president was new to Thor, as she was now working on a community college campus; she had previously only worked at the district office. She was the twelfth female college president of the 107 California community college presidents at the time and was by far the youngest. Thor also had a lofty goal ahead of her: to increase enrollments by 20% by the fall. New to the job, she befriended the president of the Academic Senate. On her first day at the college, at a specially called college-wide meeting, he introduced her to the college, addressing concerns he had heard about such as her age, gender, and experience. “He discussed the undiscussables, and by doing that he just put it all out in the open and let people get on with it,” she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Thor followed up her colleagues’ introductions by presenting the Board’s enrollment goal — a big, hairy, audacious goal, or BHAG, a term proposed by Jim Collins in his best seller *Built to Last*. Thor and her team not only met the Board’s big, hairy, audacious enrollment goal, they surpassed it, increasing fall enrollment by 33%. Thor became the college’s permanent president of West Los Angeles College, where she stayed for four and a half years from 1986 to 1990. While president, Thor gave birth to her daughter, becoming the only sitting college president to have a baby while in office, an event so unique the *Los Angeles Times* did a feature story highlighting her unique situation.

Thor had always found herself interested in innovation, technology, and working with community employers — an interest that led to her next position. “They were really the leaders in the country in terms of the use of technology,” Thor said of the Maricopa

Community Colleges in Phoenix (personal communication, May 6, 2014), noting that her interest in the system was reinforced by their presence and participation at national conferences. In 1990, she took on the role of president at Rio Salado College, a unique institution founded as a college-without-walls within the Maricopa system. According to Thor, Rio Salado was never intended to have a traditional campus; instead, it was a distance-learning college, which at the time offered courses by television and correspondence. It operated in 250 locations and, as Thor says, "...was really charged with challenging the limits of tradition" (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Thor was one of 120 applicants, twelve of whom were sitting college presidents. She remained president of Rio Salado for 19 and one half years. Interesting, both of Thor's children work for the Maricopa Community Colleges today.

"Once my children were through college, I had to decide whether I was going to just continue with Rio Salado College, which I dearly loved, and slide into retirement, or whether I was going to make another move when I still felt that I had enough years to make a difference for another institution," Thor said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). In 2009, Thor decided it was time to make the move she had been pondering. That year, she applied and was hired as the Chancellor of Foothill-De Anza Community College District. Thor and her husband, a retiree, moved back to California. Thor had big shoes to fill in her new role, replacing Dr. Martha Kanter, the previous Chancellor and current Under Secretary of the United States Department of Education, appointed by President Barack Obama. This is the job, Thor says, from which she will retire before moving back to Phoenix yet again, this time to reunite with her now growing family (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Although Chancellor Koltai, Thor's self-proclaimed mentor, has had a significant impact on her career, she admits she didn't always see him as such an important player in her game of life. "I did not really realize that I was in a mentor/mentee relationship with him until much later on when I looked back over the relationship," she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). In fact, it wasn't until after they were no longer working together. Koltai had been fired following the turnover of the district's board members, which sparked the termination of much of the district's leadership.

Koltai went on to teach at UCLA and invited Thor to be a guest lecturer in a class of doctoral students. She told the story of how he had mentored her, and she recalls him sitting in awe, taking it all in. After the conversation, Koltai agreed with Thor regarding the role he had played in her professional development, but modestly confessed that at the time he had not thought about how his actions made the difference that she proclaimed they had. "It was just natural for him," she said. "We just had this very close day-to-day working relationship" (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Thor said she now realizes that Koltai's style was very smart. "He used to tell me what a finished project looked like, but he wouldn't tell me how to get there and that frustrated me because I wanted him to just tell me 'go do this and this'; nevertheless, he was bringing out the best in people by telling them what success looked like. You had to go figure out how to get there," she said, admitting that this style builds creative and critical thinkers. "It really causes you to develop your skill set along the way," Thor noted (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Thor said Koltai gave her some wonderful advice along her journey. Some advice was serious, for example, "don't get on the wrong side of the faculty; they will always

win,” with other advice being more light-hearted, such as, “don’t read your own student newspaper” (personal communication, May 6, 2014). The other thing he did, which Thor calls “invaluable,” was to put her in an acting position first in order for her to prove she could do the job. “Other than the first job I had as a Public Information Officer and then the presidency of Rio Salado all those years later, every other job I had in the Los Angeles Community College District I had first on an acting basis” she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). This allowed her to be successful and ultimately get the positions on a permanent basis. “He used the authority that he had, probably to the max, to make things happen not only for me but for other individuals as well,” Thor recalled, explaining that she was certain she would not have had that experience had he not given her the opportunity.

He kept giving me assignments that were outside of my job description. For example, I remember he made me head of a task force, looking into something to do with the fine arts programs. Another time he had me heading some kind of a committee looking into issues with the safety officers or the police officers. Now, in retrospect, I realize that he was just seeing what I could do. He was providing me with visibility in roles other than my assigned roles. In other words, he was helping other people see me as something more than a twenty something year old female Director of Communications. (personal communication, May 6, 2014)

In hindsight, Thor describes Dr. Koltai as strategic, very calculating, and having good intuition; she called their relationship “mutually beneficial.” She said as a mentor, Koltai acted as a cheerleader for her; in other words, he believed in her and helped build her confidence. “I think that it was really important to know that there was somebody who believed in you, and I was also very fond of him. I really wanted to please him, which caused me to swallow my fear and go do it sometimes,” she said. “I think he really

was also proud of the fact that he opened doors for women and minorities, too,” she continued (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Though Koltai clearly played a vital role in Thor’s continued success and is, by her own account, her primary mentor, she nonetheless admits that there were certainly other individuals who influenced her as well. Dr. Paul Elsner, Chancellor of the Maricopa Community Colleges, was another mentor. “While he was quite different than Dr. Koltai, I learned a lot from him too,” she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). One of the primary lessons Thor took from him, who she describes as bold and innovative, was Elsner’s take on mentoring. “He didn’t see his role as solving your problems,” Thor said, recalling a time she went to him to fix a problem and he directed her back to the source, to work it out on her own, rather than telling her how to resolve the issue. She said the other notable thing about Elsner was that he cared deeply about the college, but in a way that was very detached emotionally. He taught her how to be the kind of leader who doesn’t internalize everything.

Thor believes that in mentoring, people may not even realize the lifelong lessons they are teaching future leaders at the time, but that in most instances it is simply instinctual. In fact, she admits that today, after 28 years as a CEO, she now finds herself doing the same things with her employees that others have done for her.

I was not thinking about it as mentoring, but recently I had the young Interim Executive Director of our foundation in here and she was telling me that she didn't think she could apply to be in the permanent role, that she didn't think she had the vision, I found myself launching into this major pep talk about how the vision doesn't come from one person. The vision is developed through consensus and all of these kinds of things. (personal communication, May 6, 2014)

Thor acknowledges that she has had the opportunity to formally mentor many people over the years through the Chair Academy, women's leadership groups, the League for Innovation's Executive Leadership Institute, and teaching in post-graduate programs in community college leadership. However, she believes that based on her own experience, these types of formal mentoring programs are not as long-lasting in terms of relationships as those that grow more organically. "In other words, the women that I'm still in touch with on a fairly regular basis are those that I shared a more natural relationship with, more than those who called me up one day and asked if I would be their mentor for the next year," she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

In terms of how mentoring has affected her career, Thor believes the role her mentor played was critical. "I benefited from both seeing what he did well but also seeing what mistakes he made," she said. "A number of times in my career I would see something developing and recognize it as a similar situation to something that I saw him handle either well or not so well. In many instances, it's the ones he didn't handle well that actually served me the best" (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Thor said given her mentoring experience, she knew where not to take things, and which paths not to go down. She trusted her mentor and knew he was sending her in the right direction simply by sharing his own experiences and lessons learned, which she believes to be the role of the mentor. She also believes in opening doors for others to gain valuable opportunities and considers mutual respect, or trusting one another, to be the most important aspect of the mentoring relationship. These are all characteristic, Thor says confidently, in that the foundation of her mentoring relationships drove her to the success she has today as the Chancellor of Foothill De Anza Community College District.

Something to Learn From Everyone: Dr. Charlotte Warren

Dr. Charlotte Warren serves as the president of Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield, Illinois. LLCC is the largest community college district in Illinois in terms of landmass, covering 4,100 square miles and fifteen counties. LLCC is a multi-campus institution with nine locations that serves more than 16,000 students annually. Dr. Warren has been at LLCC for eight years, stepping into the presidency May 1, 2006 with thirty years of experience in both research universities and community colleges nationwide. She is the college's sixth president and first female president in its history. Prior to LLCC, Dr. Warren was president of the Community College Alliance where she was responsible for the university's partnership with two hundred thirty one community colleges nationwide and vice president of the Virtual Campus at Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio. From 2002-2005, she served as provost of the Lawrenceville Campus of Georgia Perimeter College and preceding that appointment, assistant academic vice president for Continuing and Corporate Education at Georgia Perimeter College in Clarkston, Georgia. From 1997-2000, Warren was department chair of Nursing at Georgia Perimeter and was a psychotherapist in a private practice from 1992-1998. Beyond her achievements in higher education, Warren is also a colonel and deputy commander for a medical command in the Army National Guard. She has a doctoral degree in counseling psychology from the University of Virginia, a Master's degree in psychiatric/mental health nursing from the Medical College of Virginia, and a Bachelor's degree in nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Warren, who grew up in Virginia, came from modest beginnings. Her father, a sailor, had an eighth grade education and her mother, valedictorian of her high school

class, came from a tobacco farm and did not have money to go to college. Warren, who says it was an expectation from the day she was born, was the first in her family to go to college. “When I went to school, there weren't a whole lot of options for women; you were a teacher or a nurse. I wanted to major in music but my mother, being very pragmatic, said you're really not that good,” Warren recalls (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She began her career in nursing and immediately got her Master’s degree in psychiatric nursing. Warren began her professional career as a Program Coordinator in psychiatry at a Veterans Affairs hospital before transitioning into higher education, where she wrapped up the first half of her professional career.

After spending several years in higher education, and starting the first doctoral program in nursing in Georgia, Warren found herself disillusioned with life in a research university. She left her full-time career in higher education and went into private practice doing psychotherapy. She continued to teach though, serving as an adjunct instructor at several schools around town. It was during this period that Warren got connected with a community college. She soon realized she had missed higher education, and subsequently took a job as Chair of Nursing at Georgia Perimeter College. Ironically, the president of the college was also a nurse.

