CREATING A FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONBOARDING FOR
A NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT

by

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ABSTRACT

While executive onboarding has been used in the business and government sector, it is only recently gaining attention and traction in community college presidential transitions. AACC, ACCT, and Aspen Institute have all recently published calls to action and recommendations that governing boards and presidents develop an intentional transition or onboarding plan to take place when a new president joins the institution. Presidential retirements have been occurring at a rapid rate and are predicted to continue at a high rate into the near future. There appear to be fewer presidential candidates with a history in the traditional academic path to the presidency or even with a history in higher education, and the operating environment of community colleges is rapidly evolving. As the president has a significant impact on a community college institution, it is critical that leadership transitions within community colleges receive specific focus and resources to support a successful transition.

The matrix created for this dissertation is intended to provide a framework to guide conversations between governing boards and their newly hired community college presidents in the development of an onboarding plan as part of the transition process. Based on existing academic and practitioner literature regarding the components of existing onboarding models and the reasons that a new executive might not be successful in their first year at the helm in a new organization, as well as a review of existing and recommended onboarding activities and best practices, the author created a matrix to indicate the intersection points of onboarding program objectives and the causes of executive derailment those objectives will impact by reducing the likelihood of occurrence.

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INTRODUCTION

Community colleges and their governing bodies face a significant challenge when their presidents retire or leave the institution. With these transitions comes the opportunity for governing boards to go through a search process to select the next president or chief executive of their institution. The practice of onboarding, including executive onboarding, is quite common in the business world and in the government sector. In addition, national organizations such as the Aspen Institute, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) are calling for intentional onboarding plans when a new college president is hired. There is some limited research regarding the causes of turnover in higher education presidential positions (Tekniepe, 2014; Trachtenberg, Kauvar, & Bogue, 2013), what presidents wish they knew before starting their first presidency (Kubala & Bailey, 2001), and what boards of trustees desire in their next presidents (Plinske & Packard, 2010), for example, and anecdotal evidence of the reasons for presidential turnover can frequently be found in the daily media. However, it does not appear that higher education has paid a lot of attention to developing a framework for executive leadership onboarding.

The purpose of this dissertation is to review existing onboarding models and their components and practices along with reasons new executives may derail in their new positions, in order to develop a presidential onboarding guide for community college boards of trustees and newly hired presidents to use as part of the transition process when the new president joins the institution. The competencies, characteristics, and knowledge required of new community

college presidents as recommended by AACC and Aspen Institute may be used as a component of the onboarding process to consider a new president's professional development.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTITUTIONS

The 2018 edition of The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education reports that there are 1,432 institutions classified as either Associate's College or Special Focus Two-Year. The Associate's College basic classification contains nine different categories that an institution can be included in depending, in part, on whether the focus of the institution is transfer, career and technical, or a mix of the two. The Special Focus Two-Year classification contains four different categories an institution can be included in, depending on the concentration of degrees awarded (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, n.d.). As of March 2021, there are 1,044 member institutions of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (AACC, 2021). AACC member institutions serve a diverse population of 6.8 million students; 44% of the students are 22 years old or older, 29% are first generation college students, 62% of the full-time students work, 72% of part-time students work, 20% are students with disabilities and 15% of the students are single parents (AACC, 2021). Diverse institutions, diverse program offerings, and diverse students are a hallmark of community colleges.

In addition to diversity of institutions, programs and students, community colleges operate in a wide range of geographic locations. Community colleges and other two-year institutions operate in all 50 states from small rural communities to large metropolitan, urban areas. This variety of locations results in a diversity of communities served by the over 1,000 community colleges throughout the country. Communities across the country have different types of dominant businesses and industry, differing levels of educational attainment, different

levels of demographics in their populations, and different needs. Yet, the common mission of community colleges has long been to be an educational resource to the community it serves, to provide access to transfer education, vocational and technical education, developmental education, continuing education, and community service such as cultural education and events (Brawer & Cohen, 2008). This common mission becomes challenging dependent upon the location because "[r]egardless of size, location, and governance structure, the community college is a complex organization" (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997, p. 11). No matter the location or the population served, the expectation is that community colleges perform a similar set of services aimed at achieving their mission.

Community colleges and other two-year institutions have a leader who is responsible for guiding the college to achieve its mission. The titles for that leader can vary, and she or he may be responsible for a state-wide community college system, a multi-campus district, a single campus district with one location, an individual campus in a multi-campus district system, or any number of organizational structures. In public, two-year community colleges, there is a leader who ultimately reports to an elected or appointed governing body at the local, regional, or state level. The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) reports that 36 states have a local governance structure for their community and technical colleges and 11 states have governing boards on a statewide level (ACCT, 2018). In addition to two different governance structures, there are three different methods by which the members who serve on the governing boards are selected; the sitting governor appoints board members in 31 states, 14 states have public elections to determine the membership of a governing board, and five states have a mix of appointment and public election (ACCT, 2018).

Over the past twenty years, concerns have been expressed over the impending retirements of community college presidents. In 1997, Vaughan and Weisman reported, based on survey results, that the oldest community college president was 72 years old, 62% of presidents were between the ages of 50 and 59, and 17% were age 60 or older. The population for the survey was presidents of community colleges belonging to AACC, and the survey had a 74% response rate. Based on the survey results, it can be observed that 79% of the sitting presidents in 1996 were age 50 and older. Even in 1996, this did not leave much time before a significant number of community college presidents would likely begin retiring. In 2001, AACC produced a Research Brief titled *The Critical Impact of Impending Retirements on Community College Leadership* (Shults, 2001), and it was reported that 45% of sitting community college presidents were anticipating retirement in 1–6 years. If the timeframe was extended to 10 years, 79% of sitting presidents in 2001 planned to retire within the next 10 years. This is consistent with the data reported from Vaughan and Weisman noting that 79% of sitting presidents in 1996 were age 50 or older.

Eleven years later, in 2012, AACC prepared a Research Brief (RB-2012-1), *Compensation and Benefits of Community College CEOs: 2012*, which reported that 75% of survey respondents planned to retire within the next 10 years, and if the timeframe was expanded to 15 years, the number of survey respondents planning to retire increased to an astonishing 90% (Tekle, 2012). The AACC 2015 Compensation Survey appears to confirm this notion as 35% of sitting community college presidents reported that they planned to retire within five years, while 80% of sitting community college presidents reported that they would retire in 10 years or fewer (Phillippe, 2016). It appears, based on the consistency of reported retirement percentages in the 2001 and 2012 AACC Research Briefs and the AACC 2015 Compensation Survey, community

colleges may be entering a time where significant presidential turnover due to retirements is becoming a norm rather than an anomaly.

In addition to AACC studying the retirement and transition of presidents from their current positions, the American Council on Education (ACE) has produced a report about American college presidents every five years since 1988. The latest iteration of the report (ACE, 2017) reported that 22% of associate degree institution presidents planned to move on from their current position in the next two years. The percentages of presidents planning to move on from their current presidency increased to 56% and 79% when the timeframe was extended to 3–5 years and 6–9 years, respectively (ACE, 2017). The findings by ACE indicating that 79% of community college presidents plan to retire from their current position within 6–9 years is consistent with AACC's finding that 80% of current community college presidents plan to retire in 10 years or fewer. The anticipated significant turnover in the community college president position is coming within the next decade, as indicated by the retirement plans of the AACC survey respondents in both 2012 and 2015 and by ACE survey respondents in 2017.

The average tenure for community college presidents today appears to be declining. ACE's *American College President Survey 2017* found that just 15 years ago, in 2006, the average number of years presidents reported being in their current positions fell 2.1 years from 8.5 years to 6.4 years. Similarly, the *Trends Report* from the League for Innovation found a decline in the tenure of community college presidents. The 1997 League survey found that the average tenure of a community college president was 9.1 years and 10 years later, the 2007 survey found that average had decreased to 8.5 years (De los Santos & Milliron, 2015). The survey was conducted again in 2014; while the 2014 survey did not compile a specific average number of years, the results reported indicated that 44% of current presidents had been in their

positions for five years or fewer (de los Santos & Milliron, 2015). This decline in the number of years that community college presidents have been in their positions is also reported by past AACC CEO compensation surveys. Like the League surveys, the results of the AACC 2015 survey found that the average respondent had been serving as a president at their current institution for just over five and a half years (Phillippe, 2016). This tenure is down from a mean of seven years in the 2012 survey. If the average tenure of a community college president is declining, it becomes increasingly important for a new president to get up to speed quickly when joining a new institution in order to be as successful as possible during a potentially brief presidency.

Three trends currently impacting the hiring of college presidents are the significant amount of turnover as a result of retirements, a reduced number of candidates interested in the college presidency who hold positions that have traditionally preceded that of the college president, and a lack of systems in place to adequately prepare diverse and nontraditional candidates for the college presidency (Aspen Institute, 2017). As a result of the number of impending retirements, shrinking tenure in the role of president, and a reduced pool of interested candidates to fill the role of president, higher education appears to be hiring presidents from outside of higher education. ACE (2017) reported that the number of associate degree college presidents reporting their immediate past position being outside of higher education increased from 9.4% in 2006 to 12.9% in 2016. Historically, Weisman and Vaughan (2007) reported that the traditional path to the position of community college president had been through the academic ranks with approximately half of presidents having been in academic positions prior to their first presidency from 1984 to 2006. ACE's study of American college presidents in 2011 found that 45% of associate degree granting college presidents were in chief academic officer or

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other senior academic leadership positions in their last position before assuming a presidency (ACE, 2017). However, the 2016 survey results found that percentage had decreased to only 40% (ACE, 2017). The Aspen Institute (2017) observed that "the ability of higher education to flourish will require an expanded and more diverse pool of talented individuals who aspire to and are prepared for the college presidency" (p. iii).

These factors have resulted in a large number of first-time presidents taking the helm at community colleges. In the 2015 AACC CEO compensation survey, 56% of respondents reported that their current presidency was their first (Phillippe, 2016), while in the 2012 survey, 69% of respondents indicated that their current presidency was their first (Tekle, 2012). ACE reports similar findings regarding first time associate degree granting college presidents with 64% of community college presidents reporting their current presidency was their first in 2006 (ACE, 2017). Just ten years later, the 2016 ACE survey found that 71% of community college presidents were entering their first presidency.

Turnover in the leadership role of a community college can be planned, such as a retirement, or can be unplanned in the case of a president accepting a position at another institution or being asked to move on by the board of trustees. Tekniepe (2014) conducted a study to identify the types of pressures within community colleges that might influence a board of trustees to either dismiss the president or encourage him or her to seek other employment opportunities. Results of the study indicated that political conflict between the board and president; internal pressures due to stress in relationships with faculty, deans, or administrators; external pressures from community stakeholders; and fiscal stress of balancing the budget in the face of limited resources and escalating costs are four factors that contribute to the likelihood that a president may be dismissed or encouraged to seek other employment by the board of

trustees (Tekniepe, 2014). Other research has sought to understand what surprises or disappointments presidents may have had upon assuming their presidency. Understanding what issues were of concern to a new president may provide insight into areas that could be a potential future cause of turnover if not addressed. Kubala and Bailey (2001) found that presidents identified the financial health of the college, negative internal climate and hostility towards administration, outdated technology, increasing debt, board/president relationship, and shifting to a learner centered institution as either disappointments or significant problems to be addressed in their presidency.

CHANGING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

The landscape in which community colleges operate is continually changing. Sitting community college presidents in 2001 indicated that those following in their footsteps would need to have entrepreneurial spirits, know more about technology, and be able to adapt quickly (Shults, 2001). Compliance requirements have increased, there are scorecards and comparability data available to students, accreditors have become more demanding, decisions require research and data to support conclusions rather than "gut feelings," and citizens and students alike increasingly demand accountability and transparency. Many in society today openly question the value and relevance of higher education. There is a shrinking pool of students and increasing competition for those students. Many states have recently begun initiatives and passed legislation to make community college free or greatly reduced in cost for large groups of eligible students. The growth of credit for prior learning and competency-based education are challenging the long-held paradigm of credit hour-based degrees and certificates.

In addition to the evolving external operating environment of community colleges, presidents also experience challenges inside the institution. The president must work with multiple internal constituencies, including Boards of Trustees; navigate budgets; and make decisions about the allocation of human, physical, and technological resources in order to move the institution forward in achievement of its strategic goals. As part of a survey of new presidents by Kubala and Bailey (2001), the presidents were asked to identify their disappointments upon assuming the presidency. The most frequently cited disappointments included "dealing with difficult people, a negative climate, hostility toward the administration, and a lack of cooperation" followed closely by "budget shortfalls, inadequate budget flexibility, and lack of technology" (Kubala & Bailey, 2001, p. 798). Without a full understanding of the campus climate, the budget resources and restrictions, and available technology, a new president can find it difficult, at best, to be successful in moving the institution forward in the achievement of strategic goals.

Any one of these external changes or internal influences on the operational landscape can be significant challenges for community college presidents and their governing boards. However, community colleges often experience several of these changes and influences simultaneously. This changing landscape calls for different skill sets in the community college presidents of today and of the future as compared to community college presidents from as little as a decade ago. AACC recognized the need to define the competencies necessary for presidents to be successful in 2005 when the organization produced the first edition of *Competencies for Community College Leaders*. At that time AACC (2005) identified, defined, and provided illustrative behaviors for the following six leadership competencies: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and

professionalism. AACC then conducted a survey of participants in a leadership summit to validate the competencies they developed and found that all six of the competencies identified were highly essential to effective performance as a community college leader, yet most survey respondents indicated that their professional development in these competencies had been minimal or moderate (AACC, 2005).

The operational landscape for community colleges is changing so quickly that, just eight years later in 2013, AACC produced a second edition of *Competencies for Community College Leaders*. The core competencies observed in the second edition are organizational strategy, institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management, communication, collaboration, and community college advocacy (AACC, 2013). The competency category of resource management in the first edition was expanded to include institutional finance, research, and fundraising as equally important pieces of managing the assets of the institution. Reflecting a belief that the competencies needed for effective leadership are developed on a continuum, the second edition of the document presents ideas on how emerging leaders, new presidents in their first three years, and new presidents with more than three years of experience might exhibit each of the five competencies (reduced from six competencies in 2005). While the competency of professionalism is not specifically listed in the second edition, professionalism is woven throughout the continuum as part of the behaviors and traits exhibited by a leader at each of the three levels of leadership.

Staying at the forefront of community college leadership development, AACC again updated the leadership competencies in 2018 by publishing the third edition. This third edition of leadership competencies is different from the previous version in several ways. The document is designed to be a guide for the development of emerging leaders in community colleges and,

rather than just discussing competencies, the third edition includes 11 focus areas for current and future leaders. Additionally, it lists competencies or skills needed to be successful in that area of focus depending on the individual's position within the college and goes on to encourage the use of executive coaching (AACC, 2018). The Focus Areas for new CEOs (defined as within the first two years of their presidency) are Organizational Culture, Governance, Institutional Policy and Legislation, Student Success, Institutional Leadership, Institutional Infrastructure, Information and Analytics, Advocacy and Mobilizing/Motivating Others, Fundraising and Relationship Cultivation, Communications, Collaboration, and Personal Traits and Abilities. For CEOs who are more seasoned (three or more years of presidency experience), the focus areas and the competencies remain the same while the examples of exhibited behaviors and traits focus on how to continue what the president mastered/learned/developed in their first two years and then refine/expand/continue it.

Taking a slightly different approach from identifying the competencies and behaviors/ traits that are necessary for a community college president to exhibit, presidents responding to the ACE (2017) survey identified the top five areas of importance that future presidents should be prepared to address. College budget and financial management, ability to fundraise, enrollment management, assessment of student learning, and accreditation were the five areas, in order of highest percentage of response, identified as important areas of focus for future community college presidents by existing community college presidents in the most recent survey (ACE, 2017). The findings from both ACE and AACC are parallel and the competencies or focus areas reported as crucial for new presidents by AACC would help a new leader address the areas of importance for tomorrow's presidents by ACE.

Given the operating environment of today's community colleges, boards of trustees are looking for a variety of skills in the selection of their next president. While the board of trustees is ultimately responsible for the college and college policies, the board hires "a chief executive officer to carry out the mission, advance the organization, and serve the needs of its constituency" (Potter & Phelan, 2008, p. 20). A study by Plinske and Packard (2010) sought to identify critically important characteristics, competencies, or professional experiences as essential for future community college presidents to possess from the point of view of trustees. Plinske and Packard (2010) identified sixty-eight items as important for future community college presidents to possess and the following nine items were determined to be critically important: having a vision, being able to articulate the vision, and generate support for the vision; being passionate about education; being able to recruit and assemble an effective team; being able to establish trust; being able to communicate clearly; being able to listen and read people; being honest and trustworthy; being dependable; and holding at least a master's degree (p. 302).

COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD–PRESIDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE

In addition to the skills, experiences, and abilities that a president or CEO brings to the position, the relationship between the board and president is also critically important. Finkel notes, "A major driver of the continued success of two-year colleges is how fruitfully the relationships between CEOs and their boards evolve over time (Finkel, 2017, p 12). Potter and Phalen (2008) observed eight principles that are essential for positive board-president relationships to exist. Effective board-president relationships exist when there is strong mutual trust between the president and the board, when the president treats all board members the same, when there is open communication between the president and board and the president keeps the

board appropriately informed, when the board and president respect the authority that each has to make decisions, when the board supports the authority of the president, when the board evaluates the president's performance annually, when the board and president protect each other (prevent surprises or situations that could embarrass each other), and when the board and president recognize that they function as a team (Potter & Phalen, 2008). When these traits and characteristics of a president and of an effective board-president relationship are considered along with the suggested AACC leadership competencies and the areas of critical importance for future presidents to address from ACE previously discussed, the profile of the "ideal next president" becomes quite extensive.

The relationship between the college trustees and the college president is an important one for the institution. As observed by AACC and ACCT (2018), "the board-president partnership is a shared leadership role and perhaps the single most crucial ingredient to institutional success" (p. 8). In 2017, ACE reported the average duration of tenure for presidents in higher education was 6.4 years, and a 2007 League for Innovation survey found that the average community college president's tenure was 8.5 years (De los Santos & Milliron, 2015). Gilmore and Turner (2010) observe that "although executive recruitment and retention is an important and significant undertaking, it is a relatively infrequent event within any given organization" (p. 128). While a community college board of trustees may only hire a new president once every six to eight years based on the length of presidential tenure as reported by ACE and League for Innovation, the importance of that decision is immense. Given the significant amount of resources invested by the governing board and the college community when a new president is hired, it is critically important that the hired president be successful in his or her role: "Failed presidencies are costly, and not just financially. Momentum and the

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valuable, irreplaceable time it takes to move the college forward can be lost along with the board's reputation as competent trustees" (AACC & ACCT, 2018, p. 10).

The governance structure and relationship between the board and the new president can be a source of potential disappointment or frustration for the president. For example, Kubala and Bailey (2001) found that while over 70% of new community college presidents were familiar with and supported the ideas of policy governance, only 12% of presidents indicated that their boards supported and used policy governance. Regardless of the governance model that an institution operates under, ensuring that both the board and president are supportive of the model is crucial. As observed by Potter and Phalen (2008), "for a college to thrive, it generally requires a strong, skilled, ethical, and visionary board and a president working together as a team" (p. 20).

IMPORTANCE OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT TRANSITIONS

The transition of the newly hired president to the institution and community is of critical importance. The board's role has "really just begun with the successful hire, and board members should see themselves as active agents in supporting the president in the transitional first year" (Trombley, 2007, p. 16). AACC (2013) noted, "Trustees must be willing to invest in a leader and allow him or her sufficient time to implement a student success change agenda…. Trustees cannot recycle leaders every two years and expect to move the institutional needle on student success and completion in any significant manner" (p. 4).

Much anecdotal advice and practitioner literature has been written on hiring a new community college president, including opinion pieces, education materials from national organizations, and marketing material prepared by firms who specialize in executive recruitment. However, the timeline and steps described in the existing literature regarding presidential hiring appears to stop once the president is selected and the contract is negotiated. For example, the

publication by the Aspen Institute in 2014, *Hiring Exceptional Community College Presidents –*
Tools for Hiring Leaders Who Advance Student Access and Success, discusses four basic steps in
the hiring process: (1) identify strategic priorities and criteria for hiring, (2) job announcement
and candidate recruitment, (3) review and ranking of candidates, and (4) confirmation of the
selected candidate through conversations with references. In comparison, much less has been
written about how to successfully onboard the new president once the contract negotiations
between the new president and the governing board are completed. As noted by Gilmore and
Turner (2010), "Onboarding processes have the potential to greatly improve the success rate of
executives, especially those employees who are hired from outside the organization" (p. 127).

With enhanced accountability and focus on higher education as part of the nation's
agenda, the changing competencies required to be a successful community college president, the
onslaught of retirement of community college presidents, and a shrinking pool of traditional
candidates to replace those presidents, the pressure on community college boards of trustees to
hire the best president is ever increasing. Unsuccessful presidential hires and transitions "are
often the result of boards that do not sufficiently understand either their own institution or the
complexities across the higher education sector, and the skill required of college presidents and
chancellors to successfully lead transformational change" (AACC and ACCT, 2018, p. 3). There
are three phases of a presidential transition that must all work together in a cohesive and planned
manner to increase the likelihood of a successful presidential leadership change: The search
process, the transition out of the existing president, and the onboarding of the new president
(AACC and ACCT, 2018).

Despite the best efforts of both boards and newly hired presidents, there are times when
presidents derail and are either dismissed or encouraged to seek other employment as soon as

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possible. Trachtenberg, Kauvar & Bogue (2013) report, "A derailed presidency can undermine an institution's image, destroy campus morale, and cost millions of dollars. We define a derailment as the termination or resignation of a president before the end of his or her first contract" (p. vii). There are six themes that most presidential derailments can be classified in: ethical lapses, poor communication and interpersonal skills, being unable to coalesce and lead key constituency groups, being unable to adapt to the community or institutional culture, failing to meet stated performance objectives, and board of trustee issues (Trachtenberg, Kauvar & Bogue, 2013). Once a president has been successfully hired, the transition process to that individual as president begins. Trachtenberg, Kauvar & Bogue (2013) posit six suggestions that can help a board and institution contribute to successfully managing a presidential transition: (1) manage the departure of the current president and the arrival of the new president with care throughout the institution, (2) recognize that every presidency and president is different, (3) seize the transition as an opportunity to reconnect the institution with its stakeholders, (4) remember that a transition is ongoing and not a single event, (5) support the president with planning sessions, and (6) spend time and energy investing in onboarding activities.

ROLE OF ONBOARDING IN NEW EMPLOYEE AND NEW EXECUTIVE TRANSITIONS

Onboarding is defined as "the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly" by the Society for Human Resource Management in *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success* (Bauer, 2010, p. 1). As with any process in an organization, onboarding may be formal or informal. Regardless of the level of formality in the process, onboarding consists of four components: (1) compliance to inform employees of basic legal and policy-based rules and regulations, (2) clarification to inform employees of the expectations for their new job, (3) culture to provide employees with a

feeling for the organizational norms, and (4) connection to help the employee build crucial interpersonal relationships and networks (Bauer, 2010). In addition to the four components of onboarding, an onboarding program is most successful when it helps new employees to increase their self-confidence, understand their job role and expectations, and fit in with coworkers and be comfortable in the social setting of the workplace (Bauer, 2010). An onboarding program provides benefits to both the organization and to the individual employee joining the organization. As Bauer (2010) notes, studies by other researchers have found that higher employee retention rates, improved individual job satisfaction, improved performance levels for individual employees and the organization overall, and lower stress have all been associated with effective onboarding programs.

A specialized subset of employee onboarding is executive onboarding. As observed by Gilmore and Turner (2010), onboarding for a new leader serves to help prepare the leader for her or his new organization and includes "a deliberate plan for introducing the new executive to his or her team, peers, and other key stakeholders" (p. 127) along with components such as coaching, mentoring, and multiple feedback sources. Bauer explains "The higher a person's level in the organization, the more tailored and flexible the program will need to be" (2010, p. 13). There are many reasons that executive onboarding is more in-depth and specific to the individual assuming the position. The new executive may have been hired to carry out specific strategic intentions and onboarding him or her into the status quo culture and environment may be at odds with those intentions. Secondly, onboarding executives involves many more stakeholders (such as board members, legislators, donors) than a standard new employee orientation and onboarding program. Finally, a typical onboarding program for typical employees follows a standard process and format, and the new executive will likely be facing situations and challenges that are far

different from the standard (Dai, De Meuse, & Gaeddert, 2011). As a result, Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) proposed "a model of executive onboarding that encompass four key objectives — preventing derailment, fostering retention, catalyzing performance acceleration, and achieving strategic optimization" (p. 173). Conger and Fishel (2007) studied the executive onboarding process at Bank of America and like the later research of Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011), Conger and Fishel (2007) assert that an executive onboarding model should be designed to serve three purposes: (1) enhance the executive's understanding of the role and objectives in order to minimize the possibility of derailment, (2) speed up results by assisting the executive in the development of networks and relationships and setting realistic objectives, and (3) provide the ability to have more efficient integrations for those businesses going through significant acquisitions or periods of accelerated growth. In order to achieve the goals of executive onboarding as noted by Conger & Fishel (2007), the following are key components to the executive onboarding process in use at Bank of America: the individual must receive support from the CEO for the onboarding program; onboarding activities must happen regularly during the individual's first 12 to 18 months in the new role; onboarding activities must involve multiple resources and stakeholders; and the quality of the activities and interactions with stakeholders are crucial to success.

In addition to the business world using executive onboarding to support successful transitions for new executives, the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) worked with external consultants, training professionals, and existing senior executive employees to produce *Hit the Ground Running: Establishing A Model Executive Onboarding Program* "to assist agencies in creating an executive onboarding program and a business case for it" (OPM, 2011, p. 3). OPM (2011) noted that while many federal agencies had onboarding

programs for general employees, few had developed onboarding programs or practices aimed specifically towards executive-level positions and observed that "the onboarding of executives often is even more critical because of the significantly greater performance expectations executives face and the greater impact they have on the overall performance of the organization" (p. 5).

Like community colleges, the federal government faced a significant number of imminent retirements and also recognized that a percentage of their new hires failed to make it to their one-year anniversaries in the positions (OPM, 2011). OPM (2011) reflected on that and stated in their onboarding manual that "the most successful organizations understand they may choose to invest valuable time and money positioning their executives to succeed rather than expending those same resources in lost productivity and turnover" (p. 5). The OPM executive onboarding process is designed to support the transition of employees who are assuming leadership roles in agencies they have built a career in, employees assuming leadership roles within an agency with government experience elsewhere, and those assuming leadership roles from positions outside of government (OPM, 2011). According to the OPM (2011), a successful executive onboarding program has the following components: commitment to the program from the highest levels of the agency; objectives to help the executive understand the agency business and culture; clarification of performance expectations and implementing active steps to reduce the learning curve; identification of and focus on key leadership competencies for the agency; employment of multiple learning methods; provision of specific timelines for activities as well as assessment measures and criteria; and helping the executive with work/life balance by keeping their family in mind.

Based on a review of existing literature, there appears to be minimal academic or practitioner onboarding focused literature being used in higher education. Much of the existing onboarding activities in higher education appear to be related to library functions (Knight, 2013; Graybill, Hudson-Carpenter, Offord, Piorun, Shaffer 2013; Keisling & Laning, 2016; Hall-Ellis, 2014; Snyder and Crane, 2016) and faculty (Clark, Corral, Nyberg, Bang, Trivedi, Sachs, McArthur, and Rumack, 2017; Eisner, 2015) and exist primarily in the four-year college and university realm. Academic and practitioner literature discussing existing onboarding practices and programs for presidents at two-year community colleges was not found to be prevalent.

In May 2017, the Aspen Institute convened a task force to study the future of the college presidency. The task force issued a report titled *Renewal and Progress — Strengthening Higher Education Leadership in a Time of Rapid Change*. This report identified three focus areas that are needed in order to strengthen the college presidency: (1) increase and enhance professional development for new and current presidents; (2) provide training and coaching for boards to assist the board in setting goals and hiring and supporting presidents; and (3) identify a more diverse pool of potential presidential candidates and assist them in becoming successful candidates (Aspen Institute, 2017). Given the challenging environment that community colleges operate in today and the importance of board-president relationships, the report recommends that "every president and every board commit to an extended, intentional induction process by which incoming presidents can understand the particular challenges and opportunities associated with their institution's internal and external contexts" (Aspen Institute, 2017, p. 14).

In addition to the Aspen Institute noting that onboarding can play a critical role in a strong college presidency, AACC & ACCT (2018) believe that an onboarding process can help establish a strong relationship between the new president and the board and potentially help all

involved avoid missteps during the first few months of a new presidency. AACC and ACCT (2018) define onboarding as activities "empowering, informing, and orienting the incoming president during the period immediately following his or her selection and up to at least the first 12 to 18 months in office" (p. 5). Key elements of the onboarding process AACC and ACCT believe to be beneficial are consistent, regular communication with the board, assisting the president to establish a network in the community, defining a professional development plan, providing an independent assessment of the college and its operations, the new president assessing and maneuvering through his or her learning curve, identifying a liaison to assist with the process, and having a well thought out communication plan regarding the transition and onboarding (AACC and ACCT, 2018).

In addition to the 2018 recommendations published by AACC and ACCT, ACCT put forth its own recommendations regarding presidential onboarding in 2020 in a guide titled *5 Keys to a Successful Transition Year*. The guide acknowledges the significant retirements anticipated within community colleges in the coming years and observes that the first year for a new president often "sets the stage for the CEO's success" (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020, p. 2). The authors discuss crucial strategies for the first year that the new president and board should undertake and recommend key activities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

ACCT, AACC, and the Aspen Institute — three highly respected organizations supporting higher education (two of which exclusively support community colleges) — all recommend that there be a transition process or onboarding activities for new presidents when they take the helm at an institution. Onboarding is often used in the private business and government sector and there are onboarding models that have been developed through

practitioner literature and academic research and literature. Existing practitioner and academic literature has provided data about the reasons that a higher education institution governing body may force a presidential transition (Tekniepe, 2014) and disappointments that newly hired college presidents experience when they begin their new role (Kubala and Bailey, 2001; Finkel, 2016). However, there does not appear to be guidance in the existing body of practitioner and academic literature connecting the elements of executive onboarding models in the private business and government sectors, the reasons that new executives may struggle or fail in the transition to a new executive position, and the calls to action within higher education for presidential transition and onboarding plans.

Purpose of this Onboarding Construct and Guide

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a presidential onboarding guide for community college boards of trustees and newly hired presidents to use as part of the transition process when a new president joins the institution. The construct is not intended to be followed explicitly as a step-by-step guide and is not intended to suggest that every element of the construct must be present in a community college presidential onboarding or transition plan. Rather, the intent of the construct is to provide a framework to guide the conversations of a new community college president and their governing board to determine what issues are important, given the context of their institution at the point in time of the presidential transition, and what to consider in the development of an onboarding or transition plan. The construct developed can be used by governing bodies of community college institutions and their newly hired presidents to understand what the components of an onboarding program for a new president should consist of and what potential causes of derailment exist for a new president that may be avoided or diminished through onboarding. When considering onboarding activities, the construct can be

used to help the board and the new president determine if the actions being considered are part of an onboarding program and will help to avoid a potential cause of derailment.