Warren continued to move up the ranks at the new institution. “Every time there was an issue she needed cleaning up, she'd call me and put me in another position, and she just kept promoting me to do that opportunity” (personal communication, April 6, 2014) . Warren spoke of the boundless opportunities bestowed upon her by her former president. Subsequently, Warren found herself in several interim roles, including assistant

academic vice president for Continuing and Corporate Education and provost of Georgia Perimeter's Lawrenceville Campus.

We had some issues with our community and corporate education. She called me one night, and said, "I need you to step in tomorrow." I said, "You know, if the President calls, it's hard to say no." I had done those kinds of things in another position as part of dean of Nursing at a larger university, and I had run my own practice. I had run a business previously, so I understood the bottom lines. I did, and we were well on our way out of the hole, and the provost, which, at that college is the head of campus, was leaving very quickly. She had just made a decision to move, and had asked me if I would go over there. The next day, I was over there, and I was provost of the campus. I was the go-to person. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

For Warren, her interim assignments always turned into being placed in a permanent position, which eventually led her to the presidency at LLCC.

Warren, who has had a fruitful career in business, education, and the military, thinks once you have a mentor, their voice always stays with you.

For me, it's people who have had a major impact on who I am, and how I do things. That can be family, friends, or teachers. Having a psychiatric background, I believe we all carry voices in our heads that talk to us all the time. Sometimes it's advice; sometimes it's a scolding that you remember because it was a wake up moment for... you really do need to do things differently. Sometimes it's a leg up that gives you a job opportunity; sometimes it's just someone to bear your soul to and talk to, to get things out and sometimes it's just someone you observe from afar, and you sort of absorb their energies and ideas. For me, it's a little bit of all of those, but it's collectively the voices that guide you. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

As to whether her then president was a mentor, or a guiding voice, Warren says, "she certainly was encouraging and gave me opportunity; she really put me out there to do it or not to do it" (personal communication, April 6, 2014). There were others whose voices, Warren says, stayed with her throughout her career, one of whom was a mentor from a graduate school who Warren says was a great friend until she left Virginia, and with whom she stayed in touch over the course of her career. "I spent 21 years in the

National Guard, and I had several mentors there too,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). One was a general Warren worked with, who she described as “the greatest leader she ever met” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

People believed in him; they trusted him; they knew he believed in them, too. They knew he trusted them; they would have done anything for this person, because they knew he would never do anything intentionally to harm them; that it was always for the good of what we were doing. He made sure that he, even as he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died within the year, would go to every single soldier when he came to the unit to say hello and shake their hands. They appreciated it. Whether it meant crawling up on a roof where the scouts were, or whether it meant going into the kitchen with the cooks, wherever he went he spoke to people; he made them know that they were important, and he always said, that unless the last soldier in the last rank knows what's going on and understands the mission, he will never be successful. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Regarding how the general’s style impacted her own, Warren said, “It’s challenging.... I think it's a good mindset to have but, in actuality, in relation to every single individual, I don't know if that’s possible, but it's something for which to strive” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Warren plans an annual convocation where she says she attempts to start the year with an honest, frank statement about the college. She describes her methods as thus: “Where we are, what our opportunities are, what our challenges are. Then through the year, as things come up, then there's an opportunity to speak to the campus” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). However, she doesn’t bombard them with weekly newsletters or other kinds of useless information. It is important to Warren that communications are intentional, to ensure all employees get important information. “I don't get around to everyone as much as I like because of our size,” she says (personal communication, April 6, 2014); however, communication is always on her mind. LLCC has a shared governance structure; cabinet minutes and

meeting agendas are all posted on a portal for easy access for all employees. Through policies like being transparent with meeting information, Warren says she has strived to build organizational trust since she arrived. “It was a real challenge when I first got there because the college had been through six presidents in six years. No one was buying anything. You could see it,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). From meeting with the Faculty Senate president to the classified staff, professional, and administrative employees, Warren has taken the time to listen and get to know people, to understand the college and its culture, just like her mentor, the Army General.

Warren profoundly remembers the lessons her mentors have taught her, including one in particular about punctuality and professionalism. “I had an issue with being chronically late,” she said. “I didn't know that I was just scooting in, getting in, being there” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Her mentor sat her down one day and asked whether she knew what her behavior was communicating to other people. “It's saying they aren't important; you are the most important thing; they don't matter; their time isn't important. Every time you do that, you're sending that message,” Warren said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), confessing that she may not always be on time but now she is very conscious about it after the talk with her mentor. “I knew that day she was somebody important in my life. Maybe it's the way that she impacted herself upon me; she cared enough to have that hard conversation, which is not always easy to have,” Warren said. “I guess that's part of a well-rounded mentor, caring enough to have the hard conversation. Not just lifting you up, not tearing you down, but having a hard conversion” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Mentors need the ability to address both strengths and weaknesses. You can't always hear how great you are. Sometimes you

need to know where you can grow, so mentors have to be able to speak to both equally. Other mentors have taught her about confidence. I've had people who said "you can do this," she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), going as far back as faculty members who helped her navigate the system when starting college as a first-generation student, to the president at Georgia Perimeter who helped her move up the ranks by giving her opportunities for career advancement. "She just told you what needed to be done, and what to do, and so she gave me an opportunity, so what I got from her was that I could do it," Warren said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). It was reassuring as she went through life. We all need someone to tell us we can succeed, to not be afraid and to take the next step. "I won't say I never had ambition. I never had ambitions for being in the position that I'm in now. I never would have dreamed I would have been a president. I would never have dreamed I would spend 21 years in the Military and retire as a Bird Colonel," Warren said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), noting that there are not a lot of women who get to her position, but that is wasn't about fighting her way to the top, but rather listening and letting others lift you up until you get there.

Warren's mentors have been male, female, Caucasian, African-American, military, civilian, formal, and informal but perhaps the most important lesson they have taught her — there is something to learn from everyone. "Sometimes someone is even a mentor when they don't mean to be. They challenge you, not in a good way, and so you're determined to prove them wrong," she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), admitting that she has had a few mentors who fell into that category. Good or bad, they were still learning experiences and opportunities. It helps you develop your set of ethics, learn how to behave, treat others, and manage your business. "I have swords that I will go

down on,” Warren said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), sharing a story of when she told a doctor, who was trying to exert his authority over her as a nurse, that he would have to administer a patient’s medication himself if he wanted the patient to have it, because she knew it was the wrong medication and refused to administer it. She tied that example to her current role as president:

Even with the Board I have now, I have seven bosses, and it's very hard to please seven people. I'm very clear about what's okay, and what's not okay, and where it's something that reaches into my ethics, or starts challenging me as a president in such a way that I will lose their respect and confidence. That is where I personally draw the line. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Warren went on to highlight the importance of picking your battles wisely. “You could get in a fight every other day if everything is a battle. If they know you, and you don't fly off the handle every other day, then when you pick something and say this is not okay, they believe it” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Everyone can benefit from mentoring and Warren says she works closely with the Student Government Association (SGA) and student trustees, helping them to resolve issues, understand how to maneuver systems, and make life decisions such as which career path may best align with their hopes and dreams. She hopes she is a mentor for the people on her Cabinet too. “I hope that as we go through our decision-making process and work together, that I'm able to share some experience to help them help me make good decisions,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She also hopes they will come talk to her when they are making some life decisions; whether it's a job, school, or family, they will be able to talk to her. “I leave the door open, and I leave that relationship up to them,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Mentoring isn’t just important for women or young professionals, it is important in all careers: “One

is never too old or too experienced for a mentor, but the older and more experienced you get, the line blurs between peer and mentor” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). “I think it’s important for everyone to have people give them feedback, to lift them up, to give them guidance,” Warren said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Mentoring is social, sharing good times is important, and while emails are convenient, they are not the best way to communicate with a mentor because too much is lost in electronic correspondence. “I think the reality is that the best opportunity for dialogue is in a more social, or at least away from the office kind of conversation,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), adding that you have to find a good balance between roles, like boss, faculty member, mentor, and friend.

Becoming a Better Version of Yourself: Dr. Kristine Young

Dr. Kristine Young is vice president of Academic Services at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois. She received her Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and her Master's degree in Chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1998, she came to Parkland and attained the rank of associate professor of Chemistry in the Department of Natural Sciences. Young served as assistant to the chair of Natural Sciences from 2001 to 2004, and became chair of that department in June 2004. She was named interim vice president for Academic Services in July 2007, and received her doctoral degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign that December. Since February 2008, she has served as the vice president for Academic Services at Parkland College.

As a doctoral student in Chemistry at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Young realized early on that the goal she was working toward was not her own. Other people wanted her to be a Ph.D. chemist; however, Young was getting positive feedback and enjoying her role as a teaching assistant. She decided to leave North Carolina sooner than expected and see who would hire a graduate with a Master's degree. Young was well aware of one place she could teach with her Master's degree, a community college. "I didn't know much about community colleges at all, other than I could get a job there," Young said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

According to Young, Parkland College was the only college that paid attention to her application (personal communication, April 6, 2014). They interviewed her and gave her a shot. Within a year of being at Parkland, Young found herself in a full time, non-tenure track position, which was a special program to diversify the faculty and required

no experience. “My running joke is, I wrote a cover letter that explained just how little experience I had, and that if they wanted someone with no experience, I was their gal,” Young said of her first position, admitting that she was hired just because of being a woman in the field of science (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Within a year of being in a full-time role at Parkland, Young realized she had fallen in love with community colleges — what they did, how they felt, and their focus on students. “I decided I never, ever wanted to leave the community college, ever,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She realized, however, that she would not be satisfied in the classroom for the next thirty years. Young was drawn to leadership. Fortunately for her, the Community College Executive Leadership Program was right across town at the University of Illinois.

Young started the Community College Leadership Program; she was a full-time, non-tenure track faculty member at Parkland College. As she progressed through the program, she advanced in her career as well. When the sole female chemist retired and a tenure position became available, Young applied for it and acquired the tenure track position. She then became department chair and, when there was an unexpected vacancy in the presidency and the previous vice president of Academic Services was named interim, she gave the vice president position serious consideration. “It was earlier than I thought it would be, but I remember thinking this is the institution I have been with for four years, wouldn’t it be nice to stay and apply for the position,” Young recalls (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Young advanced in the internal search and was named vice president and later finished up as part of the Community College Leadership Program. “I started the Community College Leadership Program as a faculty member,

continued as chair, and then finished as vice president,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Young has now been at Parkland College for sixteen years.