This dissertation is a meta-analysis of existing academic and practitioner literature discussing subjects including but not limited to onboarding models used in the private and government sectors, executive onboarding as a unique and important subset of new employee onboarding, reasons a new executive might not be successful in their first year in the position, and community college advocacy organization calls for new president onboarding or transition planning. The vast majority of the literature reviewed focused on onboarding models, practices, tips, general surveys of executives, and recommended actions when a new president joins an institution, for example. This literature was found to be written with a perspective that focused on the professional traits of a new executive and the actions that an organization or a hiring body might undertake to assist the new executive with this professional transition. The literature reviewed spent little, if any, time discussing how personal characteristics of the new executive — such as age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual identity, for example — might impact the onboarding process for a new executive. Consequently, as this dissertation is a meta-analysis of existing literature to develop a framework to be considered when onboarding a new community college president, the perspective of this dissertation is the same as the literature review and analyzed. The resulting onboarding framework is focused on the professional characteristics of a new community college president and the transition or onboarding planning that the new president and their respective governing board might engage in. The onboarding framework does not attempt to distinguish how onboarding and transition planning might be different for new presidents of a community college of varying ages, genders, ethnicities, or sexual identities.

Research Questions

To guide the development of the community college executive onboarding construct, the following guiding questions were considered:

1. What models of executive onboarding exist outside of higher education?

2. What might cause an executive transition to go poorly and result in the new executive leaving the organization?

3. How might institutional governing boards and a new president work together to develop onboarding activities and objectives?

SUMMARY

As observed by AACC, "Trustees cannot recycle leaders every two years and expect to move the institutional needle on student success and completion in any significant manner" (AACC, 2013, p. 4). As noted earlier in this chapter, presidential retirements appear to be occurring at a rapid rate and there appear to be fewer presidential candidates with a history in the traditional academic path to the presidency or even with a history in higher education. As the president has a significant impact on community college, it is important that leadership transitions within community colleges provide resources to support the new president and create a successful transition. A failed presidency is costly for any community college in terms of the potential costs and time involved, slowing or lost momentum towards strategic goal achievement, and the potential loss of reputation of the board (AACC & ACCT, 2018, p. 10). The for-profit and government sectors have used a process of executive onboarding to help in the transition period when a new leader comes on board with the organization. AACC, ACCT, and the Aspen Institute have recognized the value of a smooth transition process when a new president assumes leadership of a community college.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Klein and Heuser (2008) and Klein and Polin (2012) observe that while numerous articles exist in the realm of practitioner literature, there has not been a comprehensive review of academic literature regarding onboarding activities and the evaluation of onboarding programs nor are there a significant number of studies to evaluate orientation programs "despite this being one of the most commonly offered types of training" (Klein & Polin 2012, p. 269). Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert (2011) view executive onboarding as a practice originating in the business world and assert that "conceptual and theoretical exploration of this concept by scholars has lagged far behind its application" (p. 176). This literature review and dissertation make use of both academic and practitioner literature to discuss various definitions and models of onboarding, the value of employee onboarding, onboarding of new executives in particular, uses of onboarding in higher education as well as the call for executive onboarding in higher education, and intends to develop a model to be used in the onboarding of community college executives.

DEFINITIONS OF ONBOARDING AND GENERAL ONBOARDING PRACTICES

An efficient and effective onboarding process can allow employees to form stronger relationships, increase employee satisfaction with their job, and strengthen employee engagement and retention, among other benefits (Snell, 2006). Snell (2006) defines onboarding as "the direct bridge between the promise of new employee talent and the attainment of actual productivity" (p. 32). Snell (2006) noted, "An effective onboarding process enables new team

members to gain access to information, tools and materials needed to perform their function more quickly. Productivity generated by successfully onboarding a new hire sooner will have a direct, positive effect on the overall productivity of the company" (p. 32). According to research by Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton, onboarding is "the process of integrating and acculturating new employees into the organization and providing them with the tools, resources and knowledge to become successful and productive" (2008, p. 2). While a community college may not be focused on productivity, it certainly benefits the institution to have new employees, including presidents and executives, get up to speed quickly in their roles. Bauer (2010) defines onboarding as "the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly" and asserts that "the faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the firm's mission" (p. 1). Vernon (2012) describes onboarding as "developing the behaviors that will be the foundation of an employee's long-term success" (p. 32). Klein and Polin (2012) acknowledge that the new employee plays a role in onboarding activities but still define onboarding as something the organization does, stating that onboarding refers to "all formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment" (p. 268).

In an effort "to understand the effectiveness of organizations' current onboarding programs and their ability to help new hires better adjust to their new role and organization" (p. 34), *Training* magazine conducted a survey in 2011 and received over 1,300 responses. Highlights of the survey include the following practices: 73% of the onboarding programs are conducted on a formal basis, onboarding processes begin before the new employee's actual start date in 53% of the responding organizations, and new employees are introduced to coworkers

and colleagues on their first day in 70% of organizations (Savitt, 2012). Through open-ended survey questions, Savitt (2012) also identified areas in which organizations believed their onboarding practices could be improved, such as including mentoring in the program (only 37% of organizations assigned a mentor to new hires), assessing effectiveness of the onboarding program (only 32% of organizations ask their new hires evaluate the effectiveness of onboarding activities), and dedicating adequate resources to the program (only 38% of respondents believed they provide sufficient resources for onboarding).

MODELS OF ONBOARDING

Two prevalent models of employee onboarding, regardless of the type of organization, are the Inform-Welcome-Guide framework developed by Klein and Heuser (2008) and the Four Cs developed by Bauer (2010). Along with these conceptual models of onboarding, Caldwell and Peters (2018) developed an onboarding model that focuses on what the outcomes and requirements of a successful onboarding program should include. In addition to these academic models, more practitioner focused models of onboarding were developed by the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) and the United States Office of Personnel Management (2011). These models came as a result of a large study reviewing how the federal government integrates new employees in their jobs (Partnership for Public Service & Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008) and when the federal government developed a guide for government agencies to use when creating executive onboarding programs (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2011).

Academic Models

Klein and Heuser's Inform-Welcome-Guide Onboarding Model

Klein and Heuser (2008) developed the Inform-Welcome-Guide model for onboarding and Klein and Polin (2012) added to the understanding of the model by categorizing various activities that take place within the model. Klein and Heuser (2008) expanded on their Inform-Welcome-Guide model to create twelve dimensions of onboarding, or socialization. The 12 dimensions and their definitions are noted below.

1. Language – The extent to which the individual has learned the unique technical language, acronyms, slang, and jargon.

2. History – The extent to which the individual has learned the history, traditions, origins, and changes.

3. Task Proficiency – The degree to which the individual has learned the necessary job knowledge and skills needed to successfully perform required "in-role" tasks.

4. Working Relationships – The extent to which the individual has learned the necessary information about others to establish effective working relationships including the learning of work colleagues' expectations, needs, and working styles.

5. Social Relationships – The extent to which the individual has learned the necessary information about others to develop a network of social relationships including the extent to which an individual has learned personal things about a work colleague (i.e., common interests, family).

6. Structure – The extent to which the individual has learned the formal structure including the physical layout and where formal responsibility and authority is assigned.

7. Politics – The extent to which the individual has learned the informal power structure including where actual control of resources, decision making, and influence over decisions resides.

8. Goals and Strategy – The extent to which the individual has learned the current product/market mix, competitive position, mission, goals, and strategies.

9. Culture and Values – The extent to which the individual has learned the customs, myths, rituals, beliefs, and values including guiding principles, symbols, and ideology.

10. Rules and Policies – The extent to which the individual has learned the formal workplace rules, policies, and procedures.

11. Navigation – The extent to which the individual has learned the implicit rules, norms, and procedures of the workplace.

12. Inducements – The extent to which the individual has learned what is offered in exchange for their contributions including pay, development opportunities, and intangibles.

Klein and Polin (2012) reviewed academic literature about onboarding and while this review found support for the Inform-Welcome-Guide model developed four years earlier and for activities that take place and relate to the twelve dimensions of onboarding, the review also concluded that "relatively little empirical research has examined the usefulness, optimal content, structure, or timing of specific onboarding activities" (p. 275). The first category of onboarding activities are those actions designed to provide the new employee with "information, materials, and experiences to help them learn what they need to know to be successful in their new roles and in the organization" (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 269) and is appropriately titled Inform. Generally, practices undertaken within the Inform category can be further broken down into communication (both one-way, such as providing reading material, and two-way, such as discussion with a supervisor) activities, resource providing activities such as ensuring that a workspace with all necessary items to be productive is provided to new employees on the first day, and training activities to help the new employee acquire general organizational knowledge and job-specific knowledge (Klein & Polin, 2012).

A second category, covering onboarding activities and titled Welcome, "consists of practices, programs, and policies aimed at acknowledging and celebrating a newcomer's arrival and providing newcomers with opportunities to meet and socialize with their new coworkers" (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 273). Successful welcoming activities appear to be crucial to a new employee's ability to feel comfortable and up to speed on the job in a timely manner. Rollag,

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Parise, and Cross (2005) found that only one-third of new employees were happy with the way they were introduced to other employees at the organization and many new employees felt that poor quality introductions were a reason that they didn't get up to speed in their position as quickly as they had hoped: "Planned, strategic introductions between newcomers and key resources" (Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005, p. 39) provide opportunities for the newcomer and existing employees to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and helps the newcomer build their internal network (Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005).

The third and final broad category of onboarding activities, titled Guide, identified by Klein and Polin (2012) in their review of academic literature, consists of efforts to guide the new employee through their transition to a new place of employment (that is, a "buddy"). Rollag, Parise, and Cross differentiate a buddy from a mentor as being "someone of whom the newcomer can comfortably ask questions of that are either trivial or politically sensitive," and some who can also help the newcomer establish relationships within the organization (Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005, p. 40). Another form of guiding activity for a newcomer as part of the onboarding process might be the assignment of a mentor. However, Klein and Polin (2012) noted in a previous 2010 study of Klein, Polin, and Sutton's that assigning a mentor who is at a higher level than the newcomer's supervisor is regarded as highly beneficial by new employees but is not a common onboarding practice exhibited by most organizations. As noted by Klein, Polin & Sutton (2015), assigning a buddy to help the new employee answer questions was viewed by the newcomers as a highly beneficial activity and was reportedly used in a majority of organizational onboarding practices.

Inform-Welcome-Guide Model Onboarding Activities

Klein, Polin & Sutton (2015) studied the onboarding practices in a group of organizations and the related impact of the practices on the employees who participated using the Inform-Welcome-Guide model as a framework for classifying the specific onboarding practices. With the Inform category being broken down in to three sub-categories (communication, resources, and training), this model presents five categories that onboarding activities can be classified into: (Inform-communication, Inform-resources, Inform-training, Welcome, and Guide). The goals of the study were to investigate if and how new employees experienced the onboarding practices, identify the practices identified by new employees as the most beneficial, and understand how the type and timing of the practices impact socialization of the new employee within each category (Klein, Polin & Sutton, 2015). The two most commonly identified practices from the survey within each specific Inform-Welcome-Guide category and the employee reported helpfulness of that practice are listed in Table 1, as well as the average helpfulness score for all practices for the category.

Table 1: Inform-Welcome-Guide Practice Use and Helpfulness

ONBOARDING CATEGORY AND PRACTICE	ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING THE PRACTICE (%)	EMPLOYEE RATING (1-5) OF HELPFULNESS OF PRACTICE 5 =EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL
On-the-job training upon arrival	100	4.37
Each new employee is assigned a co-worker as a buddy to answer questions	80	4.15
Direct manager set aside a block of uninterrupted time to spend with the new employee	90	4.14
The new employee's workspace was ready on their arrival	100	4.11
Guide (3 Practices total)	60	3.93
A single point of contact is designated for new employees to ask questions of	80	3.86

ONBOARDING CATEGORY AND PRACTICE	ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING THE PRACTICE (%)	EMPLOYEE RATING (1-5) OF HELPFULNESS OF PRACTICE 5 =EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL
Tour of the organization's facilities	100	3.82
Inform-Resources (6 Practices total)	80	3.81
New employee met with a representative from HR	90	3.80
New employee shown how to find information on the organization's internal website	100	3.80
Inform-Communication (4 Practices total)	75	3.79
Inform-Training (7 Practices total)	77	3.78
New employees are provided with a Welcome Kit	80	3.74
Opportunity provided for new employees to meet their co-workers and other employees	80	3.70
Welcome (10 Practices total)	52	3.34

Source: Klein, Polin, & Sutton, 2015

A majority of the organizations in the study offer activities in the Inform categories and employees generally find the information helpful to their onboarding, or socialization, to their new organization. The practices in the Guide category are offered by just over half of the organizations with the employees finding these practices to be of the most helpful in their onboarding. Further analysis of the data by Klein, Polin, and Sutton (2015) found a positive relationship between both the number of onboarding activities offered and requiring participation in the activities, and the level of socialization reported by the employees. Requiring participation in multiple onboarding activities appears to result in employees who are better socialized. It is important to note that this study by Klein, Polin, and Sutton (2015) did not differentiate between employee levels within the organization or the type of organization.

Bauer's Four Cs Onboarding Model

The components of Bauer's (2010) Four C model are compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. Bauer (2010) defines the components as follows:

> Compliance is the lowest level and includes teaching employees basic legal and policy-related rules and regulations. Clarification refers to ensuring that employees understand their new jobs and all related expectations. Culture is a broad category that includes providing employees with a sense of organizational norms – both formal and informal. Connection refers to vital interpersonal relationships and information networks that new employees must establish. (p. 2)

These components are used in varying degrees to develop onboarding programs that fall into one of three categories. The first category is passive onboarding programs focusing primarily on compliance with a short time spent on clarification and very little, if any, time spent on culture and connection (Bauer, 2010). In organizations displaying passive onboarding, the activities are likely a series of tasks on a checklist to be completed versus being a systematic process of bringing a new employee on board (Bauer, 2010). High potential onboarding is the second category and at this level compliance and clarification are well covered and the organization begins to provide some activities which delve into the culture and connection components of the Four Cs model (Bauer, 2010). Finally, proactive onboarding is a process that is systematic across the organization and thoroughly addresses each of the four components of the model (Bauer, 2010). One of the best practices in onboarding identified by Bauer (2010) is that the events take place over time as evidenced by the recommendation that onboarding programs check-in with the new employee at specific intervals over the first year of employment.

Meyer and Bartels (2017) studied the benefits of Bauer's (2010) Four Cs onboarding model (Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connection). The researchers did not focus on any one group of employees, but rather a cross section of employees who had participated in onboarding activities at least six months ago and were still employed with the same organization

in which they experienced the onboarding activities. The intent of the study was to determine if the perceived usefulness of onboarding, commitment to the organization by the employee, perceived support of employees by the organization, and employee job satisfaction were positively impacted by employees experiencing higher levels of onboarding on the continuum identified in Bauer's (2010) Four Cs model (Meyer & Bartels, 2017). The study results indicated that a significant increase in the employee's rating of the usefulness of onboarding, in the employee's commitment to the organization, in the employee's perception of support provided to them by the organization, and in the employee's overall job satisfaction existed when onboarding programs progressed through all four levels (compliance, clarification, culture, and connection) versus programs that used only a single level or multiple levels that were not sequenced (Meyer & Bartels, 2017). As Meyer and Bartels (2017) noted, "By integrating all four levels of onboarding into their programs, organizations could expect a powerful impact on employee work attitudes, and other key areas as well" (p. 22). While the researchers did not focus exclusively on executives, it is important to note that higher levels of onboarding had a positive impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment which are important at the executive level for any organization (Meyer & Bartels, 2017).

Caldwell and Peters Onboarding Outcomes Model

The Inform-Welcome-Guide model from Klein and Heuser (2008) focuses on activities that are undertaken in an onboarding program while the Four Cs model developed by Bauer (2010) focuses on the intent and depth of the onboarding program. Similar to Klein and Polin's (2012) focus on activities to define the dimensions of socialization, or onboarding, within the Inform-Welcome-Guide model from Klein and Heuser, Caldwell and Peters (2018) developed an onboarding model comprised of outcomes based on their understanding that onboarding is an

ethical duty owed to new employees by their new employer to "demonstrate that they [the employer] are: committed to employee success, caring in their ability to understand employee needs, and competent in providing employees with an efficient and effective onboarding process" (p. 30). Caldwell and Peters (2018) model does not dictate specific activities but rather emphasizes the following ten outcomes that the onboarding program should achieve:

1. Begin an online relationship with the new employee as soon as the hiring decision is made

2. Assign a mentor/coach

3. Provide opportunities to build relationships and networks

4. Include an orientation document to provide pertinent relocation information, share mission and goals, introduce relevant policies and procedures, etc.