Young admits there have been people at all points in her life who have taken an interest in what she was or could be doing and have assisted in giving time and advice toward her career progression. “I don’t know if I’ve had a mentor, but certainly I haven’t done this myself,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), thinking as far back as her college career. “Chemistry is still very much a male-dominated field, so as an undergrad, a very, very influential group were the ones who connected me to the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill for grad school,” Young said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). The department chair who hired her was also influential; she considers him an informal mentor. He took great interest in helping to develop her as a faculty member. “I think once he saw I had some leadership interest and capability, he encouraged me at every turn to get involved in the department, get involved in the college, take on increasing leadership,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Her first officemate at Parkland College, a fellow chemistry faculty member, was also someone Young acknowledges as having an impact on her. He was extraordinarily gracious in acquainting her with everything. “The art of teaching, the community, how to get things done, the culture of Parkland, who were the movers and shakers,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). More recently, other Chief Academic Officers in the state have also opened a lot of doors for Young regarding national and state organizations, further encouraging her to stand for leadership roles.

Looking back, Young noted the difference in her relationships with mentors as a young professional, compared to more recent experiences. Referring to one of the Chief Academic Officers, Young said, “She has never sat down with me and specifically said here, this is what you need to do” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Instead, she has watched what Young is doing and is interested in; she has learned her personality, made suggestions, and opened doors. “I’m really grateful for that,” Young said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Her first officemate, she said, was assigned as a formal faculty mentor in her first year at the college. “It was structured by our Faculty Development process. I remember we had a binder; we were supposed to write in it. That lasted about one meeting,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). There were also differences in the framework of Young’s mentoring relationships. With both of the male mentors earlier in her career, Young admitted blending professional and personal lines. They were, “Friendly to the point of being friends,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). With the Chief Academic Officer, however, Young admits her relationship is different; she is friendly, but she keeps it strictly professional. “Now, at an AACC meeting, maybe we’ll have a glass of wine; we’ll linger in a hallway and talk at a professional meeting, but it’s never crossed over into friendship. That’s becoming important to me,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Despite the difference in their relationships, Young noted that a common theme surrounding all of the people who have informally mentored her is cultural assistance. “How do you really get to know the institution you’re working in? How do you get to know the context for operating at the state or national level? You need to know who’s who, and how to get

work done,” for example “Things you can’t pick up on websites or books or grad programs” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Young definitely attributes her successes to the relationships she has built during her professional career and largely credits her ability to achieve high-level positions to their encouragement. “If I walked into Parkland College, as untested as I was, and I wasn’t encouraged and celebrated and pointed in the right direction, I don’t know what I would be doing right now,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). What she does know is, if she were picking a mentor now, she would look for someone who is genuine, motivated to help students, positive, affirming, direct, and most importantly honest, because she believes the role of the mentor is truly “to help you be a better version of yourself; help you fill in gaps that maybe you don’t even know you need to fill in” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). An advantage to having a mentor, she says, is confidence, and sometimes that comes in the form of a kick in the butt and someone else saying, “Would you stand for that position already? You’re ready; you can do this. What help do you need?” (personal communication, April 6, 2014)? And, a continuation of that, “Once you’re there, you still know that somebody believes in you, and believes that you can do this” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). On the other hand, speaking from her own experiences, Young says a downfall to mentoring is that you can get hurt pretty easily by blurring the lines between personal and professional relationships (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Given her own experiences, Young sees the importance of giving back to others. “Am I formally mentoring anyone? No. But have I deliberately taken an interest in

others? Yes,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014), noting the challenges surrounding her unique circumstances as a fairly young vice president.

I came from a chair position, which meant I had eight peers. There were lots of reasons why I made the decision, but I decided, who am I to tell these eight peers to do mentoring tasks with them? I can’t mentor them. They were my colleagues. I felt I had no credibility to do that. Could I try to lead them? Yes. Did I attempt to mentor them? No. Any chair or dean that has come on since, I have thought, okay, I’ve got permission now, culturally or common-sense-wise or even from myself that it’s okay to mentor. Even those who have been older than me, I have felt more of a capacity to guide and to help them along. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Young has guided and helped others along by offering encouragement. “I do a lot of listening with regards to what it is they really want to be doing, and then responding, Why not? What’s in the way? What’s the barrier? Is it you? Is it money? Is it time? What is it?” she said, “Then try to help people go in the direction that they are intending to go themselves” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Young noted that she has twelve direct reports and all have expressed an interest in a leadership role, six of which are presently in doctoral programs. “I’m a little sensitive, since three of them are at Ferris State University, but in a quiet moment, I would tell myself I had something to do with that for most of them,” Young says (personal communication, April 6, 2014), going back to the notion of encouragement.

However, there is one person who Young feels most responsible for mentoring.

The person I felt like I have a responsibility to mentor and help this person along is the only person who is younger than me. She happens to be a woman. There, I felt a special.... She’s going to be a terrific leader. She’s going to be a community college president someday, no doubt about it. She’s going to be extraordinary. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Maintaining a mentor and mentee relationship energizes Young. “That’s when I am motivated. I want the whole college answering to her one day. That’s going to be

great for those students. I feel a special oomph to help her, to open doors for her, to encourage her,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Young has opened doors for her mentee, who has expressed an interest in other aspects of the college, by expanding her job responsibilities and giving her latitude when it comes to faculty-led projects. “It’s good for her; there are things that have to be done for the institution. I’m not making stuff up so she can boost her resume, but it’s stuff that needs to be done,” Young said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). It is a mutually beneficial relationship. Young says yes, go do that, and she takes the self-initiative to go research, study, talk, figure out what she needs to do in order to lead in those areas.

Regarding mentoring, Young says, “It implies that somebody knows something more than you, and that you are in need of that something or you want to know more about that something” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). The relationship is going to evolve over time and change. For Young, there was a gap in her mentoring. She used to use it as a way to work the network, but now, as she prepares to change gears in her career, she is looking for advice, doors to be opened, and help with professional growth.

Conclusion

There are several, practical benefits to mentoring. In fact, just as previous studies have shown that those who are mentored earn more, have accelerated career growth, and greater career and job satisfaction (Kram, 1985; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Scandura, 1992; Noe, 1988), so too did this exploration of the role mentoring plays in the development of female community college leaders. The participants in this study, eight diverse female community college leaders, ranging in age from 30 to 70, and having worked in the field for at least a decade each, shared compelling stories of those in their personal and/or professional life who were willing to take them under his/her wing, validating that having an ally with the power and interest to help a young professional get her feet in desirable doors and advance her career is extremely beneficial. The mentors described in the above-mentioned stories were family, friends, colleagues, officemates, and bosses who influenced the participants tremendously. They offered these women the tools, training, advice, and encouragement needed to accomplish career progression and success. From their stories, it is clear that the participants attribute much of their leadership success to the role mentoring has played in their journeys and that mentoring, as a leadership development activity, has the potential to help women create connections that help them grow as leaders.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study investigated the role of mentoring in the leadership development of female community college leaders, seeking to answer the following research questions,

1. What role does mentoring play in the success of female community college leaders?
 - a. What aspects of the mentoring relationship are most useful and why?
 - b. What are the underlying dynamics and frameworks/interactive processes that surround mentoring relationships?
2. What are the respondents' attitudes and perceptions of mentoring as it relates to leadership development, especially in terms of female leaders?

The researcher wished to answer these questions by collecting stories and experiences from established female community college leaders, letting their words explain what mentorship means to them, how it affected their careers, and how they are providing similar support to future female community college leaders.

Data Analysis

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with eight female community college leaders during the spring of 2014. The interviews were recorded and over 150 pages of texts were transcribed. The data were analyzed using QSR International's NVivo 10, qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, which allowed the

researcher to organize the unstructured data obtained in the interviews. During this process, five interdependent themes, which reflected the descriptions of the participants' experiences, emerged: (1) opportunity, (2) trust, (3) confidence, (4) support, and (5) guidance. A "node," or container for gathering references about a specific theme, was created in NVivo 10 for each of the five themes, and raw data from the interviews were reviewed, sorted, classified, and placed in the appropriate node. Each theme is illustrated in this chapter, using quotations from the interviews. In an effort to preserve the flavor of the narrative, a few long quotations were used as opposed to several short ones.

Discussion: The Definition of Mentoring

Mentoring is a powerful personal and professional development tool. Deliberately left undefined in an effort to let the participant's stories build a framework and bring meaning to the concept, all eight participants indicated that they had engaged in, and been impacted by, a mentoring relationship. The women's experiences epitomized mentoring; they participated in a wide array of mentoring relationships from formal to informal and had traditional, boss, family, situational, and — most commonly — inspirational mentors. Their stories provide in-depth information about the impact of mentoring, which has the potential to resonate with, impact, provide additional insight to, and validate the feelings of, future female community college leaders.

Mentoring took on a variety of definitions and structures to the participants. To Dr. Alice Jacobs, a mentor is "someone who supports the individual, who encourages them, who facilitates, who paves the way, if possible, when there are barriers to their continuing to advance" (personal communication, May 13, 2014). She mentioned those

who supported her through her doctoral studies, a former boss, and her husband as mentors.

Dr. Annette Parker also had multiple mentors throughout her career. She identified boss mentors who provided leadership development opportunities by strategically assigning her tasks and duties that would challenge her and have a positive impact on the college, as well as those who increased her depth of knowledge in the field by discussing national agendas and emerging trends with her. Dr. Parker was assigned a formal mentor tasked with helping her explore her individual leadership skills and prepare for the presidency through a recognized leadership development program, The Thomas Lakin Institute for Mentored Leadership, which is sponsored by the Presidents' Round Table of African-American CEOs of Community Colleges (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

To Dr. Brunet-Koch, a mentor isn't necessarily a formal relationship, but rather a person who has had a "strong influence on where she eventually landed" (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

Likewise, for Dr. Lori Sundberg, mentoring was also informal yet career related. She mentioned a previous boss as an informal mentor, saying she believe he "saw potential" and provided her the experiences she needed to eventually become the first female vice president at the institution she is now leading (personal communication, April, 6, 2014).