5. Ensure the physical work location is prepared before the new employee arrives

6. Provide help with transition and relocation for the new employee and her or his family

7. Be sure that expectations, goals, outcome measures, etc. are explicitly clear for the new employee from the beginning

8. Provide opportunity for the new employee to be engaged in the organization and their position by allowing opportunities to contribute from the beginning

9. Ensure the onboarding program is supported by executive management and includes their active participation

10. Both the employee's mentor and supervisor should be active participants to assure the employee is aware of the resources available to help them become part of the organization

An important conclusion reached by Caldwell and Peters (2018) is their acknowledgement that "although all the ten steps might not always be practical in every situation, this model provides a guideline which has general applicability for many organizations in a variety of disciplines" (p. 33). This conclusion suggests that onboarding is an important activity to undertake regardless of the industry or business the organization is a part of.

Practitioner Models

Partnership for Public Service Onboarding Model

In addition to the academic literature models described previously in this chapter, a practitioner-based strategic onboarding model was developed through a joint effort between the nonprofit organization Partnership for Public Service and a large consulting firm as an outcome of their study of how the federal government integrates new employees in their jobs (Partnership for Public Service & Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008). While the joint report, *Getting on Board – A Model for Integrating and Engaging New Employees*, acknowledges that onboarding will not be a cure-all remedy for the challenges surrounding an organization's human resources, the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton state that "it is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to enhance employee performance and improve retention" (Partnership for Public Service & Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008, p. iv). Similar to other practitioner and academic literature, Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) assert an effective onboarding process will improve or increase a new employee's performance, engagement, likelihood of retention, and time-to-productivity. In order to achieve those goals of an effective onboarding process, there are key components to include in a strategic onboarding model; principles of the model, roles for participants in the program, a specific timeline, key activities, and stated outcomes of the program (Partnership for Public Service & Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008). The timeline for the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) onboarding model begins with activities taking place before the new employee's first day and continuing throughout the first year of employment. The Partnership for Public Services and Booz Allen Hamilton model is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Onboarding Model, Partnership for Public Services
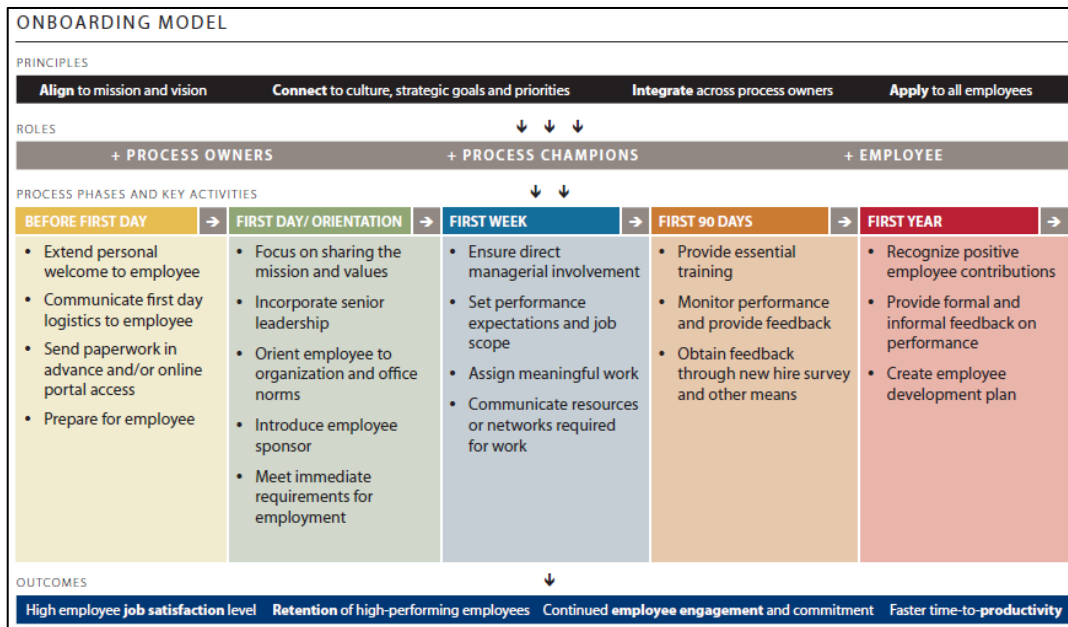
Source: Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008, p. 6

While Klein and Heuser's (2008) Inform-Welcome-Guide model focuses primarily on five categories of onboarding activities and Bauer's (2010) Four Cs model focuses primarily on the progression of onboarding activities through four levels, the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) model takes a more holistic approach in that it encompasses the intent and values of onboarding, explains who is involved in the onboarding activities, provides a timeline and examples of onboarding activities, and also provides the outcomes desired as a result of participation in an onboarding program.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management Executive Onboarding Program Model

In addition to the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) strategic onboarding model, the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) convened a group of individuals consisting of external consultants, current senior executive service members with varying lengths of service, and executive resources and training staff to discuss

the onboarding of senior executives within the Federal government in 2010. As a result of this effort, OPM (2011) produced a guide titled *Hit the Ground Running: Establishing A Model Executive Onboarding Program* to offer a framework for the creation of executive onboarding programs which contained the steps that are necessary to implement a successful onboarding program that covers the timeline from pre-hire through the first twelve months on the job.

OPM (2011) developed recommendations of elements that should be included in an onboarding program including (1) cultural awareness and diversity management practices, (2) education and support for political appointees on topics such as ethical standards, understanding existing key processes and procedures, the importance of relationships, and the importance of performance and achieving measurable results, (3) support for external hires to provide both "information and guidance on the culture and team dynamics of the organization," (p. 8) and to conduct assessments of the new hires to discover their leadership style and personality, (4) use of technology to enhance the efficiency of the program and allow access to information in advance of the first day. OPM (2011) identified several characteristics of an executive onboarding program that will help make the program successful. These include ensuring support for the program from senior leadership, developing objectives for the program, focusing on the core leadership competencies required for the position, involving multiple learning modalities, establishing specific dates and timelines for activities to be completed, establishing ways to encourage accountability for completing the program, developing metrics and evaluation criteria, and offering support for the newly hired executive's family, if appropriate (OPM, 2011).

Executive Onboarding Definition and Practices

Executive onboarding is a subset of onboarding that grew out of a need to "provide a more comprehensive and systematic plan for helping new executives transition into new roles"

(Gierden, 2007, p. 14). Gierden (2007) noted, "The goal [of executive onboarding] is twofold: ensure new executives find their footing quickly and avoid costly missteps; and help them build effective alliances with direct reports to ensure continuity and co-operation in achieving organizational goals" (p. 14). Klein and Heuser (2008) note that while all 12 content dimensions (as described on page 27) of onboarding are important to all levels of the organization, the exact type of content to be covered in onboarding and the importance of each dimension likely changes across the various levels. While Klein and Heuser (2008) acknowledge that onboarding differs across levels of an organization, their research found that "precisely how the content of what needs to be learned differs across those different levels has received little attention, and as a result, the academic basis for recommending what content needs to be mastered for each level is limited" (p. 310). For example, task proficiency is likely not as important as the level of position in the organization increases, while the importance of culture and values is more important at the top organizational levels versus lower levels (Klein & Heuser, 2008). In addition to culture and values, the dimensions of both goals and strategy and rules and policies are of critical importance at high organizational levels (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Klein and Heuser (2008) "believe all of the dimensions to be relevant at most levels for most positions, but the type of position (e.g., extent of boundary spanning required) and the level of position (i.e., entry-level vs. executive) would clearly impact the profile of what is most important to master to ensure the successful adjustment of a newcomer" (p. 312).

Conger and Fishel (2007) conducted a case study of the executive onboarding process at Bank of America and found objectives and practices in place similar to those later identified by Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert in their 2011 study of executive onboarding. Conger and Fishel (2007) identified four phases of the executive onboarding program at Bank of America: selection

phase, entry phase, mid-point phase, and final phase. Bank of America's executive onboarding program starts during the selection phase with the goals of ensuring that the organization has gone through a rigorous job design process so that the new executive knows exactly what the job entails and has the skills and abilities necessary for the job in an effort to reduce the probability of derailment after the individual is hired (Conger & Fishel, 2007). During the first 90 days on the job, also known as the entry phase, the new executive attends orientation forums (both general for all new employees and specific for executives), participates in various processes to orient them to key aspects of the business and begin to build relationships with stakeholders, develops short term goals, and is assigned a coach and an advisor (Conger & Fishel, 2007). As stated by Conger and Fishel (2007), "the aim of this extensive coaching support is to surround the new executive with supportive relationships to ensure their success" (p. 452). These activities are closely associated with Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert's identified objectives of accelerating the performance of the executive and helping the executive achieve optimal performance levels.

The mid-point phase, 100 to 130 days after the new executive starts, of the executive onboarding program at Bank of America centers around efforts to help the executive continue to develop relationships with key stakeholders by asking stakeholders to provide feedback to the executive regarding "the leader's on-boarding process, operating style, leadership approach, and cultural fit" (Conger and Fishel, 2007, p. 452). Bank of America found that this stakeholder check-in process at this time "brings great clarity to identifying the new leader's strengths as well as highlighting development needs and problem areas" (p. 453); if done earlier than this point, the staff have not had ample interactions with their new executive yet and later than this point, the stakeholders and staff may begin to stereotype the new executive's behavior and actions (Conger & Fishel, 2007). Again, this process is designed and timed in order to enhance

the performance results of the new executive which is one of the objectives of executive onboarding according to Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert (2011).

The last element of executive onboarding at Bank of America takes place 12 months after the executive was hired and is known as the final phase. This final phase consists of a feedback evaluation conducted by the executive's leader or direct boss and is based on the leadership model developed by Bank of America which includes the organization's values, defined leadership competencies, common derailing behaviors, and leadership expectations). Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert's (2011) executive onboarding objectives are demonstrated here with the focus on creating a plan for future success and avoiding derailing behaviors. Conger and Fishel (2007) assert that the success of Bank of America's executive onboarding program can be attributed in part to there being multiple activities spread over the duration of the newly hired executive's first year on the job rather than at a single point in time and effective involvement of stakeholders from the beginning through to the end of the four phases.

As observed by Dai, De Meuse, and Gaedert (2011), while executive onboarding has often been used in the corporate world for the past decade, executive success rates have not seen a marked improvement as a result. In part, this is due to the fact that many executive onboarding efforts are done as mere extensions of the typical orientation and onboarding practices used for all employees in general (Dai, De Meuse, & Gaeddert, 2011). Much like Klein and Heuser (2008) and Klein and Polin (2012) findings regarding a lack of academic literature surrounding onboarding program components and activities, objectives, and evaluation of the effectiveness of such programs, Dai, De Meuse & Gaeddert (2011) found that in executive onboarding, "the literature has provided no theoretical framework of executive onboarding to assist organizations in the development of effective onboarding practices" (p.166). Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert

(2011) contend that executive onboarding is different from more traditional new employee orientation and socialization programs in four primary ways:

1. Rather than simply socializing a new employee (learning culture values, history, etc.), executive onboarding "should focus on actively integrating new senior-level managers and executives into the company." (p.167)

2. New employee orientation typically is designed to help employees assimilate into the organization, whereas the newly hired executive may have been hired to make changes to the status quo and, therefore, indoctrinating him or her into the status quo is counter productive.

3. There are stakeholders that an executive must be exposed to during onboarding (board members, key customers, etc.) that typical new hires would not necessarily meet through a typical orientation.

4. General new employee orientations typically follow a prescribed process and outline, while newly hired executives are likely to face unique challenges and different situations than typical employees and, therefore, require specifically designed processes.

Accordingly, an organization with an effective executive onboarding process has four objectives: reduce the possibility of the new executive derailing, enhance the likelihood that the new executive will be retained, accelerate the performance results of the new executive, and, ultimately, gain optimum performance of the new executive to continuing the advancing pursuit of the organization's strategic goals (Dai, De Meuse, & Gaeddert, 2011).

NEW EXECUTIVE DERAILMENT AND BENEFITS OF EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING

As observed by Conger and Fishel (2007), executive onboarding programs are beneficial to organizations in two ways; effective programs "can and should provide the support and feedback that will assist the executive in successfully addressing hurdles" (p. 453) and will also serve "as early warning systems that allow the executive and their organization to pre-empt the possibility of derailment" (p. 453). OPM (2011) found that from January 2006 until the time of their onboarding summit in 2010, 16% of employees hired into senior executive service positions

did not make it through the first 12 months of employment either as a result of being terminated for poor performance, or from resigning of their own free will, among other reasons. OPM noted, "The onboarding of executives often is even more critical because of the significantly greater performance expectations executives face and the greater impact they have on the overall performance of the organization" (p. 5). OPM added, "A successful onboarding process leads to an inclusive workplace, maximizing the talents of each person to achieve the vision and mission of the organization" (p. 6).

Practitioner literature surrounding onboarding is often written in a format that presents best practices to include and/or pitfalls to avoid in a well-designed onboarding program. Wells (2005) and Vernon (2012) each identified five concerns that are mistakes to avoid when designing an onboarding program and/or have the potential to cause a new executive to derail early in their new positions. Of the five issues that contribute to derailment identified by each author, three were similar in nature; the expectations of the new employee are unclear or are different than the expectations presented during the recruitment and hiring process, the onboarding program fails to provide a thorough understanding or vision of the values and culture of the organization, and the organization doesn't provide appropriate training to help the new hire develop new skills versus relying on skills that may have been successful in their former organization (Wells, 2005; Vernon, 2012). In addition to those three concerns, Vernon (2012) adds the following issues as mistakes to avoid in the design of an onboarding program so that the program and employees will be successful; not providing feedback about performance early and often to the new employee and not positively engaging new employees on day one of the onboarding program.

Wells (2005) also identifies two additional potential derailment issues beyond the three in common with Vernon (2012) as the inability of the new executive to build strong relationships and connections and stakeholders having negative views of the new executive's credibility. The importance of relationships for any newcomer to an organization cannot be underestimated. Korte and Lin (2013) studied new employee orientation and socialization (their definition of onboarding) from the perspective of relationships developed and found that "it was the quality of the relationships newcomers formed with coworkers and managers that was the primary driver of socialization outcomes" (p. 407). The study found that the quality of relationships developed by the new employees had a positive impact on how well the new employee fit in at their new organization, how well the new employee learned new information and performed, and how well the new employee made the transition from outsider to insider who was accepted by their new group of coworkers (Korte & Lin, 2013). The findings of this study suggest that it is important to include relationship-building opportunities and to encourage positive relationship building as part of an effective onboarding program.

Indeed, Kubala and Bailey (2001) and Tekniepe (2014) both found that strained relationships were among the reasons that college presidents sought other employment and/or experienced frustration upon assuming their current presidency. Further emphasis on the importance of relationships for community college presidents comes from AACC. AACC (2005, 2013, 2018) has included either communication, collaboration, or relationship cultivation in their competency or skill lists for community college presidents for the last 14 years. As observed by AACC (2018), "the board-president partnership is a shared leadership role and perhaps the single most crucial ingredient to institutional success" (p. 8).

Dai, De Muese and Gaeddert (2011) have pointed out the lack of academic literature in providing a framework for onboarding in general and executive onboarding specifically. Their review of the relevant literature at the time identified six areas which appear to have a direct impact on the ability of the new executive to achieve strategic goals, or potentially derail. Based on those six areas, Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert (2011) developed strategic executive onboarding activities designed to "help newly hired executives make a smooth transition into a new organizational environment and successfully perform their strategic roles" (p. 168) with the intent of the activities being to limit potential for derailment and maximize potential for making contributions. The potential cause for derailment and the associated executive onboarding recommendations developed by Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert (2011) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Causes of Derailment and Executive Onboarding Activities to Mitigate

POTENTIAL DERAILMENT FACTOR	EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING ACTIVITY TO MITIGATE DERAILMENT FACTOR
Stakeholders compare new executive's performance against the former executive, especially if the former executive was viewed as highly successful	Ensure that the new executive is aware of the position imprint of his or her predecessor and help the new executive understand the "do's and taboos" (p. 169) of their new position
Performance expectations are not congruent between new executive and hiring official or officer	Clarify expectations for the newly hired executive to assure that the onboarding activities match expected goals and contributions (e.g., If change is desired, what is the timeline and parameters)
New executive has excellent leadership skills developed in a different industry	Provide ample opportunity for the new executive to learn and develop skills specific to the new domain/industry she or he is entering
A new executive hired from the outside "may not understand company traditions, history, the customer base, the employees, and mostly importantly, the source(s) of problems" (p. 171)	Provide opportunities for the new executive to accelerate their progression on the learning curve regarding culture and accumulation of stakeholder views of the organization
A newly hired executive may forge ahead with change too quickly	If organizational change is a stated performance expectation, executive onboarding activities should provide the new executive opportunities and time to assess current culture, assess readiness for change, and build a change culture

POTENTIAL DERAILMENT FACTOR	EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING ACTIVITY TO MITIGATE DERAILMENT FACTOR
Leadership team that does not support the newly hired executive	Provide onboarding opportunities giving the new executive ample time to spend "building cohesive teams throughout the organization and, in particular, at the senior leadership level" (p. 173)

Adapted from Dai, De Meuse, Gaeddert (2011)

ONBOARDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Based on this author's search for literature and data regarding the use of onboarding in higher education, there appears to be limited academic and practitioner literature regarding onboarding programs specifically used in higher education and, in particular, literature focused on the onboarding of community college presidents. As previously noted, onboarding literature reviewed related to higher education appears to focus on libraries. Hall-Ellis (2014) recommended a model for library administrators to use in the onboarding of new librarians, noting that the process should benefit both the new employee and the college; provide knowledge and understanding of mission, goals, constituents, available resources, and culture; create an awareness of the importance of the library's community and culture by helping the new employee develop a network of colleagues; understand the new employee's skills and abilities and provide for professional development and growth; and encourage the newcomer to "create new solutions to existing problems" (p. 140). While Hall-Ellis (2014) presented what an onboarding program should be designed to accomplish, Keisling and Laning (2016) studied the orientation and onboarding experiences of a small group of librarians to develop five specific recommendations of activities to include in an onboarding program. These activities include developing intended outcomes and learning objectives of the program in advance; providing opportunities for new employees to explore expectations, relationships, and culture; providing ample opportunity to develop a network of colleagues outside of the primary work area; be open

and honest about any difficult organizational issues that exist; and provide specific work assignments or projects early on focusing on the new employee's strengths to provide early success opportunities (Keisling & Laning, 2016).

A primary reason for a higher education institution to have an onboarding program for new employees was aptly summarized by a participant in Keisling and Laning's 2016 study who stated, "people in a new job are very happy to be there, and the organization should do as much as possible to capitalize on their enthusiasm" (p. 390). Complementing this statement from a new employee who experienced an onboarding process is Hall-Ellis' (2014) assertion that in order to have productive, well-adjusted employees who provide benefit to the institution it is important to "develop and implement a well-designed, comprehensive onboarding process to recruit and retain a high-performance library team" (p. 140).

Conger and Fishel (2007) advocate that executive onboarding programs include the assignment of a trusted advisor or coach as is done in the Bank of America executive onboarding program that they studied. Unfortunately, as Savitt (2012) found, many organizations identify the mentoring component of onboarding as something they could improve upon and only approximately 37% of organizations currently include mentoring in their onboarding programs. One of the 10 components of the onboarding model developed by Caldwell and Peters (2018) is to provide a mentor/coach for each new employee. Eisner (2015) and Clark et al. (2017) studied faculty mentoring programs and found the mentoring programs to be successful in contributing to the satisfaction of new faculty members and in generating positive outcomes for the institution as well.

The Aspen Institute Report *Renewal and Progress – Strengthening Higher Education Leadership in a Time of Rapid Change* (2017) indicates that the next generation of higher

education presidents will operate in a very different environment and be faced with growing inequalities and ever-changing complexities in higher education. The task force "concluded that professional development for presidents, services available to boards, and processes for developing the next generation of leaders urgently need to be expanded and improved, especially in light of rapid turnover in the college presidency" (Aspen Institute, 2017, p. 13). AACC and ACCT (2018) reached similar conclusions in their joint monograph titled *Executive Leadership Transitioning at Community Colleges.* AACC and ACCT assert that the presidential transition process is comprised of three components; the search process to hire a new president, the transition and exit of the departing president, and the onboarding of the incoming president (2018). The joint report states that "onboarding encompasses empowering, informing, and orienting the incoming president during the period immediately following his or her selection and up to at least the first 12 to 18 months in office" (AACC & ACCT, 2018, p. 5).

SUMMARY

Models of general onboarding programs for new employees to an organization have been created by academicians and practitioners and consist of a variety of activities with the purpose of informing, educating, and supporting new employees in their transition to a new organization. Recognizing that the needs of executives in the onboarding process are different than the needs of employees at other levels of the organization, the business world and the federal government developed specific onboarding activities for executive leadership of organizations. There appears to be little literature, practitioner or academic, regarding executive onboarding models and activities being used in higher education. Recent reports from organizations such the Aspen Institute, ACCT, and AACC indicate that intentional presidential transition planning and onboarding are critical for the success of the institution, the new president, and the governing

board. The remaining chapters of this dissertation will focus on the design of a construct to be used by community college governing boards and incoming presidents when a presidential transition takes place.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will describe the process used to create the construct presented in Chapter Five. The construct is a matrix designed to assist governing boards and new presidents in developing a transition or onboarding plan for the newly hired president of a community college. The author developed the matrix through review of relevant practitioner and academic literature to create a summary listing of the primary objectives of onboarding programs and a summary listing of the primary reasons that a new executive or a new community college president might struggle in the role and "derail." Wells (2005) defines derailment or executive failure as "the departure of the executive within a year and a half of taking the job" (p. 55). Specific to higher education, Trachtenberg, Kauvar, and Bogue (2013) define derailment as "the termination or resignation of a president before the end of his or her first contract (p. vii). This can come about as a result of the new executive choosing to move on to another organization and position or the governing board or hiring body asking the new executive to seek other employment.

EXISTING APPROACHES

Klein and Heuser (2008) and Klein and Polin (2012) observe that while numerous articles exist in the realm of practitioner literature, there has not been a comprehensive review of academic literature regarding onboarding activities and the evaluation of onboarding programs nor are there a significant number of studies to evaluate orientation programs. As observed by Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011), "the literature has provided no theoretical framework of executive onboarding to assist organizations in the development of effective onboarding

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practices" (p. 166). Similarly, in research for this dissertation, the author found this to be true and also observed that there appears to be limited research available specifically addressing onboarding of new executives in community colleges.

Through the review of literature conducted and presented in Chapter Two, the author observed that while onboarding exists in the business and government sectors, it does not appear to be used to the same degree in higher education. Further, executive transition is a unique subset of onboarding and, similarly, was observed to be used in the business and government sector but appears to be infrequently used in the transition of higher education executives.

IDENTIFYING KEY COMPONENTS OF ONBOARDING PROGRAMS

A review and analysis of theoretical models of onboarding programs and practical models created in government and business sectors was conducted to examine key components of onboarding programs, recommended activities of onboarding programs, and differences with executive onboarding to gain an understanding of executive onboarding programs. Recently, AACC, ACCT, and the Aspen Institute have made recommendations that governing boards and new presidents define and create a transition or induction process for an incoming president. Upon completion of the analysis of relevant literature regarding business and government sector onboarding, the recommendations from AACC, ACCT, and the Aspen Institute were considered in the context of the completed research and a relationship between the recommended practices and the onboarding objectives defined in the construct developed became apparent.

To develop a construct that governing boards of community colleges and their newly hired presidents can reference when developing a new executive transition plan, the author studied onboarding program models developed by both academic research and practitioner research used in the private business and government sectors. In addition to understanding the

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various components of onboarding programs, the subset of executive onboarding programs was reviewed as well to gain an understanding of how executive onboarding differs from and is similar to general onboarding programs developed for all employees regardless of their level in the organization.

USING AFFINITY MAPPING TO IDENTIFY ONBOARDING OBJECTIVES AND CAUSES OF DERAILMENT

From this review of relevant onboarding literature and executive onboarding, the author developed a data set containing a variety of onboarding concepts, practices, and components identified by multiple researchers. The affinity diagraming technique was used to group the various model components, program considerations, steps, activities, tips, recommended practices, and conclusions reached by the various researchers in order to develop the author's listing of seven objectives of onboarding programs.

To generate the data set used to develop the author's listing of onboarding objectives, academic and practitioner literature was reviewed to document the components of onboarding models, recommended activities for onboarding programs, and tips and best practices for onboarding programs. Each component or step, activity, tip or best practice, program consideration, or conclusion was written on an individual small piece of paper and attached to a large board. An affinity diagram technique was then used to group similar ideas or findings. The result of this affinity diagram was the emergence of seven broad categories of onboarding objectives that should be included in an onboarding program.

In some instances of new executive transition, the new executive is not successful in acclimating to their new role and either chooses to leave the organization or may be asked to leave the organization by the hiring or governing body during the first year. This is true in private business, in government, and in higher education. To understand the reasons that this

phenomenon may occur, the author reviewed relevant literature to understand the reasons that new executives might derail and not complete their first year in a new position regardless of the sector and developed a resulting data set. The affinity diagramming technique was used on this data set to develop the author's listing of five causes of derailment.

To generate the data set used to develop the author's causes of derailment, literature regarding the reasons that an executive may fail or derail in their first year was reviewed. During review of each study or article, the findings of each author were listed individually on small pieces of paper and attached to a separate large board from that used for the onboarding objectives. While not necessarily studying or reviewing causes of derailment, there is academic and practitioner literature available that provided data regarding reasons for college presidential turnover, lessons learned by new presidents upon assuming a college presidency, and concerns of new community college presidents they wish they had known before assuming their new position. The author believed that these reasons for college president turnover and concerns or disappointments of new presidents upon assuming a presidency have the potential to result in derailment of the new president and, therefore, this data was reviewed together with the derailment data. Each finding or conclusion reached by the author of the literature reviewed was also written on an individual small piece of paper and placed on the same board. An affinity diagram technique was then used to group similar ideas or findings. The result of this affinity diagram was the emergence of five distinct categories of causes for an executive to derail. A definition was created for each category and an example from literature was provided to illustrate the category.

The development of the author's definition of onboarding objectives and causes of derailment provided a framework to then review and analyze specific onboarding or transition

activities recommended in a business world case study, in a government executive onboarding model, and by AACC, ACCT, and the Aspen Institute in a variety of publications. A review of the recommended activity and, where available, the definition of the activity allowed the author to consider which onboarding objective might be achieved by the activity and which cause of executive derailment might be avoided or diminished by the activity.

The Result: An Onboarding Matrix

The development of five causes of executive derailment and seven onboarding objectives led the author to consider that the definition or description of many onboarding activities reviewed indicate an onboarding objective to be achieved and, often times, also describe a goal to be achieved that would provide a new executive with an opportunity to avoid one or more of the causes of executive derailment. This led to the development of a matrix with the seven onboarding objectives defined by the author listed down the left side of the matrix and the five causes of executive derailment developed by the author listed across the top. The aforementioned analysis of the recommended practices then allowed the particular practice being considered to be placed in one or more intersection points of the matrix based on the onboarding objective that the author perceived to be achieved by the activity and the cause of executive derailment perceived to be avoided or diminished by the activity. The recommended activities can have singular or multiple intersection points depending on the complexity and breadth of the activity.

Conclusion

What follows in the next chapter is review and analysis of findings, recommendations and practices reported in academic and practitioner literature to develop a list of reasons that a new executive or community college president may fail in their first year and a list of common

onboarding program objectives. The results of this analysis are the basis for the creation of the

new community college president onboarding matrix presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FOUNDATION FOR THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT ONBOARDING MATRIX

INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of this dissertation to present an onboarding guide to be used by governing boards and new executives at community colleges to assist in the transition process when a new president is hired. Onboarding is a practice that has been used in the private sector and in the government sector to help in the education and transition process when new employees join an organization or institution. It has been used to a lesser extent in executive hiring and in higher education; documented examples of the use of onboarding in community college executive transitions are limited. This chapter will examine the reasons that executives and/or onboarding programs may fail during their first year; common models of onboarding and onboarding practices, including executive onboarding; and discuss AACC's focus areas for new presidents and Aspen Institute's qualities of an exceptional community college president. These data elements generated from the examination of onboarding models and executive derailment will be used in Chapter Five to develop an onboarding construct for governing boards and new community college executives to use during the transition process when a new community college president takes the helm at an institution.

REVIEW OF SHORTCOMINGS OF ONBOARDING PROGRAMS AND POTENTIAL CAUSES OF EXECUTIVE DERAILMENT

There have been several academic and practitioner studies and reports about the reasons that a new executive might not be successful during their first year leading a new organization or institution and about shortcomings in onboarding programs. Vernon (2012) discussed

onboarding practices of new employees in general and found five common mistakes or issues

with onboarding programs which can reduce the effectiveness of the onboarding program and, in

turn, the effectiveness of the employee. The five common mistakes or pitfalls are noted below:

1. Failing to engage employees on the first day,

2. Failing to articulate clear responsibilities,

3. Failing to address culture fit,

4. Failing to link onboarding to desired skills, and

5. Failing to deliver feedback early and often. (Vernon, 2012)

As defined by Vernon (2012), "onboarding is about developing the behaviors that will be

the foundation of an employee's long-term success" (p. 32). It stands to reason that these five

common mistakes should help inform the creation of an onboarding program or onboarding

activities designed to help prevent derailment or failure of a newly hired institutional leader.

Wells (2005) reviewed broad practices employed in large corporations to onboard and

integrate new executive leadership into the organization to help avoid executive failure which

she defines as "the departure of an executive within a year and a half of taking the job" (p. 55)

and found five derailment concerns for an organization to actively work to help their new

executive leader avoid. Like Vernon (2012), Wells (2005) identified unclear responsibilities and

expectations, lack of understanding of organizational culture, and limited training and

development of new skills as key reasons that executives may fail and also as issues that

onboarding programs fail to adequately address. As a result of Wells' (2005) focus on executive

leadership and onboarding as compared to Vernon's (2012) review of general onboarding

programs, two unique concerns were observed. They are development of negative credibility

with stakeholder groups and the inability of the new executive to build strong connections and

relationships with key people (Wells, 2005).

Similar to Wells' (2005) review of reasons for executive failure, Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) focused on new executive transitions through a review of responses to a global survey targeting senior executives who had recently moved into a new leadership role. The researchers reviewed responses to understand the top reasons for failure and what might have helped to avoid failure. Supporting Wells' (2005) and Vernon's (2012) observation of failing to address cultural fit being a reason for executive failure or an onboarding program shortcoming, 65% of the executives responding to the survey reported a misfit with organizational culture as a primary reason for failure (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017). In addition, 57% of the survey respondents identified having problems forging alliances with peers at the organization as another of the primary causes for failure (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017). Survey respondents were asked what would help reduce executive failure rates and the feedback indicated the need for "constructive feedback and helping with navigating internal networks and gaining insight into organizational and team dynamics" (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017, p. 3).