For Dr. Thor, who had a handful of different mentors as she worked her way up from a public information officer, her first job after receiving her Bachelor's degree, to a president at age 36, a mentor is someone who shares experiences and lessons learned,

who opens doors and, when appropriate, helps close them (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Dr. Plinske, who noted having “probably a dozen, if not more, mentors along the way,” including formal, informal, and family mentors, likened a mentor to a coach and a guide, and said a mentor should “ultimately hope that their protégé far surpasses anything that they have ever accomplished or achieved.” She went on to say a mentor is “someone who just gets a natural sense of satisfaction by seeing others be successful” (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

Dr. Kristine Young noted several mentors, including an officemate at Parkland who helped her get acquainted to teaching, the community, and the culture of the college, as well as the department chair who hired and took a great interest in helping her develop as a faculty member. She also mentioned different connections she made as she had worked her way up the ranks from her faculty position, noting that as her role changed so too did what she needed from those she considered mentors. “The word mentoring implies that somebody knows something more than you, and that you are in need of that something or you want to know more about that something. There is a little bit of a power dynamic to say the least,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

When asked to define mentoring, Dr. Charlotte Warren said, “For me, it’s people who have had a major impact on who I am, and how I do things,” explaining that mentors can include family, friends, teachers, and even people who never even know that they said something that you carry with you long after it was said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

The participants' colorful accounts of mentoring made it abundantly clear that their perceptions of mentoring were uniquely shaped by their personal experiences.

Theme #1: Opportunity

Mentoring plays a crucial role in expanding opportunities for leadership development; thus, the first theme, Opportunity, is used synonymously to describe career advancement assistance. Research points to career advancement assistance as a consistent outcome of mentoring (Berk, et al., 2005; Noe, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Scandura, 1992; Sosik & Godshalk, 2005). Under the guise of "Opportunity," the women in this study confirmed obtaining assistance with career advancement, the same benefit corroborated in prominent studies.

Assistance with career advancement for the women in this study came in a number of ways, two of which were (1) being given the chance to learn specific skills and knowledge that was relevant to professional goals, and (2) networking with influential employees. According to the participants, mentors helped them learn new skills and advance in their careers by providing opportunities that enabled them to gain essential experience and leadership skills — often in areas where they might otherwise have had gaps. Providing increasingly responsible work experiences was one common way the women felt their mentors helped.

Dr. Alice Jacobs recounted the opportunities afforded to her through mentorship over the course of her career. She spoke specifically about the opportunities her mentor, Dr. Whitmore, gave to her to speak in front of a group — a task she recalls being particularly nerve-wracking for her early in her career. As Dr. Whitmore's administrative assistant, Jacobs was assigned the task of providing welcome remarks at group events.

Jacobs is confident this task prepared her to take on leadership roles: “He was providing opportunities for me to grow, so that when it came time, when there was an opening and I applied for it, I was certainly much more prepared to take on additional responsibilities” she said (personal communication, May 13, 2014), noting that there were always jobs that needed to be done and that her mentor provided her opportunities to assume additional responsibilities despite the fact that she was in a support position. “My job sort of evolved into a true administrator and less of a support role” she said (personal communication, May 13, 2014), citing the opportunities she was given through her relationship with Whitmore which helped her reach her goal of being a college president.

Dr. Linda Thor also shared stories of opportunities she was given to her by mentors as she worked her way up to her current position as chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. Dr. Thor was the youngest director in the Los Angeles community college district and reported directly to the chancellor, who also became her mentor. Thor recounts sharing her aspirations of becoming a college president with him: “He told me that I needed to get some experience on the instructional side of the house, And when your mentor is a powerful person like the chancellor of the largest community college district in the country, he had the ability to just move you,” she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Her mentor moved her several times within the organization, giving her special assignments that provided the opportunity to meet with advisory committees made up of people from business, industry, and unions; work with people from state agencies; and forge life-long friendships with others from outside her area. “Needless to say, that did a tremendous amount for my career,” Thor said of the experiences (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Throughout her journey, Thor was given the opportunity to act in several interim roles, which enabled her to be well prepared to take on the permanent post when the time came: “Other than the first job I had as a public information officer and then the presidency of Rio Salado all those years later, every other job I had in the Los Angeles community college district, I had first on an acting basis,” she said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). She went on to explain that non-traditional candidates like herself wouldn’t have been given a shot, but by being put in interim roles she was able to prove herself and eventually be hired into the position permanently: “Back in those days, the 70's and the 80's, a young female who did not have direct experience in the job that she was applying for would most likely get screened out” (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

As a boss mentor, the chancellor was in a position to open doors for Thor that others may not have had the same ability to open: “He used the authority that he had probably to the max to make things happen — not only for me, but for other individuals as well,” she said of the opportunities she received from her mentor. “He kept pushing — even back when I was director of Communication. He kept giving me assignments that were outside of my job description,” she said, sharing other examples of taskforces and committee work her mentor charged her with. “Now, in retrospect, when I look back at that, I realize that he was just seeing what I could do; he was providing me with this ability in roles other than my assigned roles,” she said. She continued, “In other words, he was helping other people see me as something more than a twenty-something-year old female director of Communications” (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Similarly, Dr. Charlotte Warren also experienced increased opportunities as a result of her mentoring relationships. Regarding the role of her mentor in providing opportunities such as special assignments and promotion, she said the following:

She kept moving me up through the ranks. Every time there was something... every time there was an issue she needed cleaning up, she'd call me and put me in another position, and she just kept promoting me to do that opportunity. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Dr. Annette Parker also illustrated stories of opportunity provided by her mentor, the president at Lansing Community College: “She was a visionary leader. Her talks, her speeches to the college inspired me. They were motivational. She wanted to make sure that I also had good experiences. I think she wanted to grow me as an individual,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker noted that the tasks and assignments given by her mentor stretched her as a professional.

She would ask me to do things. Important, strategic things that had a positive impact on the college. I was doing a few big things at once; I mean really big things like developing the alternative energy curriculum for the whole state of Michigan and making sure that our school was a test bed for alternative energy. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

These additional tasks really challenged her to be successful, Parker recalled. Regarding her mentors through the Lakin Institute, Parker affirmed they also gave her opportunities by way of making personal and professional connections through networking. She reminisced about an experience at the American Association of Community Colleges annual conference: “She showed me where all, I guess I’d say, the powerful people are: ‘That’s so and so, and this is....’ She gave me the dynamics of relationships,” Parker recalled, explaining how her mentors took her to receptions

teaching her how to work the room and talk to people (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Dr. Plinske also believes the role of networking and powerful connection are an important aspect of the mentoring relationship: “I think a mentor can almost be a relationship broker in terms of helping an individual make the right connections and meet the right people and just get a broader sense of the landscape” (personal communication, April 7, 2014).

Paying it forward, or providing similar opportunities to emerging leaders in the field, was also a topic of conversation with the participants. Dr. Kristine Young talked about how she is now providing the same types of opportunities that she experienced — similar to the experiences of Dr. Thor and Dr. Parker — for a protégé she is mentoring:

Quietly expanding her job responsibilities when she has expressed interest in other aspects of the college that are generally, carefully balanced, things that are led by faculty that need special attention to make sure they keep that going. Saying, ‘You’re interested in that? Fantastic. Do that for me. I would love that.’ Giving her latitude, too. Her job description probably doesn’t match 50% of how she spends her time now, but it’s good for the institution. It’s good for her. They are things that have to be done for the institution. I’m not making stuff up so she can boost your resume, but it’s stuff that needs to be done. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Dr. Sundberg shared the same sentiment, succinctly saying, “If my former boss hadn’t given me an opportunity, I wouldn’t be where I am. As women, we have to provide those opportunities [for other women],” (personal communication, April, 6, 2014).

Dr. Parker is giving back, too, by mentoring young women who like her just a few years ago are working through the Lakin Institute in hopes of being a college president someday.

Regarding the role of mentoring in providing opportunity, or assisting in career advancement, Dr. Thor summarized it nicely by saying, “I think that it's opening doors when you have the opportunity to do so and, besides putting people into positions, it's also [connecting them with] people in leadership who have the opportunity to appoint people to committees and such” (personal communication, May 6, 2014). The stories proved there are a number of ways to provide opportunity. “The more the ability of the mentor to help bring about some change for you, the better,” Dr. Thor said (personal communication, May 6, 2014).

Theme #2: Trust

Trust, the second theme, is the foundation upon which relationships are built. According to Ensher and Murphy (2005), “Trust is integral to the mentoring relationship. Mentors and protégés share secrets of their success, stories about their failures, and often reveal many details of their lives.” They continued, “Not only must protégés learn to trust someone else, they in turn must be trustworthy” (p. 142). Like, Ensher and Murphy, the participants in this study also spoke vehemently about the importance of trust in mentoring, placing it at the core of the mentoring relationship.

When asked about the most important aspect of the mentoring relationships, the participants almost unanimously responded with trust. In fact, Dr. Alice Jacobs emphatically and succinctly answered the question by simply saying one word, “trust” (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Dr. Kathleen Plinske provided a similar, but more elaborate answer, saying following:

I think it's knowing that you've got someone that you can trust and just knowing that you're not alone, that there's someone that you can turn to, that you don't know what situation's going to present itself where you feel you're in over your

head. Or you're completely lost. Or you don't know what to do next. Or you're just dreading the next thing that's going to happen. And knowing that there's someone there that you can either pick up the phone and call, or you can go visit them in their office, or what have you. I think that, to me, was tremendously important. I think all the other stuff was amazing, but just knowing that there's someone, that you've got that rock that you can count on. Someone who's there that you can trust and that you can be yourself with. I think is really important. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

Dr. Charlotte Warren also said “trust,” observing that the mentoring relationship needs to be a “safe house” where mentors and protégés can share without fear of repercussion and feel assured that what they share is confidential (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Expanding on the topic of trust, multiple participants added that trust in a mentoring relationship needed to be reciprocal. “Mentoring is a two-way street,” Thor said (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Both she and Dr. Brunet-Koch drove home the point that protégés have to trust that their mentors are sending them in the right direction, and mentors have to trust the protégé to follow through on the advice that was shared and opportunities that were afforded through the mentoring relationship. In addition, the protégés also have to be candid if they feel their mentor is leading them down a path they are not interested in taking.

Theme #3: Confidence

The third theme, Confidence, has long been recognized as an important trait of effective leaders. “Community College Leadership in the New Millennium,” a paper commissioned as part of the AACC New Expeditions project, identified Confidence as a trait of effective community college leaders, saying “An effective leader must have and exude confidence that the directions in which he or she is leading the organization will

serve it well” (Hockaday & Puyear, 2002, para. 7). Like the other traits on this list, Confidence, the authors say, can be learned and developed over time. Results of this study found Confidence to be a theme mentioned by multiple participants. Regarding the impact mentoring has on one’s confidence, participants generally believe that mentoring helped them gain the confidence needed to aspire to more advanced leadership roles. Specifically, the confidences placed in them by mentors helped participants learn to recognize their own value and gain self-confidence.