A third examination of executive derailment conducted by Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) reviewed differences between general and executive onboarding as well as identified "six areas appearing to directly impact the derailment of new executives and the achievement of strategic goals" (p. 168). Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) posit that general onboarding for all levels of employees at many organizations is simply an extended socialization and orientation process and executive onboarding has had little attention paid to the distinct nature and focus of the executive leader's job. In addition to the six areas of derailment, Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) found that "the literature has provided no theoretical framework of executive onboarding to assist organizations in the development of effective onboarding practices" (p. 166)

and they suggest that a uniquely designed executive onboarding program can help address the six problem areas that executives often experience. According to Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) new executives may struggle in their new positions due to stakeholders comparing them against the previous leader, not having clear performance expectations throughout the recruitment and hiring process and not enough communication about performance early on, not being able to learn and develop new skills needed in the new position, having to quickly learn organizational culture, people, and problems in order to begin making effective decisions, needing time to assess readiness for change and build a culture of change, and difficulties building an effective senior leadership team to rely on and support the executive.

In addition to the corporate or business world literature discussed above, academic and practitioner literature regarding community college presidential turnover and lessons learned upon assuming a community college president position is also available. Kubala and Bailey (2001) surveyed newly appointed community college presidents to understand the various career paths to the presidency, why the presidents are interested in serving as presidents, the presidential search process, governance, and the first impressions and disappointments upon assuming the role of president. While this survey did not study turnover or failure of community college presidents, it provided insight to what broad topics or issues were most disappointing to new presidents when they took the helm at an institution. The disappointments most often expressed by the new presidents included "dealing with difficult people, a negative climate, hostility towards the administration, and a lack of cooperation" (Kubala and Bailey, 2001, p. 798) as well as budget shortfalls and lack of technology resources. Finkel (2016) spoke with three new, first-time community college presidents who were early in their tenure (less than three years) as presidents regarding lessons they had learned about the community college presidency

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since assuming the position. Among the lessons learned that emerged were realizing the significant nature of the position and that the responsibility for everything at the institution ultimately belongs to the president, learning to rely on good people on the president's team because the president cannot know everything, and realizing that a new president cannot pursue everything at one time (Finkel, 2016).

Tekniepe (2014) studied community college president turnover based on the theory of push-pull motivation, meaning that there are either factors that push a president to leave (the governing board either terminates the president or encourages the president to seek other employment) or factors that pull a president to leave (the president chooses to leave to advance their career elsewhere) (Tekniepe, 2014). There were four common causes of push factors identified by Tekniepe (2014) through a survey of presidents of two-year, associate degree granting institutions. The common push factors are political conflict between governing board members themselves and/or between the governing board and the new president, internal pressures and lack of mutual trust and respect between the new president and employee groups, external stakeholder groups not understanding the issues of the college and community as a whole and expecting specific action of the new president, and tight fiscal constraints causing friction between the new president and stakeholder groups (Tekniepe, 2014).

ANALYSIS OF SHORTCOMINGS OF ONBOARDING PROGRAMS AND CAUSES OF EXECUTIVE DERAILMENT

This author reviewed the findings and recommendations from Vernon (2012); Wells (2005); Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011); Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017); Kubala and Bailey (2001); Finkel (2016); and Tekniepe (2014). Each author or group of authors reported as few as three and as many as six conclusions and/or recommendations for a total of

approximately thirty conclusion and/or recommendation statements. An affinity diagram

technique was used to group the multiple findings and recommendations from the seven authors.

As noted by The American Society for Quality (ASQ), "the affinity diagram organizes a large

number of ideas into their natural relationships" (ASQ, n.d.) and one of the typical circumstances

in which an affinity diagram is used is to "develop relationships or themes among ideas" (ASQ,

n.d.). Each of the conclusion or recommendation statements from each author was written on a

single piece of paper and placed on a large board. Based on keywords, phrases, and central ideas

of each author's work, this author then began grouping recommendations and conclusion

statements of a similar nature. This affinity grouping exercise continued until five broad

categories, each with distinct characteristics, emerged. The five categories defined by this author

where an executive may struggle or fail in their first year and where onboarding programs may

fall short include mismatched expectations of the position, cultural misunderstanding of the

organization, inability to develop effective relationships (both internal and external), lack of

resources, and lack of training and development. The two categories with the largest number of

common findings among the seven works reviewed are inability to develop effective

relationships (internal and external) and cultural misunderstanding of the organization which

suggests that these two categories are of utmost importance to address for new executive leaders.

Each of the five categories defined by this author is presented along with a brief definition and

an example from the literature reviewed in Table 3.

Table 3. Causes of Executive Derailment Categories and Definitions

CAUSE OF DERAILMENT	DEFINITIONS
1. Mismatched Expectations	
Definition	A difference in expectations between the governing board and the new executive regarding goals and objectives.

CAUSE OF DERAILMENT	DEFINITIONS
Example	Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) observed at least one circumstance where significant tension existed between a new executive leader and the CEO that the new leader reported due "to a misalignment of performance expectations" (p. 170).

2. Cultural Misunderstanding

Definition	The new executive leader fails to obtain a thorough understanding of the vision and values of the organization, how decisions are made, and/or forges ahead with change too quickly.
Example	In the survey results regarding executive failure reviewed by Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017), 65% of responding senior executives cited mismatch with the organizational culture as a reason for failure. A newly hired community college president found that he needed to slow down change at the institution in order to understand culture. He stated, "I had some pretty grand ideas of what I wanted to do when I got here, but we put some major decisions on hold" (Finkel, 2016, p. 26).

3. Inability To Develop Effective Relationships

Definition	A lack of mutual trust and support exists between the new executive and one or more stakeholder groups (e.g. executive leadership team, employee groups, customers, community partners, etc.)
Example	As noted by Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert (2011), "a key characteristic of executive onboarding needs to be directed at the process of building cohesive teams throughout the organization and, in particular, at the senior leadership level" (p. 173). Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis' (2017) findings support for this observation with 57% of senior executives citing difficulty forging alliances with peers as a reason for executive failure.

4. Lack of Resources

Definition	A lack of resources, primarily financial and technological, and budget flexibility exists.
Example	Do more with less has become a mantra of sorts within community colleges as the pressure to achieve greater results with declining resources and increasing costs has become the norm. As observed by Tekniepe (2014), "limited resources and increased general operating costs likely cause greater levels of friction between the president, governing board, faculty, and staff" (p. 156).

5. Lack of Training and Development

Definition	A new executive may have excellent skills developed in another position or industry that do not fully translate to their new leadership position and opportunities are not provided to develop new skills.

CAUSE OF DERAILMENT	DEFINITIONS
Example	Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis' (2017) analysis of survey results found that 26% of senior executives cited a lack of experience or skill as a reason for executive failure. As noted by Wells (2005), it is important that the new leader realize that not all current skills will be effective in a new environment. A new leader must be open to developing new skills and "onboarding should help build new hires' least transportable skills" (Dai, De Meuse, & Gaeddert, 2011, p. 171).

These five themes will be used in the development of the construct as various onboarding models and practices are discussed and how the identified onboarding practices and recommendations in the models may prevent one of the five themes of derailment.

REVIEW OF ONBOARDING MODELS AND PRACTICES

Similar to the topic of potential reasons a new executive might derail or an onboarding program might not live up to expectations, there is academic and practitioner literature available which develops models for successful onboarding programs, recommends activities for onboarding programs, and provides tips and best practices for onboarding programs (Bauer, 2010; Klein & Heuser, 2008; Klein & Polin, 2012; Caldwell & Peters, 2018; Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008; OPM, 2011; Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017; Gierden, 2007; Dai, De Meuse, & Gaeddert, 2011). These various onboarding models, best practices for onboarding programs, and activities for onboarding are discussed below.

Bauer's Four Cs Model

Bauer (2010) defines the process of onboarding as "the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly" (p. 1) and asserts that the sooner a new employee is made to feel welcome and prepared for the tasks ahead, the sooner they are able to make contributions to the organization. Bauer's (2010) model consists

of four levels of onboarding that apply to all employees of an organization and as the levels progress so does the effectiveness of the onboarding program. The Four Cs, as Bauer (2010) calls the model, consists of the compliance level in which new employees learn basic policy and procedure and legal regulations related to the organization, the clarification level which adds knowledge of the responsibilities and expectations of the employee's new position, the culture level which educates new employees about organizational norms and behaviors, and the connection level which assists in the formation of professional networks and relationships with co-workers. When compliance, clarification, culture, and connection are formally incorporated in an onboarding program, the onboarding program is defined as proactive onboarding and represents the most effective type of onboarding according to Bauer (2010).

Key elements to include in a proactive onboarding program that includes all four levels are ensuring that the onboarding plan is written, indicating the timeline of the program and what help is available; holding regular meetings with the new employee during the program to help eliminate potential problems early before they have an opportunity to develop; and providing opportunities to meet with stakeholders. As part of the development of the Four Cs model, Bauer (2010) developed a listing of best practices for onboarding programs. Bauer's (2010) Four Cs model doesn't specifically address executive onboarding; however, Bauer states "the higher a person's level in the organization, the more tailored and flexible the program will need to be" (p. 13) and providing an objective, external coach will allow the new executive to prepare for the leadership transition and provide a confidential sounding board for concerns and ideas that the new executive has.

Klein and Heuser's Inform-Welcome-Guide Model and Klein and Polin's Review of Onboarding

Klein and Heuser (2008) developed the Inform-Welcome-Guide Model of onboarding. Their research work identified 12 dimensions of socialization all new employees need to learn when they become a new member of an organization. The 12 content dimensions are socialization, onboarding, language, history, task proficiency, working relationships, social relationships, structure, politics, goals and strategy, culture and values, rules and policies, navigation, and inducements (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Klein and Heuser (2008) observed the content from each dimension that needs to be mastered differs across various levels of the organization (e.g., at the job specific level or at the organizational level as a whole) and further note that existing literature at the time was limited to assist in the determination of "what content needs to be mastered for each level" (p. 310). While the academic literature was noted to be limited, Klein and Heuser (2008) made the following general observations regarding importance of the twelve dimensions depending on different levels of onboarding:

- task proficiency is more important at the job specific level versus broader levels while goals and strategy are more important at the broad level as compared to the job specific level,

- rules and policies and culture and values are important at all levels of onboarding, and

- working relationships, social relationships, and politics become more important at higher levels.

Klein and Heuser (2008) reviewed academic and practitioner literature to understand the types of activities taking place in organizations when new employees join. It was observed that while the plethora of activities address all 12 of the socialization dimensions, the activities themselves fell broadly into three categories; inform, welcome, and guide (Klein & Heuser, 2008). The activities in the informing category are intended to provide new employees with all of the information necessary to be successful in their new jobs and are sufficiently distinct that

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three types of informing activities were identified; communication efforts to share information, providing resources for employees to seek out information, and training to provide skill or job specific information (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Welcoming activities are intended to celebrate the arrival of new employees and provide opportunity for new employees to establish relationships with each other and with current employees and guiding activities are intended to provide more one-on-one assistance with the transition into the new organization (Klein & Heuser, 2008).

Through a review of available practitioner literature, Klein and Polin (2012) developed a list of seven best practices that are advocated as components or defining characteristics of onboarding programs. The seven conclusions are described below and are "presented as best-practices for onboarding" (p. 276) by Klein and Polin (2012).

1. Recognize onboarding as a process consisting of a variety of activities taking place over time as opposed to a single event occurring at a specific point in time.

2. Onboarding programs and activities are an opportunity for the organization to convey its culture and reinforce to the newcomer they are now a part of the culture.

3. Onboarding activities are not conducted by nor the responsibility of a specific individual within the organization. Rather, it is important that many individuals across the organization play a role in onboarding.

4. Consider using technology as part of the onboarding program to track information and progress of newcomers, to deliver training, and also provide access to important information prior to the newcomer's start date.

5. Ensure new employees participating in onboarding activities see the value of onboarding by making sure "newcomers understand the importance of their new roles, as well as how those roles influence and are connected to other areas of the organization" (Klein & Polin, 2012, p. 277).

6. Design appropriate onboarding activities and training to do more than simply provide newcomers with opportunities to fill out forms, take a tour, and listen to presentations. Recognize that onboarding activities may need to differ between groups of employees.

7. Two-way feedback is an important component of onboarding programs to provide new employees with an opportunity to provide feedback about the effectiveness of the

activities and to provide newcomers with an opportunity to receive feedback on their performance in their new roles and in the onboarding activities.

Caldwell and Peters' 10-Step model

Caldwell and Peters (2018) reviewed existing literature and developed a 10-step model of onboarding from the perspective of an unwritten contract existing between new employees and the new employer in which both parties benefit from a positive employee-employer relationship. "By honoring the ethical duties that employee perceives to be part of the psychological contract owed to them, employers demonstrate that they are: committed to employee success, caring in their ability to understand employee needs, and competent in providing employees with an efficient and effective onboarding process" (Caldwell & Peters, 2018, p. 30). As observed by Caldwell and Peters (2018), while all 10 steps are not always appropriate or practical to implement in all organizations and circumstances, the model provides a guide which allows the employer to communicate the value of each new employee to the organization. The 10 steps in Caldwell and Peters (2018) are noted below:

1. Establish the relationship online immediately after hiring

2. Appoint a trained and committed mentor coach for each new employee

3. Focus the onboarding on relationships and networks

4. Prepare a well-developed and complete new employee orientation booklet

5. Prepare physical location, office, and staffing support prior to onboarding

6. Assist in transition logistics

7. Clarify and affirm priorities and expectations

8. Engage, empower, and appreciate the employee

9. Involve upline in onboarding training and orientation

10. Create an ongoing coaching process

Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton Model

In the report titled *Getting On Board, A Model for Integrating and Engaging New Employees*, the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) defines onboarding as "the process of integrating and acculturating new employees into the organization and providing them with the tools, resources and knowledge to become successful and productive" (p. 2) and views onboarding as "one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to enhance employee performance and improve retention" (p. iv). Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works with the federal government to help the government transform the way it does business and move forward to prepare for a new generation of employees. The Partnership for Public Service worked with a large, private consulting contractor, Booz Allen Hamilton, to review current literature, identify successful onboarding practices in the private sector, and study current onboarding practices within eleven different federal agencies. The Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton (2008) onboarding model consists of four broad components: (1) identifying the principles of the onboarding program, (2) defining the roles of those involved in the onboarding program, (3) providing specific activities to occur in five phases during new employees first year on the job, and (4) defining the desired outcomes of the onboarding plan.

The four principles of this particular model contained in the first component include ensuring the onboarding program applies to all new employees, allowing the new employees to connect to the organizational mission and vision, providing opportunities to learn and understand the culture of the organization, and integrating all of the organizational departments playing a part in onboarding so the program is seamless to the participants (Partnership for Public Service & Booz Allen Hamilton, 2008). Another component of the model with multiple parts is the timeline. Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton's (2008) onboarding model

takes place over the new employee's first year on the job and is separated into the following five time periods: (1) activities taking place before the new employee's first day to ensure the workspace is ready and paperwork is completed; (2) first day activities to explain policies, introduce senior leadership, and engage the new employee with their sponsor; (3) first week activities to clearly communicate the new employee's job role and responsibilities and provide some meaningful work opportunities; (4) activities occurring over the first 90 days to provide the new employee with feedback, training, and opportunities to meet key stakeholders; and (5) activities that occur throughout the employee's year on the job to continue filling any training gaps identified, provide formal and informal feedback, and seek feedback from the employee regarding their onboarding experience.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Executive Onboarding Model / Program

Similar to the anticipated turnover wave of community college presidents noted in Chapter One, significant numbers within the leadership ranks of a variety of federal government agencies were expected to retire in the near future and the federal government had observed 16% of new senior leaders failed to make it through their one-year probationary period over the previous five years (OPM, 2011). In the publication *Hit the Ground Running: Establishing A Model Executive Onboarding Program*, the Office of Personnel Management (2011) concluded "the onboarding of executives often is even more critical because of the significantly greater performance expectations executives face and the greater impact they have on the overall performance of the organization" (p. 5). Given the looming retirements, the difficulties experienced by a portion of newly hired leaders, and explicitly stated importance of executive onboarding, OPM (2011) developed an onboarding model for federal agencies to consider when hiring new senior leadership consisting of the following six tenets:

1. The onboarding program contains elements of cultural awareness and diversity awareness to ensure the new leader understands the importance of maximizing the contributions of each member of the organization.

2. The onboarding program is designed to provide education and support to bring new executives from outside the agency up to speed quickly on their new organization.

3. The onboarding program provides education and guidance on the agency's culture and team dynamics to help the new leader transition quickly and also assesses each new leader to identify any skills or knowledge gaps to be addressed.

4. The onboarding program uses technology to speed up paperwork, convey data and organizational information, and track progress through the onboarding process.

5. The onboarding program provides networking opportunities to meet and develop relationships with other executives and develop relationships within the new organization.

6. There are mechanisms built into the onboarding program to monitor, measure, and improve the program.

In addition to these broad principles of an executive onboarding program, OPM (2011) also developed eight tips and recommendations intended to assist federal agencies in the design and implementation of an executive onboarding program. One of the tips includes a recommendation that the program be one year long and provide recommended goals and activities along a 12-month timeline. In addition, OPM (2011) also recommends that an onboarding program develop leadership competencies including knowledge of key stakeholders, goals, and objectives; knowledge and understanding of organizational culture; ability to work with organizational networks and individuals; and, providing a clear understanding of the expectations of executive leadership. A complete listing of all eight tips is provided below (OPM, 2011):

1. Obtain commitment from senior leadership within the organization to demonstrate buy-in and to encourage program participants to actively participate and complete the onboarding program.

2. Ensure that the onboarding program establishes objectives for the program to help address key issues including "understanding the organization's business and culture,

help[ing] clarify performance expectations, and shorten the executive's learning curve to enable them to perform to their full potential" (p. 9).

3. Develop leadership competencies of the new executive.

4. Provide learning opportunities in a variety of formats and at multiple points in time during the first year.

5. Establish a timeline for the onboarding program of twelve months and assign specific tasks to specific time periods.

6. Include accountability for the executive and supervisor to ensure the new executive's needs are met and the onboarding program is completed.

7. Measure and evaluate the results or outcomes of the onboarding program to be sure it has a positive impact on both the new executive and the organization.

8. In situations where the new executive has relocated, especially with a family, develop ways to support work/life balance and assist with the adjustment for the family as part of the onboarding program.

OPM (2011) developed an overview chart indicating key goals to take place during various timeframes from the post-hire and pre-start date point, also known as pre-boarding, through the one-year anniversary of the new executive. The chart includes key goals and activities to take place during each time period of the onboarding program.

Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) Five Tasks for A New Leader

While Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) did not create a specific onboarding model for executives, the authors discuss five significant tasks that new leaders face during the first few months in a new executive role and assert that "these are the areas in which they need the greatest integration support" (n.p.). The five tasks observed by Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) are listed below along with a brief explanation of the task.

1. Assume Operational Leadership – In order to build credibility in their ability, a new leader must have an understanding of operational issues, find solutions to immediate problems, and make good decisions early on in the new role. To do so requires that the new leader have a full understanding of the organization.

2. Take Charge of the Team – The new leader should have the opportunity to review their direct reports, the leadership team, without prejudice from others. In addition, it is helpful for human resources to provide objective input about individual team member's performance and development and, often times, to facilitate meetings between the new leader and the leadership team. "Building trust early with the team members enables the new leader to make key decisions with confidence that people will follow through on them" (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017, n.p.).

3. Align with Stakeholders – In addition to building relationships with the leadership team, a new executive must identify the important stakeholders beyond the leadership team and demonstrate a commitment to building relationships with and understanding expectations of key stakeholder groups.

4. Engaging With the Culture – The new leader must understand "the values, norms, and guiding assumptions that define acceptable behavior in the new organization" (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017, n.p.); if not, there can be a negative impact on the organization's view of the new leader's intentions.

5. Defining Strategic Intent – A new leader must be definitive about the path and direction of the organization moving forward, whether that be maintaining current strategy and goals or reshaping strategy and goals to alter the direction of the organization.

Byford, Watkins, and Triantogiannis (2017) contend that organizations support their new executives in the transition to new leadership positions at four different levels. Level 0 is aptly named sink or swim and, as the name suggests, organizations at this level essentially provide the new executive with an office and resources (generally, both technology and human resources) and step back to let the new executive do the job. Level 1 is considered to be basic orientation in which the organization provides the new executive with general information (for example, organization structure, policies, team member evaluations) that she or he is left to interpret on their own. Active assimilation is the term used to denote Level 2, and at this level, the organization is an active participant in helping the new leader transition. The organization intentionally provides opportunities for the new leader to interact with stakeholders to understand the organization and provide context about the leader's new organization. Level 3, the preferred level of support, is named accelerated integration. At this level, the new leader's organization

takes time to understand what is needed for the new leader's transition and provides the

necessary support (for example, in depth discussions regarding strategy and identifying

challenges to be overcome) to bring the new leader up to speed more completely and quickly

than the other levels (Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis (2017).

Executive Onboarding Differences

Aligning with Bauer's advocacy of providing a coach as part of an executive onboarding

process, Gierden (2007) found that while the traditional onboarding or orientation practices of

functional job training and feedback regarding performance are important, it is the inclusion of

coaching that sets executive onboarding apart from traditional onboarding. The coaching

component of executive onboarding provides great opportunity to get the most out of the

executive's training by helping the new executive create specific implementation plans for their

knowledge and by providing an independent person outside of the organization to "offer

themselves as a sounding board, help them work through stress and discuss any pressures the

executive is feeling" (Gierden, 2007, p. 14).

Dai, De Meuse, and Gaeddert (2011) identified four differences between typical

onboarding for all general employees of an organization versus what executive onboarding

should be: (1) "focus on actively integrating new senior-level managers and executives into the

company" (p. 167); (2) there are often strategic intentions behind the hiring of a specific

executive and a general onboarding program which brings the new executive into the current

culture or status quo of the organization may be at odds with the strategic intent for which the

executive was hired; (3) executive onboarding must involve some key stakeholders which are not

part of the traditional all-employee onboarding process (premier customers and board members

are used as examples); and (4) given that executives likely will face situations that are more

complex and unique than most general employees, an effective executive onboarding program will be designed to address the specific needs of the organization and those of the new executive.

ANALYSIS OF ONBOARDING MODELS AND PRACTICES

As with the causes of executive derailment and shortcomings of onboarding programs analysis in the previous section of this chapter, the affinity diagraming technique was used to group the various model components, program considerations, steps, activities, tips, recommended practices, and conclusions reached by the models discussed above (Bauer, 2010; Klein & Heuser, 2008; Klein & Polin, 2012; Caldwell & Peters, 2018; Partnership for Public Service, 2008; OPM, 2011; Byford, Watkins, & Triantogiannis, 2017; Gierden, 2007; Dai, De Meuse, & Gaeddert, 2011). Based on keywords, phrases, and central ideas of each author's work, this author began grouping recommendations, activities, components, conclusion, and best practices and tips of a similar nature. This author's use of affinity diagraming to analyze the components of models for onboarding programs, recommended activities for onboarding programs, and recommended tips and best practices for onboarding programs initially resulted in identifying two broad categories of data elements: onboarding program design elements and onboarding program objectives. Once the data elements were divided between these two broad categories, affinity diagraming was used a second time to identify the categories or themes within the onboarding program design and onboarding program objectives groupings.

Within the onboarding program design elements category, this author identified four broad questions or topics in the literature those developing an onboarding program should consider:

1. Who will be involved?
2. What will the timeline or duration of the program be?

3. What are the desired goals, objectives, and outcomes of the program and how will those be measured?

4. How can technology be used to make the program efficient and seamless to all participants (both new employees and current employees involved in the program)?

Within the onboarding program objectives category, this author identified seven broad topics in the literature to be included as part of a community college president onboarding program. The seven objectives and this author's definition based upon the research reviewed are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. New President Onboarding Objectives and Definitions

ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE	DEFINITION
Orientation	Planned, structured communication to share information about the mission, vision, and goals of the institution, to share organizational structure and history, and to provide opportunities to meet and greet other employees.
Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback	Create an ongoing two-way feedback process to prevent early missteps by the new executive and monitor the onboarding program to demonstrate and help the new employee build connection to mission, vision, values, and goals of the institution
Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities	Specific, intentional communication between the governing board and new president to clarify key responsibilities, expectations and goals, how performance will be measured, and to lay out the path ahead.
Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture	Provide deep understanding of the norms, values, guiding assumptions, language, and decision-making processes of the institution as well as providing information about the cultural diversity of the organization.
Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships	Meet key stakeholders, both internal and external, other executives, politicians, and others to establish vital relationships and begin to build business and information networks. Assuming leadership of the organization and having sufficient time to build relationships with the senior leadership team.
Training and Executive Coaching	Provide an executive who can be a sounding board for the new president and provide objective, external advice. Provide an opportunity to get up to speed on unique circumstances of the institution, programs, services, etc. Assess any knowledge or skill gaps that may exist and develop a plan to address them.
Work/Life Balance	Assist with relocation details and acclimating to the new community if a relocation is involved. This is especially important if the new president is relocating with a family.

Three of these objectives had a larger number of components, program considerations, steps, activities, tips, recommended practices, and conclusions reached by the researchers than the other four objectives. These three objectives are Engage, Empower, and Feedback; Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships; and Training and Executive Coaching. This would suggest that these three objectives are of utmost importance to address for in onboarding programs. These seven objective topics will be used alongside the previously identified themes of executive derailment in the development of the community college president onboarding construct.

REVIEW OF AACC LEADERSHIP FOCUS AREAS AND ASPEN INSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL PRESIDENT QUALITIES

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) published the first edition of *Competencies for Community College Leaders* in 2005. At that time, six competencies were identified and presented along with a definition of what an effective leader in each of the competencies looks like and examples of different ways in which the effective leader might demonstrate his or her competency. A second edition of the document was published in 2013 and was expanded to present the concept that competencies for community college leaders are developed along a continuum as an individual progresses from being an emerging leader to a new community college president (initial three years in a first presidency) to a community college president with three or more years of experience in the role (AACC, 2013). Like the first edition, the second edition also included an overall definition of what an effective leader in each of the competencies looks like and then indicated how the mastery of the competency evolves as the leader moves through the continuum.

In 2018, AACC published the third edition (the most current) of competencies for community college leaders. This third edition is noticeably different from the first two. Rather than a listing of overall competencies for an emerging leader or president to demonstrate, the third edition presents eleven focus areas defined as "specific categories identified as having significance to the internal and external workings of the community college" (AACC, 2018). Each of the focus areas lists specific competencies to be mastered and examples of behaviors, tasks, or knowledge that an effective leader would demonstrate or emulate. Another significant difference from the previous two editions is the inclusion of a variety of job levels in the publication; the job levels include faculty, mid-level leaders, senior level leaders, aspiring presidents, new presidents, and seasoned presidents (AACC, 2018). While the focus areas remain the same for all of the job levels, the competencies and illustrative behaviors vary for each job level. The 11 focus areas and their related definitions are taken directly from the third edition and listed in Table 5.

Table 5. AACC Focus Areas and Definitions for New and Experienced Presidents

FOCUS AREA	DEFINITION
Organizational Culture	An effective community college leader embraces the mission, vision, and values of the community college and acknowledges the significance of the institution's past while charting a path for its future.
Governance, Institutional Policy, and Legislation	An effective leader is knowledgeable about the institution's governance framework and the policies that guide its operation.
Student Success	An effective leader supports student success across the institution, and embraces opportunities to improve access, retention, and success.
Institutional Leadership	An effective leader understands the importance of interpersonal relationships, personal philosophy, and management skills in creating a student-centered institution.
Institutional Infrastructure	An effective community college leader is fluent in the management of the foundational aspects of the institution, including the establishment of a strategic plan, financial and facilities management, accreditation, and technology master planning.

Focus Area	Definition
Information and Analytics	An effective community college leader understands how to use data in ways that give a holistic representation of the institution's performance and is open to the fact that data might reveal unexpected or previously unknown trends of issues.
Advocacy and Mobilizing/Motivating Others	An effective community college leader understands and embraces the importance of championing community college ideals, understands how to mobilize stakeholders to take action on behalf of the college, and understands how to use all of the communications resources available to connect with the college community.
Fundraising and Relationship Cultivation	An effective community college leader cultivates relationships across sectors that support the institution and advance the community college agenda.
Communications	An effective community college leader demonstrates strong communication skills, leads, and fully embraces the role of community college spokesperson.
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 the college community, and sustain the community college mission.
Personal Traits and Abilities	An effective leader possesses certain personal traits and adopts a focus on honing abilities that promote the community college agenda.

Source: AACC, 2018

Like AACC, Aspen Institute studied community college presidencies and produced

research reports. Two of Aspen Institute's publications most relevant to the community college

presidency and development of an onboarding construct include *Renewal and Progress —*

Strengthening Higher Education Leadership in a Time of Rapid Change (2017) and *Crisis and*

Opportunity — Aligning the Community College Presidency with Student Success (2013). Rather

than focusing on competencies and behaviors to be developed in and demonstrated by

community college presidents as with the AACC publications, Aspen Institute, along with

Achieving the Dream, researched qualities and attributes demonstrated by presidents of

community colleges that have achieved high or significantly improving levels of student success

(Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream, 2013). The research consisted of interviews with

current community college presidents and student success experts as well as focus groups with presidents of Achieving the Dream Leader colleges and "revealed a series of five core qualities present in highly effective community college presidents" (Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream, 2013, p. 5) presented in Table 6. While this is similar to the development of AACC's Focus Areas, it is different in that the Aspen Institute research focuses on behaviors and characteristics of presidents leading successful community colleges rather than AACC's work defining Focus Areas that represent broad subject areas that have a significant impact on the operations of a community college.

Table 6. Aspen Institute Core Qualities and Definitions

CORE QUALITY	DEFINITION
Deep Commitment to Student Access and Success	A highly effective leader demonstrates a "zealous drive to ensure student success while at the same time maintaining access" (p. 5) and "push urgently and relentlessly for scaled and sustainable advances in institutional behavior that result in measurable better outcomes for students" (p.6).
Willingness to Take Significant Risks to Advance Student Success	"Effective community college presidents recognize that the existing culture at their institutions often foster resistance to fundamental reform [and] are willing to take significant risks to inspire changes in how their colleagues think and act to improve student outcomes" (p. 6).
The Ability to Create Lasting Change Within the College	An effective president understands the critical importance of balancing their time between the internal and external responsibilities of the position in order to positively impact changes to improve student success.
Having a Strong, Broad, Strategic Vision for the College and its Students, Reflected in External Partnerships	Exceptional presidents look beyond their institutions and build external partnerships with K-12 systems, four-year institutions, regional employers, and legislators to increase resources, improve access to education, and expand the local economy and job opportunities.
Raise and Allocate Resources in Ways Aligned to Student Success	Highly effective presidents "align expenditures with strategies for ensuring student success" (p. 9) by having a firm understanding of their institution's budget, developing entrepreneurial revenue sources, using data in decision making, and being transparent in resource allocation decisions.

Source: Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream, 2013

AACC's *Competencies for Community College Leaders, Third Edition,* is intended to be used as a professional development tool by individuals currently working in a community college or those looking to enter the community college sector to help them assess their level of skill in each competency and where gaps in their current experience exist (AACC, 2018). It describes "abilities that institutions seek when hiring, as well as those things one must understand to keep the job over the long term" (AACC, 2018, p. 6). AACC (2018) presents each competency as developing on a continuum and evolving as an individual's leadership position changes to involve more and broader responsibilities.

Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream (2013), in *Crisis and Opportunity — Aligning the Community College Presidency with Student Success,* approached their study and report from the perspective of the community college sector as a whole through observation of successful institutions. Characteristics that the presidents of these successful institutions had in common were determined as opposed to the AACC competency reports which indicate a series of competencies that contribute to making a leader successful. Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream (2013) studied actions taken by current community college presidents at high performing institutions which contributed to the success of the college, and actions taken and attributes present "that are distinctive among presidents that achieved high and/or improving levels of student success" at their respective institutions (p. 5). Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream (2013) then compared these existing five qualities of exceptional presidents with the qualities that trustees search for most often in the hiring of a new president and with the design of community college leadership development programs. The result of that work was the development of the five core qualities exhibited by presidents leading highly successful community colleges.