Alluding to the fact that women sometimes lack self-confidence with regards to their own potential, Dr. Cameron Brunet-Koch observed that often our own thinking limits what we allow ourselves to do. Regarding the role of mentoring on the assuredness of the protégé she said the following:

Everyone can benefit from having contact with someone who is in a position one or two levels above where you currently are working. For one, you get to see that they’re really human first, and then you start to think, well if he or she can do that, I’ll bet you I could [too]. (personal communication, April 16, 2014)

Along the same lines, Dr. Plinske feels that in an effort to build confidence in protégés, the mentor’s role is to help identify and address barriers, such as insecurities, which may prevent success:

I believe that a lot of people are limited by their own beliefs about what’s outside of their realm of possibility in terms of what they might be able to achieve or what they might be able to accomplish. I think one of the most important things a mentor can do is sort of help the individual identify what might be holding them back and figure out why that is. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

She continued, illustrating her point by sharing the following example:

If somebody is hesitant to take on that vice presidency just because they’re afraid they might not be successful at it? Well, that’s something that I think a mentor can help that individual sort of identify and say, ‘You know, you really probably are ready for this position; don’t let your own beliefs about what you’re good enough

for hold you back.' I think that that is a good role for a mentor (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

Sharing her personal journey, Dr. Alice Jacobs noted increased confidence as a result of mentoring. Referring to aspirations of a presidency and the role of her mentor, Dr. Whitmore, she said, "He suggested to me that I was capable of doing it.... I remember thinking, 'I don't think I could do that.' It just was beyond what I imagined that I could do" (personal communication, May 13, 2014). Specific to the role of leadership development for women, Jacob also believes mentoring and confidence play an important role: "They often don't necessarily aspire to more advanced leadership roles without someone suggesting it to them" (personal communication, May 13, 2014).

Dr. Charlotte Warren also talked about confidence as well. She believes the impact mentoring has on confidence is immense: "It's having people along the pathway, truly believe in you and letting you know that. It makes a huge difference" (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Sharing her personal experience, she went on to say the following:

The people that I've come across have been amazing in doing that - letting me know that I do a good job, and continuing to either promote me or give my names to people for positions, because they believe that I can do it.

She continued, sharing examples of times when others believed in her, including a story of her tenure in the service.

Even in the Military, putting me in positions that nurses had never been in, and being willing to fight other guys who didn't think nurses should be doing that; and for me, because they believed in me. Yeah. Those people have made a huge difference. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Warren concluded her comments about confidence saying, “You can think you're doing a good job, you can even know you're doing a good job, but it never hurts to hear from someone else” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Dr. Young doesn't believe men experience the same lack of confidence that often plagues their female counterparts. In fact, based on information in an article she recently read, she believes women tend to make themselves available for leaderships roles several years after they are actually ready. She likened this information to another study she read regarding career advancement.

A corollary thing I heard recently was men are often promoted on potential. Women are promoted on experience and previous results. I heard them very separately, but I have connected them in my mind as being just about the same thing. The advantage of a woman having a mentor is maybe that [it] becomes the kick in the butt to say, ‘Would you stand for that position already? You're ready.’ I don't think guys need to be told.

When asked about the relationship mentoring has on women in leadership she had a similar answer:

Maybe it's a confidence — that kick in the butt to say, ‘Yes, you are ready. Go stand for that position. It's okay.’ Maybe it's a continuation of that. And once you're there [in a position of leadership], you still know that somebody believes in you, believes that you can do this. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Dr. Brunet-Koch also addressed the difference in confidence levels between women and men, attributing the disparities to experiences and upbringing throughout life — specifically boys' participation in organized sports.

Perhaps women may not have had the benefit of having coaches all through life. Women may not have played sports where you can really develop a relationship with someone who is trying to develop a skill, and in sports it would be the specific skills associated with that sport. I don't know if women would have had that type of experience. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

She went on to say, “I think that the boys have many more opportunities to develop that coach/mentor relationship that young girls didn’t have in the past” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). In terms of the progress that has been made to cultivate confident young women, Brunet-Koch believes opportunities are becoming more prevalent: “They [girls] are getting exposure now, but certainly not for women who are forty and fifty years old — they didn’t have that opportunity” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). She was emphatic that mentoring is not more important for women than men, but rather it is equally important to the confidence and overall leadership development for everyone.

Theme #4: Support

Support, the fourth theme, is a function of mentoring that researchers believe is closely related to emotional and psychological development (Burke, et al., 1990; Hansman, et al., 2002; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Wai-Packard, 2009; Noe, 1998, and Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Mentors were a source of Support for each of the eight participants in this study, and the participants spoke both passionately and at length about the Support provided by their mentors. A common sub-theme that fell under the umbrella of Support for the women of the study was constructive feedback.

According to Dr. Kristine Young, the support she received through mentoring has gotten her where she is today: “If I didn’t get the encouragement, if I walked into Parkland College, as untested as I was, and I wasn’t encouraged and celebrated and pointed in the right direction, I don’t know what I would be doing right now,” she said (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Dr. Alice Jacobs also talked about the support provided by her mentors, indicating that one of her mentors, Dr. Whitmore, was so supportive he was nominated for the American Association for Women in Community Colleges Mildred Bulpitt Award, which is given to CEOs who are especially supportive of women.

With regards to support and constructive feedback, Dr. Lori Sundberg shared profound advice she received from one of her mentors. “My personality is such that I am a quick thinker,” she said (personal communication, April, 6, 2014), indicating that she liked quick decisions and resolution, but that a career change from institutional research to human resources and then negotiations required a different set of leadership characteristics. “It’s not a sprint. You’re a sprinter. It’s a marathon,” she recalled her mentor telling her as he encouraged her to be ready for the long haul, concerned she would get very frustrated if she wanted quick decisions in the world of negotiations (personal communication, April, 6, 2014). She found his advice to be influential: “It kind of set the framework for me so that I didn’t feel disappointed along the way or frustrated. I did, but I was able to come back to those words that kind of helped me understand,” she said (personal communication, April, 6, 2014). For Dr. Sundberg, this experience alone was one of her most memorable and certainly stuck with her throughout her career.

Perhaps the strongest illustration of psychosocial support came from Dr. Annette Parker as she spoke about her multiple mentors who acted as counselors and friends as she was developing as a leader. Dr. Parker told an inspiring story of one of her mentors showing her support during a time of personal health struggles soon after accepting her position in Kentucky and submitting her resignation at Lansing Community College. “I called Dr. Keith Bird, my chancellor in Kentucky and said, ‘I can’t come, Dr. Bird. I felt

like I needed to stay in Michigan.’ And he said, ‘Oh, Annette, just get here. We’ll take care of you; just get here,’” she recounted (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Parker did leave for Kentucky as planned and, with the support of Dr. Bird, was able to work through those issues. She also talked of other mentors through the Lakin Institute who provided psychosocial support in various ways, from giving advice on her choice of clothing to providing feedback on how she worked a room or talked to colleagues during social events. Regarding the role of providing support now as a mentor, rather than a protégé, Dr. Parker said, “I understand their emotions because I was just there. I’ve been really giving them advice, giving them all the information to be successful” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). When asked what mentors give to their protégés, as compared to what protégés bring to the table, she answered “Advice, counsel, and support — emotional support” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Dr. Cameron Brunet-Koch believes that the support received through mentoring, such as that illustrated in the aforementioned stories can a positive impact on the retention of women in leadership roles. “I believe people like support, and if feeling supported, challenged, and cared for results in greater retention, I guess mentorship could do that,” she said (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

Theme #5: Guidance

The fifth theme, Guidance, is commonly associated with the concept of mentoring since it is often provided by a person with authority or experience in a particular area. Guidance is also likened to role modeling and is frequently included as one of the psychosocial functions of mentoring (Kram, 1983, 1985; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Both Ragins and McFarlin (1990) and Sosik and Godshalk (2000) found that role modeling

was associated with mentoring relationships and that female mentors provided the highest levels of role modeling for other women. Likewise, the women interviewed for this study also believed Guidance was a positive outcome of mentoring.

Referring to the role of a mentor as a role model, the women referenced formal, informal, boss, and family mentors who provided guidance and role modeling for them along the way. Dr. Sundberg spoke of a female mentor, one of the early female presidents in Illinois who she believed helped a lot of females through role modeling along the way. “She’s forged the path; she’s seen it all,” she said (personal communication, April, 6, 2014). Dr. Jacobs painted a picture of an experience early in her career as a member of the American Association for Women in Community Colleges leadership program,

Leaders of the Eighties:

I saw a short, female president from Florida. I have no idea what her name was, but she had a sort of Southern accent. She was about my size, and for the very first time, I was sitting, listening to her, and I thought that I could see myself in that role. That, for me, was very powerful in terms of how influential roles models can be, because I just remember sensing it, just looking at her, and thinking, oh....” (personal communication, May 13, 2014)

Dr. Jacobs admitted she already aspired to be a president, but noted the experience solidified the notion that she could achieve her goal. Other role models, according to Dr. Jacobs, were the chair of the Board of Trustees and executive vice president at Kellogg Community College. Specifically, she recalled paying attention to how they spoke to groups, and acknowledged that her style of addressing groups was modeled from theirs.

Dr. Plinske, like other participants, also contended that her leadership style was a product of role modeling that was provided by her mentor, who in this instance was a family member mentor:

I think probably my biggest mentor was my grandfather. He was a really intelligent man. He grew up during the great depression. Being the oldest in the family, he had to go to work, so he wasn't able to go to college even though all of his brothers did. He started working at a tool and die factory and was one of the workers on the press machine and things. He worked so hard that he ultimately worked his way up to be an executive vice president. I see a lot of parallels in our story, just sort of working as hard as you can and having your eye on an ultimate goal or a dream and working toward that. (personal communication, April 7, 2014)

Dr. Warren and Dr. Parker both cited providing guidance through role modeling as the biggest advantage of mentoring. In fact, Dr. Warren emphasized the benefits of guidance, equating finding your way in leadership to children growing up:

It's a tough world, and figuring it out by yourself is not an easy thing so having someone who has been on that journey, and has seen lots of different perspectives, who can give you information with which you can make better decisions, it's a huge impact. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

She continued, touting the impact of having someone who has already blazed the same trail: “Having someone who has been there before help explain where the pitfalls are, where the issues are, where the positives are — what you can do to better posture yourself. It's obviously going to help a great deal” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Confirming that role modeling was exactly the type of guidance she received as a member of the Lakin Institute for Mentored Leadership, and the type of guidance she is giving back to future leaders now in her role as a mentor for the program, Dr. Parker said the following about the benefits of role modeling in mentorship:

I think it gives you a heads up on what the expectations are. You don't have to learn by trial and error. You've got somebody that came before you who can really talk about what you're doing, how you're going to be successful. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

Discussion: Implications for Leadership

The current study has shown that, despite varying operational definitions, the act of mentoring has a positive influence on the leadership development of female community college leaders. Results indicate that, in addition to general preparedness, mentoring enhanced opportunity for leadership roles, and increased the confidence level of protégés through trusting relationships that provide support and guidance to emerging leaders.

Given the positive outcomes associated with mentoring, in addition to the looming crisis in community college leadership, the importance of mentoring as a tool to foster the growth of our next generation of leaders cannot be understated. Weisman and Vaughn (2006) projected that retirement of community college leaders will reach 84% by 2016, creating a leadership gap unlike ever before. With these projected turnovers, it becomes vitally important that talented, qualified, and highly skilled professionals are identified, mentored, and developed to fill leadership positions. These changes pose not only great challenges but also great opportunities to today's community colleges. In fact, Boggs (2003) suggests this looming crisis is an opportunity for community colleges to bring greater diversity to these top ranking leadership positions, and Sullivan (2001) contends that despite the changing landscape of community colleges and their leaders over time, "the leadership traits and skills that have served well in the past will serve well in the future" (p. 568). Thus, mentoring, as a way of learning from current leaders, much

as the good managers and collaborators learned from the founding fathers, is an important component of leadership development of a diverse pipeline of leaders, ready to move the 21st century community college into the future.

Regarding the preparation of the next generation of female community college leaders, Deborah Rhodes (2003), author of *The Difference "Difference" Makes: Women in Leadership* believes current leaders have an important role: “For many women, the support of an influential senior colleague is critical in securing leadership opportunities. Mentoring relationships can also help prepare women to become leaders and to take full advantage of the opportunities that come their way” (p. 29). Likewise, Patricia Ireland (2003) believes it is everyone’s responsibility:

All of us have a role to play in continuing to advance women's leadership and contributions to our society. Some will work from the inside of the institutions that shape our culture; others will push from the outside. Some will figuratively — or in some cases literally — kick open the doors of opportunity, knowing that more moderate women will then walk through and, we can hope, will serve as role models and mentors and create change from within. (p. 201)

A number of participants of this study also believed they had a duty to act as mentor for the next generation of women community college president, and through their stories, validated Boggs’ (2012) statement that “although it is never listed on a leader’s job description, mentoring future leaders can be one of the most important and most rewarding leadership responsibilities” (p. 104).

Dr. Parker, who has a formal role as a mentor through the Lakin Institute confirmed working with two protégés at the time of the study (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Likewise, Dr. Brunet-Koch confirmed that she takes on a formal mentor through a program called Leadership Little Traverse annually, helping her protégé develop a leadership plan, which involves clarifying their leadership goals five years out and identifying the necessary steps and the skills needed to meet their goals (personal communication, April 16, 2014).

Dr. Thor is also paying it forward as a formal mentor through The Chair Academy out of Maricopa, The League for Innovation, and as a faculty member in both Master's and doctoral-level leadership programs.

Dr. Plinske, who said mentoring young professionals was “sort of like being a soul coach,” which she said consists of providing support and encouragement through difficult times, confirmed she is currently working with staff at the campus who have asked her to serve as their mentor. “Because I've had so many great mentors, both formally and informally, I feel sort of obligated to agree to do that,” she said of the responsibility. At the time of the interview, Plinske confirmed that she was currently engaged in one formal mentoring relationship with an individual with an undecided career path who is in the college's professional development leadership program and that she was helping him make connections which would bridge his interests and the needs of the community. “If I can help bring those two things together, than that's a victory,” she said (personal communication, April 7, 2014). She also confirmed that she was committed to working regularly with the student government association in a mentor-like relationship.

Dr. Charlotte Warren also noted that she was also working with the student government, acting as an informal mentor to the student trustees. “I do take time with

them and as they are having issues, try and help them understand systems, and understand how to maneuver and help them,” she said, noting that she had worked with some students regarding life decisions, while others were about academic and career related topics (personal communication, April 6, 2014). Regarding professional level protégés, she lets those relationships happen organically:

I hope that I'm a mentor for the people on the Cabinet that I work with. I hope that as we go through our decision-making process and work together, that I'm able to share some experience to help them help me make good decisions. And then, there are times when they will come to me as they are making some life decisions, whether it's job or school, or family, all that, all tied into each other, and we'll talk. I leave the door open, and I leave that relationship up to them. (personal communication, April 6, 2014)

In terms of her role as a mentor, she concluded by saying, “It will be nice to think at some point that you’ve left a legacy” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Limitations and Assumptions

Although this study makes an important contribution to the literature on mentoring, it is not without limitation. There are several factors that prohibit the generalizability of this study. One limitation was the use of purposeful sampling. The fact that participants were not randomly selected, but rather chosen on the basis of their position and experience, resulted in a sample that lacked diversity of age, race, background, position, and location. A second limitation impacting generalizability of the study was the sample size itself: only eight leaders were used in the study. A larger and more diverse sample or different research design is warranted, if the results are to be more generalizable. Thirdly, this study only presents one party’s side of a multi-faceted relationship, which presents a biased perspective of the relationship itself.

Recommendations for Additional Investigation

Community college leadership has been and will continue to be a pressing issue due to the large number of retirements that are expected in the years to come. The present study explored the role mentoring plays in the leadership development of female community college leaders. Specifically, the study examined the parameters of the formal and informal mentoring relationships of eight senior-level leaders and the value of these relationships. The finding of this study, as well as the discussions, limitations, and assumptions mentioned above provide several other avenues for possible future research.

The participants of this study spoke mostly about effective mentor/protégé relationships, but not all relationships are created equal. Some participants did speak briefly to the issue of dysfunctional mentoring relationships, yet there is little research regarding any negative aspects of mentoring. Further research on negative or low quality relationships, dysfunctional mentoring relationships, and what happens when a boss mentor is fired are all needed to expand the body of literature. Furthermore, upon exploring and sharing their own experiences, every participant in the study admitted to having a mentor, even if they did not realize they were being mentored at the time. Further research is needed to explore the impact, either positive or negative, of not having a mentor. For example, do those who have never engaged in a mentoring relationship experience less career satisfaction than colleagues who have been mentored?

Participants of this study also indicated that they had both female and male mentors. Questions were asked to explore whether similarities or differences of gender make a difference in relationship quality and outcomes; however, the racial make-up of the mentoring relationship was not specifically addressed. Further research is needed to

investigate the impact similarities and differences in both race and gender have on the mentoring relationship.

Additionally, the majority of the literature focuses exclusively on the benefits of mentoring in terms of the protégé; however, done correctly, the mentoring relationship should be reciprocal, and all parties should benefit. Multiple participants in this study mentioned the reciprocal nature of mentoring; thus, more research is needed to distinguish between the benefits to mentors and protégés, as well as what organizations gain when imbedding mentoring as a part of Grow Your Own leadership programs and succession planning.

Finally, while all participants spoke of multiple mentors, it was unclear from the current study if these relationships were simultaneous or consecutive. Current thinking would suggest there is no need to limit oneself to a single mentor, especially with 21st century technologies and a limitless pool of experts, but future research should be conducted with regards to how and when mentoring relationships happened and the effects, if any, of multiple overlapping mentoring relationships.

Reflections of the Researcher

I would be remiss if I did not start by saying I deeply appreciate the opportunity to meet and learn from the incredible group of women who participated in this research. Their contribution was indispensable and not only am I forever grateful, I am forever changed. I started this project with a much different view of mentoring than I finished with. In fact, the project stemmed from a conversation regarding my personal experience with mentoring, or in actuality, a lack thereof. I entered this research study with a very traditional view of mentoring. Similar to an ongoing relationship, I believed that

mentoring was a two-way, formal, committed relationship. What I learned from these extraordinary leaders is that mentoring comes in many shapes and sizes at different times in a person's career. From modeling the behavior of a supremely successful leader to being provided with opportunities to gain a variety of work experiences, mentoring is an extremely individual experience.

Though mentoring looks different for each mentor/protégé group, I believe most successful mentoring relationships are based up three common threads; they are organic, unstructured, and based upon a strong connection to another person.

Conclusion

The interdependent themes that emerged in this study — Opportunity, Trust, Confidence, Support, and Guidance — are just five of the practical benefits associated with mentoring. Not surprisingly, the findings of this study validate and add credence to previous studies, which suggest that those who are mentored earn more, have accelerated career growth, and gain greater career and job satisfaction (Kram, 1985; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Scandura, 1992; Noe, 1988).

The women in this study shared compelling stories of people in their personal or professional life who were willing to take them under his/her wing, illustrating that having an ally with the power and interest to help a young professional get her foot in desirable doors and advance her career is beneficial. The mentors described were family, friends, and colleagues who tremendously influenced the participants; they offered new challenges and opportunity, direction, affirmation and, in general, contributed to their overall success by acting as a model of leadership. What lies beneath the findings of this study were a multitude of stories regarding the personal and professional connections.

While five common themes emerged in the interviews, it was clear that each participant experienced them in a uniquely personal way and often at very different points in their careers. Undoubtedly, mentoring had a profound impact on the participants' journeys and shaped who they are as today's leaders.

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APPENDIX

A: AACC COMPETENCIES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS (2005)

Organizational Strategy

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

Illustrations:

- Assess, develop, implement, and evaluate strategies regularly to monitor and improve the quality of education and the long-term health of the organization.
- Use data-driven evidence and proven practices from internal and external stakeholders to solve problems, make decisions, and plan strategically.
- Use a systems perspective to assess and respond to the culture of the organization; to changing demographics; and to the economic, political, and public health needs of students and the community.
- Develop a positive environment that supports innovation, teamwork, and successful outcomes.
- Maintain and grow college personnel and fiscal resources and assets.
- Align organizational mission, structures, and resources with the college master plan.

Resource Management

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

Illustrations:

- Ensure accountability in reporting.
- Support operational decisions by managing information resources and ensuring the integrity and integration of reporting systems and databases.

- Develop and manage resource assessment, planning, budgeting, acquisition, and allocation processes consistent with the college master plan and local, state, and national policies.
- Take an entrepreneurial stance in seeking ethical alternative funding sources.
- Implement financial strategies to support programs, services, staff, and facilities.
- Implement a human resources system that includes recruitment, hiring, reward, and performance management systems and that fosters the professional development and advancement of all staff.
- Employ organizational, time management, planning, and delegation skills.
- Manage conflict and change in ways that contribute to the long-term viability of the organization.

Communication

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

Illustrations:

- Articulate and champion shared mission, vision, and values to internal and external audiences, appropriately matching message to audience.
- Disseminate and support policies and strategies.
- Create and maintain open communications regarding resources, priorities, and expectations.
- Convey ideas and information succinctly, frequently, and inclusively through media and verbal and nonverbal means to the board and other constituencies and stakeholders.
- Listen actively to understand, comprehend, analyze, engage, and act.
- Project confidence and respond responsibly and tactfully.

Collaboration

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

Illustrations:

- Embrace and employ the diversity of individuals, cultures, values, ideas, and communication styles.
- Demonstrate cultural competence relative to a global society.
- Catalyze involvement and commitment of students, faculty, staff, and community members to work for the common good.
- Build and leverage networks and partnerships to advance the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.
- Work effectively and diplomatically with unique constituent groups such as legislators, board members, business leaders, accreditation organizations, and others.
- Manage conflict and change by building and maintaining productive relationships.
- Develop, enhance, and sustain teamwork and cooperation.
- Facilitate shared problem-solving and decision-making.

Community College Advocacy

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

Illustrations:

- Value and promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and academic excellence.

- Demonstrate a passion for and commitment to the mission of community colleges and student success through the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- Promote equity, open access, teaching, learning, and innovation as primary goals for the college, seeking to understand how these change over time and facilitating discussion with all stakeholders.
- Advocate the community college mission to all constituents and empower them to do the same.
- Advance life-long learning and support a learner-centered and learning-centered environment.
- Represent the community college in the local community, in the broader educational community, at various levels of government, and as a model of higher education that can be replicated in international settings.

Professionalism

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

Illustrations:

- Demonstrate transformational leadership through authenticity, creativity, and vision.
- Understand and endorse the history, philosophy, and culture of the community college.
- Self-assess performance regularly using feedback, reflection, goal-setting, and evaluation.
- Support lifelong learning for self and others.
- Manage stress through self-care, balance, adaptability, flexibility, and humor.
- Demonstrate the courage to take risks, make difficult decisions, and accept responsibility.

- Understand the impact of perceptions, world views, and emotions on self and others.
- Promote and maintain high standards for personal and organizational integrity, honesty, and respect for people.
- Use influence and power wisely in facilitating the teaching-learning process and the exchange of knowledge.
- Weigh short-term and long-term goals in decision-making.
- Contribute to the profession through professional development programs, professional organizational leadership, and research/publication.

APPENDIX

B: AACC COMPETENCIES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS (2013)

Institutional Finance, Research, Fundraising, and Resource Management

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

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs That Have Been in Their Positions for 3 or More Years
<p>Know your unit's budget. Ensure that you monitor your budget routinely and notify leadership if the unit's allocated budget and expenditures are not in keeping with the institution's key performance indicators.</p>	<p>Learn how to read your institution's budget and how to ensure that planning and data inform your budget allocations. Make decisions that ensure that funding is tied to enrollment, institutional performance, and student success.</p>	<p>Develop in-depth knowledge of the finances of the organization and have knowledge of alternative approaches to address shortages in fiscal resources, including projecting potential budget reductions in personnel and institutional operations.</p>
<p>Institutional fundraising is everyone's job. Work with your institution's advancement office to determine where you might be supportive in achieving the fundraising goals of the institution. Learn the skills of effective fundraising.</p>	<p>Be your institution's chief fundraiser. Learn the skills necessary to lead a foundation board, to run fundraising and capital campaigns, and to make the "ask."</p>	<p>Take an entrepreneurial stance in seeking alternative funding sources. Ensure that funding sources align with the institutional mission. Understand key components of effective fundraising, including how to identify and approach potential donors.</p>
<p>Understand the institutional dashboard and how to interpret data to improve the student academic experience within your unit of the institution.</p>	<p>Require an institutional dashboard and routinely discuss with key members of the staff those areas where the institution is underperforming. Design strategies to ensure that the institution is moving in a positive direction to overcome those cautionary areas. Use of data mining and learning analytics to improve the academic experience for students.</p>	<p>Ensure accountability in reporting. Support data mining and understand how to use data to make informed decisions. Support operational decisions by managing information resources and ensuring the integrity and integration of reporting systems and databases.</p>
<p>Understand the importance of time management and planning in your position.</p>	<p>You cannot do everything on the campus: understand that you must build an effective team capable of supporting the needs of the institution, especially if your position is more external.</p>	<p>Employ organizational and time management. Plan, establish, and delegate expectations for members of your team.</p>
<p>Understand the organizational protocol: if you are unable to resolve a conflict, understand how to have it addressed.</p>	<p>Understand the protocol for managing conflicts and crisis. The CEO is the spokesperson for the institution in crisis situations, and should be out front. Do not address conflict between employees who are not direct reports to the CEO.</p>	<p>Manage conflict and change in ways that contribute to the long-term viability of the organization.</p>

Organizational Strategy, continued

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs That Have Been in Their Positions for 3 or More Years
<p>Have a forward-looking philosophy, and be prepared for change. Understand the institutional process for taking risks to improve the student experience; be willing to take risks based on research and data.</p>	<p>Embrace a change management philosophy. Establish an institutional culture that empowers faculty and staff to be calculated risk-takers in developing and implementing evidence-based strategies to enhance student outcomes.</p>	<p>In addition to having an institutional change management philosophy, adopt this way of doing business in the office of the CEO. Realize that it is important to take calculated risks, and to communicate to the college community the rationale for taking those risks.</p>
<p>Know your institution's strategies for improving student success and completion.</p>	<p>Know the institution's strategies for student success and be on the front lines in championing them. Become intimately familiar with the demographics of your institution and what realistic outcomes the institution can achieve. Educate the board about student success, and establish key metrics for student success.</p>	<p>Ensure that employees at all levels of the organization are focused on improving student success. Create urgency about the student success agenda by: educating the board about student success, establishing key metrics for student success, moving the institution forward through a leadership program, fostering apprenticeship and mentoring of midlevel leadership, and maintaining the social justice mission of the institution.</p>
<p>Provide exemplary customer service that makes members of the community feel welcome. Exemplary customer service is defined as giving the customer more than just what they wanted, in a way that makes them feel they are appreciated so they always want to return.</p>	<p>Commit to ensuring that students are in a welcoming environment, and that the in-take processes are clear and hassle-free. Students should easily understand how to get through advising, registration, and orientation; and should understand their educational pathways.</p>	<p>Create an environment that promotes access, inclusion, and equity for all members of the community to actively participate in a vibrant, intellectual community that offers a broad range of ideas and perspectives.</p>
<p>Have an ongoing focus on process improvement for internal and external customers. If gaps exist in employees' technical proficiency, make requests for professional development so they can acquire the needed skills to better serve customers.</p>	<p>Demonstrate technological competence. Strive to ensure that students have access to cutting-edge technology, allowing them to master the skills of the 21st-century employee.</p>	<p>With a highly evolved technophile customer, it is important for you as a CEO to embrace and understand how to communicate with technology. Support the college as it continues to adopt changing technologies that impact student success.</p>
<p>Understand the organizational structure of the community college, and the function that your unit plays in supporting the CEO in achieving institutional goals.</p>	<p>Become extremely familiar with members of your board of trustees, including what they are passionate about, and how you can best enhance their understanding of your vision for the institution. Communicate with them consistently. Trustees should never be the last ones to hear about important issues impacting the institution.</p>	<p>Articulate the role of the board of trustees to the college community. Understand the role of the leader in supporting the board of trustees through discussions on key trends and issues, and advise the board on the importance of the distinction between governance and management. Provide ongoing professional development for trustees.</p>
<p>Understand the responsibilities of all employees within the organization.</p>	<p>Assess the needs of the institution and the strengths of current employees, as well as the skills gaps that exist, taking into account the importance of institutional fit and professional expertise in making critical hires.</p>	<p>Build a team around the institution's goals for student success.</p>

Communication

An effective community college leader uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community; promotes the success of all students; ensures the safety and security of students and the surrounding college community; and sustains the community college mission.

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs That Have Been in Their Positions for 3 or More Years
Be articulate. Work on having strong presentation skills. Have direct answers to the questions that are asked.	Be articulate. Work on having strong presentation skills, and a system of communications for your board of trustees, cabinet, employees, and students, as well as the community.	Convey ideas and information succinctly, frequently, and inclusively through the media, to the board and other constituencies and stakeholders.
Always have a succinct pocket speech that is consistent with the mission, vision, and priorities of the institution.	Have several pocket speeches and know how to determine which speech is appropriate for the audience you are addressing.	Understand communications with print versus on-camera or web-based media, and refine skills to be effective in all venues.
Know the chain of command for communications. Be extremely familiar with the institution's emergency and crisis communications plans. Always refer individuals to the appropriate person in the communications chain, if it is not you.	Never respond with "no comment." Understand the protocol for communicating in crisis and emergency situations. Project confidence that the college is taking all necessary precautions to ensure that students and employees are safe.	Project confidence and respond responsibly and tactfully. Have a communications chain of command and be prepared to address your institution's emergencies and crises promptly, and consistent with institutional policy.
Be willing to offer a realistic solution to any institutional problem. Be willing to participate in an environment that allows shared responsibility in problem solving.	Create an environment where employees feel comfortable in sharing their observations and ideas to improve strategies for solving problems.	Facilitate an environment of shared problem solving and decision making.
Learn the nuances of communications with various internal and external stakeholders. Know the appropriate jargon for the group you are addressing.	Continue to refine your communication skills through professional development opportunities. Research the appropriateness of how to greet various stakeholders, and what topics may be off limits to discuss with them.	Build and leverage internal and external networks and partnerships to advance the mission, vision, and goals of the community college. Learn to communicate across sectors, shying away from "education-ese" when working to forge effective partnerships with potential and current partners.
Become familiar with what it means to be globally competent. While this does not necessarily reflect engaging in international education, it does focus on students understanding the societal complexities that encompass other points of view, and new ways of thinking and acting.	Understand global competence, and strive to provide students with opportunities to become exposed to different points of view and their role within the global society. Ensure that your board of trustees supports global programming before aggressively pursuing this as an offering for the college.	Understand that people live and interact in an increasingly globalized world. Give learners the opportunity and competencies to reflect and share their own points of view and roles within a global, interconnected society, as well as to understand and discuss complex relationships of common social, ecological, political, and economic issues to derive new ways of thinking and acting.

Communication, continued

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs That Have Been in Their Positions for 3 or More Years
Be familiar with grassroots efforts to organize stakeholders to advocate for the community college mission.	As CEO, work to develop ongoing relationships with print, broadcast, and electronic media outlets, as well as with students, faculty, and staff, to further the goals of the college.	Understand how to engage media at the local, state, and national levels to advocate for the community college mission.

Collaboration

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

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs That Have Been in Their Positions for 3 or More Years
Understand that there are no lone rangers. All employees must collaborate to ensure that there is a focus on student access and success.	Develop a culture of collaboration on the institution's campus.	Break down silos and mitigate internal politics within the institution.
Know the key stakeholders that are advocates for the institution, and the roles that they play in the community.	Establish relationships with key external stakeholders in the community, other educational institutions, legislators, and so on. Do not only call on partners when there is a crisis, but also contact them and allow them to celebrate when there is good news.	Build and leverage internal and external networks and partnerships to advance the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.

Community College Advocacy

An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college on the local, state, and national level.

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs That Have Been in Their Positions for 3 or More Years
Recognize there are multiple government programs at the state and federal levels that contribute to the funding of a college's students and programs.	Understand the role that multiple government programs play in the operation of a college.	Heavily engage in shaping multiple government programs to best meet college objectives.
Recognize there is an interplay of public perception and policymaking that can impact college operations.	Understand the role of the CEO in crafting an advocacy position that aligns public interest with college operations.	Engage with public outlets in a proactive manner that most effectively advocates for the operations of the college.

APPENDIX

C: INTERVIEW INVITATION

Study Title: The Role of Mentoring in the Leadership Development of Female Community College Leaders: Profiles of Successful Women.

Dear ___:

My name is Alexandria Hall. I am a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership program at Ferris State University. I am conducting a study as part of my dissertation research and would value your participation.

I am studying the role of mentoring in the leadership development of female community college leaders. If you decide to participate, I would appreciate talking with you about the role mentoring has played in your personal leadership development. In particular, we will discuss how mentoring may or may not have impacted your leadership development and growth. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place and should last about one hour. You may incur a small cost due to transportation to the aforementioned location. The interview will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what we discuss. Only I, or a hired transcriptionist, will review the tapes. All tapes and transcripts will be destroyed 3 years after successfully defending the dissertation.

Taking part in the research study is entirely your decision. If you chose to participate, please understand that your name and other identifiers (i.e. job title, organization, etc.) will be used throughout the final product. You may also discontinue your participation at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. During our conversation, if you identify comments that you wish remain confidential and unpublished, I will, of course, honor your request. Following the interview, you will have the opportunity to review and approve the dissertation sections that reflect our discussion.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me by phone (574) 315-9242 or email densmoa@ferris.edu, or you may contact my faculty advisor, (Dr. Andrea Wirgau, (231) 591-2710, andreawirgau@ferris.edu) if you have study related questions or concerns.

Furthermore, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Institutional Research Board at the Ferris State University at (231) 591-255 or IRB@ferris.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. I believe that your comments about the role of mentors in your leadership development could be extremely valuable to developing community college leaders. Your story, with those of other female community college

leaders, could be a valuable contribution to our field. I appreciate your considering my request to participate. If you are willing to participate in my research study, please contact me via email, or at the number listed below, to arrange an interview time and location. I will also follow up with a telephone call within the next week.

With kind regards,

Alexandria Hall

APPENDIX

D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Key Research Questions

- What role does mentoring play in the success of female community college leaders?
- What aspects of the mentoring relationship are most useful and why?
- What are the underlying dynamics and frameworks/interactive processes that surround mentoring relationships?
- What are the respondents' attitudes and perceptions of mentoring as it relates to leadership development, especially in terms of female leaders?

Interview topics / sample questions

Section 1: Demographics

- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
- Highest level of education complete
- Length of time in higher education
- Type of institution: current place of employment
- Number of subordinates for whom you are directly responsible

Section 2: Personal Experience

(Note: These questions reflect the topics and sub-points I will cover in the interview.

The sub-points reflect topics I will explore with the interview subjects.)

1. Tell me a little about yourself and your current position.
2. Can you tell me a little about the positions you held prior to being [current position], and how they prepared you for your role today?
3. As you worked your way through those roles, did you have a mentor?
 - No: Skip to Section 3.
 - Yes: Can you tell me a little bit more about your mentor and the relationship that you two shared? (dynamics of relationship)

- How did you identify your mentor, or he/she identify you? (Self-selected or assigned)
 - Was your mentor of the same gender?
 - Was your mentor of the same race?
 - How did your mentor's age and experience compare to yours?
 - Did you have a formal or informal relationship (programs and meetings to attend or just two people whose chemistry was compatible who get together to share ideas and learn)?
 - Established goals vs unestablished goals
 - Transferring technical knowledge, advancing career goals, learning management savvy, addressing performance deficiencies, etc.
 - Measurable outcomes vs no measurable goals
 - Career advancement, technical skills, job satisfaction, professionalism, increased network of professional colleagues, etc.
 - Long-term, sustained relationship vs short-term
4. Can you tell me about the framework of your relationship? (interactive processes)
- The regularity and duration of meetings
 - Venue for meetings
 - Ways of contacting each other
 - Face to face
 - Phone
 - Email
 - The content of meetings
 - Structured vs unstructured (planned talking points or sharing ideas and thoughts relevant to current situations?)
 - The boundaries of the mentoring relationship
 - Anything that was off limits to talk about?
 - Potentially sensitive areas or differences?
 - Commitment to confidentiality (expressed or implied?)
5. What were some of the most memorable pieces of advice your mentor gave you?
- What was the context of that advice?
6. How many mentors have you had throughout your career?
- Were they carried over from previous positions, or acquired as you moved among the ranks?
 - Did you have multiple mentors at one time?

- What purpose did having multiple mentors serve?
7. What effect did mentoring, if any, have on your ability to achieve higher-level leadership positions?
 8. Has being mentored affected your leadership style?
 - How/in what way?

Section 3: Thoughts on Mentoring:

9. Was it challenging to work your way up to a leadership position without a mentor?
10. Do you think mentoring is important in the advancement of women's careers in higher education? / Is having a mentor a vital component for women's success in higher education?
 - Why or why not?
11. Do you think it is important to the relationship for a mentor to:
 - Be older, younger, the same age?
 - Be more experienced (educational, professional, etc.)?
 - Be of the same gender? (If appropriate: Was it important for you to have a woman mentor?)
 - Be of the same race/ethnicity?
 - Work in the same organization?
 - Be self-selected or assigned?
12. What do you see as the role of a mentor?
13. What are the characteristics of an effective mentor?
14. What is the most important aspect of the mentoring relationship?

Section 4: The Impact of Mentoring

15. What advantages or disadvantages do you feel having a mentor gives women who aspire to leadership positions in community colleges?
16. What relationship do you think mentoring has on the retention of women in leadership?
17. Has your mentor successfully launched previous mentees into careers that align with your own goals?

Section 5: Your role as a Mentor

18. As a leader in the field, do you currently mentor others?
- How many people to you (intentionally) mentor?
 - Are your mentees male or female?
 - What is the goal of your relationship with your mentees?
 - Do you feel you have ever helped launch a mentee's career in community college leadership?

Section 6: Other

19. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you want to add?

APPENDIX

E: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study that will take place from March to June 2014. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing this document, I understand the following:

- I am being interviewed as part of a qualitative study titled: The Role of Mentoring in the Leadership Development of Female Community College Leaders: Profiles of Six Successful Women. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the role mentoring plays in the leadership development of female community college leaders.
- My interview will be audio taped and transcribed in the form of a typed transcript intended to capture an accurate record of the discussion and to be analyzed by the researcher. Audio recordings will be heard by the researcher and transcriptionist only and destroyed upon production of the transcript. Transcripts will be securely maintained by the researcher and password protected for a period of three years following the study, at which time they will be re-formatted and destroyed.
- This research study is to be submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan. My responses will be included in the researcher's dissertation defense to a committee in the Summer of 2014 and may be used in future published articles and professional presentations.
- Results of the study can be made available by contacting the researcher:
Alexandria Hall
Ivy Tech Community College
220 Dean Johnson Blvd.
South Bend, IN 46601
adensmore@ivytech.edu
(574) 315-9242
- There are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life.
- My participation in this study is voluntary. My name and other unique identifiers (i.e. job title, organization, etc.) will be included in the final product. I have the right to refuse to answer any questions, stop the interview, or withdraw my consent at any time during the course of the interview. Sensitive or confidential information provided during the interview can also be excluded from any published materials, at my request.

- I am not receiving any compensation for my participation in this study.
- This research plan has undergone the scrutiny of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects — Ferris State University. The researcher has received approval to proceed with this interview research. I have viewed the approval document. I may contact the IRB at Ferris State University should I have concerns. The contact information is as follows:

Dr. Stephanie Thomson, Chair,
 Office of Academic Research
 1201 S. State St. — CSS 310H
 Big Rapids, MI 49307
IRB@ferris.edu
 (231) 591-2553 office
 (231) 591-3592 fax

I agree to participate in this interview, and to the use of this interview as described above.

 Participant Signature

 Date

 Participant Printed Name

 Researcher Signature

 Date

 Researcher Printed Name

APPENDIX

F: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR TRANSCRIPTIONIST

I, _____ transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentations received from Alexandria R. Hall related to his/her research study on the researcher study titled The Role of Mentoring in the Leadership Development of Female Community College Leaders: Profiles of Successful Women. Furthermore, I agree:

- To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents.
- To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized titles of the transcribed interviews texts, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher, Alexandria R. Hall.
- To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
- To return all audiotapes and study-related materials to Alexandria R. Hall in a complete and timely manner.
- To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back-up devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX

G: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

To: Dr. Andrea Wirgau and Alexandria Hall
From: Dr. Stephanie Thomson, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application #140205 (Title: *The Role of Mentoring in the Professional Development of Female Community College Leaders: Profiles of Successful Women*)
Date: March 20, 2014

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, "*The Role of Mentoring in the Professional Development of Female Community College Leaders: Profiles of Successful Women*" (#140205) and approved it as expedited – category 2G from full committee review. This approval has an expiration date of one year from the date of this letter. **As such, you may collect data according to procedures in your application until March 20, 2015.** It is your obligation to inform the IRB of any changes in your research protocol that would substantially alter the methods and procedures reviewed and approved by the IRB in this application. Your application has been assigned a project number (#140205) which you should refer to in future communications involving the same research procedure.

We also wish to inform researchers that the IRB requires 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 complete the final report or note the continuation of this study. 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,

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