In the previous two sections of data analysis in this chapter reviewing the causes for executive derailment and onboarding models and practices, affinity diagrams were used to combine the data into collective themes because multiple sources of practitioner and academic data existed. Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream's qualities of exceptional community college presidents and AACC's leadership competencies, or Focus Areas, for new and seasoned presidents were each developed from different viewpoints and, therefore, will not be combined using the affinity diagramming technique.

While the specific focus areas and core qualities of AACC and Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream do not explicitly appear in the new community college president onboarding matrix presented in Chapter Five, the recommendations for developing transition plans recently published by Aspen Institute and AACC are explicitly reviewed and incorporated in the matrix. As noted by AACC (2018), the third edition of *Competencies for Community College Leaders* is not intended to point out situations and circumstances that might cause future employment issues nor is it intended to advise readers how to handle potentially difficult scenarios. Rather, the intent is to provide a way to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses in key leadership areas and develop a plan to enhance and improve any areas where the individual may be deficient. Given that training and executive coaching is an identified onboarding objective in the author's matrix, the author determined that AACC's Focus Areas would fit more appropriately as a tool to develop a training plan as part of onboarding rather than the focus areas being considered as individual components of an onboarding program.

Similarly, Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream's 2013 report that presented the five qualities of exceptional community college presidents was written to inform and influence education programs that are preparing future college presidents, professional development

programs for current college presidents, and trustee hiring priorities. With the focus of the use of the core qualities appearing to be strongly connected to the hiring and development of community college presidents, the author again determined that the core qualities would fit more appropriately as a tool to develop a training plan as part of onboarding rather than the core qualities being considered as individual components of an onboarding program. These are crucial traits and characteristics of newly hired presidents that a governing board or other hiring body has likely evaluated during the search process that resulted in hiring the new president and can be used in the creation of a training and professional development plan for a new president as part of an onboarding activity but do not directly drive the creation of an onboarding or transition plan itself.

SUMMARY

This author's analysis of academic and practitioner literature regarding shortcomings of onboarding programs as well as literature regarding the reasons that an executive might not be successful, or derail, during their first year in a new leadership position revealed the following five categories of concern:

- mismatched expectations of the position between the new leader and the individual(s) that the leader reports to,

- the new leader has a cultural misunderstanding of the organization,

- the new leader is unable to develop effective internal and external relationships,

- a lack of resources within the organization, and

- a lack of training and development opportunities for the new executive.

Review and analysis by this author of literature regarding onboarding models, recommended onboarding activities, and best practices for onboarding program development revealed two broad categories of data: onboarding program design elements and onboarding

program objectives. Within the category of onboarding program objectives, data analysis showed onboarding programs have the following seven objectives:

1. Orient the new employee to the organization

2. Engage and empower the employee while providing feedback

3. Confirm expectations, goals, and responsibilities

4. Provide a thorough knowledge and understanding of organizational culture

5. Provide extensive opportunity to build internal and external relationships

6. Provide training and coaching

7. Provide assistance with work/life issues.

Study and data analysis of existing academic and practitioner literature led to the development of categories of executive derailment and onboarding program shortcomings and onboarding program objectives noted above. By reviewing and combining the reasons new executives may fail in their first year and program objectives of onboarding programs used in the government and private sector, a model for development of a community college president onboarding program can be developed with the intent to limit the potential for derailment in the first year.

CHAPTER FIVE: NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT ONBOARDING MATRIX

INTRODUCTION

Review of both academic and practitioner literature in Chapter Two revealed a variety of academic and practitioner models of onboarding in the business and government sectors. In addition, it is evident that executive onboarding is a special subset of onboarding and requires additional thought and attention. However, while executive onboarding has been used in the business and government sectors and, in recent years, has been called for in community colleges, there is not a model, theory or tool for new president onboarding in community colleges widely available for governing boards and new presidents to look to.

Through data review and analysis in Chapter Four, the author developed a list of seven objectives of onboarding programs and a list of five causes of executive derailment. The matrix presented in this chapter provides a framework to connect the potential causes of executive derailment with the objectives of an onboarding program and provide a framework for a governing board and a new president to develop a transition plan with activities that will meet objectives of onboarding programs and positively impact a cause of derailment by reducing or eliminating the potential for that cause of derailment to occur. A governing board and a new president should consider the specific circumstances of the transition that is about to occur and discuss potential activities or efforts using this framework. If activities have already been planned or are in progress the matrix can be used to determine what objectives and causes of derailment the activity intersects with. Alternatively, the matrix can be used as a framework to

facilitate discussion of what objectives and causes of derailment are most important in the upcoming transition and to design onboarding activities that meet desired intersection points of the matrix. The New Community College President Onboarding Matrix is presented below.

Figure 2: New Community College President Onboarding Matrix

	MISMATCHED EXPECTATIONS	CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDING	INABILITY TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS	LACK OF RESOURCES	LACK OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
Orientation					
Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback					
Confirm expectations, goals, and responsibilities					
Provide thorough knowledge of institutional culture					
Provide ample opportunity to establish and build internal and external relationships					
Training and executive coaching					
Work/Life Balance					

In addition to using the blank matrix to facilitate conversation and the creation of onboarding activities for a new president's onboarding, the author reviewed various onboarding practices, tips, best practices, and activities present in existing literature and plotted those activities in the matrix. In the analysis and plotting of activities in the New Community College President Onboarding Matrix, the causes of derailment are denoted by CD and the objectives of onboarding programs are denoted by OO. The causes of derailment (CD) and the definitions

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developed can be found in Table 3. The onboarding objectives (OO) and the definitions can be found in Table 4. Based on the purpose of the onboarding practices noted in the discussion that follows, it is the author's supposition that implementing the practice could reasonably be expected to help avoid one or more of the five causes of derailment (denoted as CD in the tables) and/or meet one or more of the onboarding program objectives (denoted as OO) identified in Chapter Four.

ONBOARDING PRACTICES IDENTIFIED BY HIGHER EDUCATION ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Aspen Institute Induction Process

The Aspen Institute convened a task force to understand the rapidly changing operating environment of community colleges today and determine what leadership skills and qualities community college presidents of the future will need and how those skills and qualities can be developed (Aspen Institute, 2017). The resulting publication, *Renewal and Progress – Strengthening Higher Education Leadership in a Time of Rapid Change*, presents three focus areas to help advance the college presidency. The focus areas and a brief synopsis of the definition of the area are taken directly from the Aspen Institute (2017, p. 13) (see Table 7).

Table 7. The Aspen Institute Focus Areas and Definitions

ASPEN INSTITUTE FOCUS AREA	FOCUS AREA DEFINITION
Expanding and improving transition planning, professional development, and peer learning opportunities for new and veteran presidents.	During their first year, all presidents need structured transition plans that enable them to learn with support from their boards and senior teams. There are new challenges facing presidents today that require high-quality training opportunities to learn from one another and experts in the field about critical parts of the presidency and campus challenges.

ASPEN INSTITUTE FOCUS AREA	FOCUS AREA DEFINITION
Provide boards greater and more integrated assistance to hire, support, and work with presidents who will act not just as institutional stewards but also as forward-thinking educational leaders in a changing environment.	In today's rapidly evolving world of higher education, it is essential that trustees are educated about leadership needs and institutional context as well as provided with support to set college goals, hire presidents, and support them through the first-year transition and beyond
Advancing new and expanded ways to identify and develop a diverse presidential talent pool.	To have future presidents who can lead institutions through changing and challenging environments, the pool of potential presidents must be expanded, diversified, and strengthened through mentorship by current presidents, leadership development programs developed by national organizations as well as individual institutions or groups of institutions, and consideration of nontraditional candidates.

Source: Strengthening Higher Education Leadership in a Time of Rapid Change (Aspen Institute, 2017)

As observed in the first focus area listed, the Aspen Institute indicates that a structured first-year transition plan is essential to the success of a new college president. When boards and new presidents commit to an intentional onboarding process, the "incoming presidents can understand the particular challenges and opportunities associated with their institution's internal and external contexts" (Aspen Institute, 2017, p. 14). An effective onboarding process ensures that a new president devotes significant time to understanding institutional culture and operating environment, meeting internal and external stakeholders, beginning to develop quality relationships with community and legislative partners that the institution works with (Aspen Institute, 2017). A model one-year induction process consisting of seven components was developed as part of the work of the Aspen Institute task force and is included in the *Renewal and Progress* report. The seven components of the Aspen Institute induction model are noted below:

1. Get to know students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors

2. Become familiar with institutional decision-making processes and culture

3. Develop a management dashboard to guide institutional priority-setting

4. Understand the evolving national landscape

5. Engage the community

6. Develop a president's professional support network

7. Craft a personal well-being plan

All of these components identified by the Aspen Institute fit within one or more of the seven onboarding program components/objectives and/or within one of the five causes of derailment identified previously in Chapter Three by this author through a review of relevant academic and practitioner literature.

As noted in Table 7, the Aspen Institute's (2017) second focus area is to provide assistance to governing boards to help guide the board through not only the presidential search and hiring process but also to ensure boards are educated about the complexity of the role of presidents in the challenging world of higher education today. In addition, the Aspen Institute (2017) states that "boards must be able to continuously support the new president, including during the critical first year to ensure that the president is successfully acclimated to the institution and is given the space to deeply learn the institution and its culture" (p. 22). This support should include development of a first-year induction process that involves both the governing board and the senior leadership team that supports the president, development of key metrics of institutional performance to measure progress towards achievement of institutional goals, and conducting an annual evaluation of the president which holds the president accountable for institutional progress towards goals and provides the president with support and feedback from the governing board (Aspen Institute, 2017).

Like the recommendations in the first focus area, the first-year transition plan, the recommendations for governing boards contained in the second focus area can also be directly related to one or more of the seven onboarding program components/objectives and/or within

one of the five causes of derailment identified previously in Chapter Three by this author through a review of relevant academic and practitioner literature.

Table 8 summarizes the recommendations from both the first and second focus areas and links them to the onboarding components and/or causes of derailment previously identified by the author in Chapter Three. The sequence numbers in Table 8 are used in the matrix developed later in this chapter.

Table 8. The Aspen Institute Recommended Practices from Focus Areas 1 and 2 and Linkage to Cause of Derailment and Onboarding Objective

ASPEN INSTITUTE RECOMMENDED PRACTICE	LINK TO AUTHOR'S CAUSES OF DERAILMENT (CD) OR ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE (OO) CATEGORY
Focus Area #1 – First Year Induction Process	
ASPEN-1 Get to know students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors	• CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
ASPEN-2 Become familiar with institutional decision-making processes and culture	• CD – Cultural Misunderstanding • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture
ASPEN-3 Develop a management dashboard to guide institutional priority-setting	• CD – Mismatched Expectations • CD - Lack of Resources • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities
ASPEN-4 Understand the evolving national landscape	• CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
ASPEN-5 Engage the community	• CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
ASPEN-6 Develop a president's professional support network	• CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Training and Executive Coaching • OO - Work/Life Balance
ASPEN-7 - Craft a personal well-being plan	• CD – Lack of Resources • OO - Work/Life Balance
Focus Area #2 – Governing Board Assistance to hire and support a new president	
ASPENGB-1 Provide president the opportunity to learn the culture and the institution	• CD – Cultural Misunderstanding • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture • OO - Orientation

Aspen Institute Recommended Practice	Link to Author's Causes of Derailment (CD) or Onboarding Objective (OO) Category
ASPENGB-2 Ensure that a first-year induction process is developed and includes both the governing board and the institution's senior leadership team.	• CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
ASPENGB-3 The president will lead or co-lead a process to develop institutional goals and key metrics to measure institutional progress towards achievement of the goals.	• CD – Mismatched Expectations • CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • CD – Lack of Resources • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
ASPENGB-4 Ensure that the president is evaluated annually using the institutional goals and key metrics identified as well as specific individual performance of the president.	• CD – Mismatched Expectations • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities

Source: Adapted from Aspen Institute (2017)

AACC and ACCT Executive Leadership Transition Planning

Not only does the Aspen Institute recommend an onboarding or transition plan for new presidents of institutions, AACC and ACCT recently recommended presidential onboarding in their joint publication, *Executive Leadership Transitioning at Community Colleges* (2018). A presidential transition is a time for an institution to guard and enhance its reputation, service to its constituents, and operations while at the same time strategically advancing the institution forward in its effort to support student success (AACC & ACCT, 2018). "Beyond identifying and selecting the ideal candidate to become the next chief executive, trustees must make concerted and well-coordinated efforts to support both the outgoing and incoming presidents in ways that keep students' success in full view and above all else" (AACC & ACCT, 2018, p. 4). AACC and ACCT (2018) state that onboarding "encompasses empowering, informing, and orienting the incoming president during the period immediately following his or her selection

and up to at least the first 12 to 18 months in office" (p. 5). An onboarding process length of twelve to eighteen months is important because that duration provides ample opportunity for the new president and the board to develop a tight alignment and to have several formal and informal feedback conversations to reduce the likelihood of any significant performance issues for the new president (AACC & ACCT, 2018).

A transition of leadership begins with the search process for the institution's next leader, progresses through the departure of the current leader, and ends with the onboarding of the new leader. While AACC and ACCT (2018) do not provide a specific action plan for onboarding as Aspen Institute (2017) did, several important activities to be included in the onboarding phase of leadership transition are presented. Six key activities were identified and include regular meetings between the board and the new president, introducing the president to key social, political, and business stakeholders and partners, creating a professional development plan for the new president, assigning responsibility for the onboarding process, establishing a communication plan, and evaluating the onboarding process at its conclusion (AACC & ACCT, 2018).

The intent of regular meetings between the new president and the board is to share the board's assessment of the current condition (academic, financial, operational) of the institution, to establish communication protocols between the president and the board, discuss performance expectations and the process to be used to evaluate performance, and to jointly develop three to five strategic priorities for the new president to pursue during the first twelve to eighteen months along with the evaluation criteria by which progress will be measured (AACC & ACCT, 2018). It is vitally important that these meetings occur regularly during the transition of leadership and throughout the first year of the new president's tenure in the position to assist in establishing the

crucial trust element of the relationship between the new president and the board (AACC & ACCT, 2018). Introducing the new president to key social, political, and business stakeholders provides an opportunity for the new president to begin building key networks and relationships and also gain insight into the institution's culture and condition from an external perspective (AACC & ACCT, 2018).

A third tool for the board to employ during the onboarding portion of the leadership transition process is to work together with the new president to jointly develop a professional development plan (AACC & ACCT, 2018). Being mindful of financial constraints, the professional development plan often includes specific organizations and meetings for the president to participate in and providing executive coaching for the new president: "A coach can be helpful to both experienced and new presidents as a thought partner and confidential sounding board who serves as a subject-matter resource and a mirror" (AACC & ACCT, 2018, p. 12). The fourth activity to be part of the transition plan for a new president is establishing a communications plan. The communications plan is important as it provides opportunities for the institution to engage with key internal and external stakeholders and share information about the new president, to showcase the institution's goals and aspirations, as well as promote the new president's agenda (AACC & ACCT, 2018). Assigning responsibility for facilitating the new president's transition plan and providing an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the onboarding plan will also serve to enhance the value of the onboarding program (AACC & ACCT, 2018).

All six of the activities recommended by AACC and ACCT in their *Executive Leadership Transitioning at Community Colleges* can be directly related to one or more of the seven onboarding program objectives and/or within one of the five causes of derailment identified

previously in Chapter Four by this author through a review of relevant academic and practitioner literature. Table 9 summarizes the six activities and links them to the onboarding components and/or causes of derailment previously identified by the author in Chapter Four. The sequence numbers in Table 9 are used in the matrix developed later in this chapter.

Table 9. AACC and ACCT Suggested Activities and Linkage to Cause of Derailment and Onboarding Objective

AACC & ACCT RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY	LINK TO AUTHOR'S CAUSES OF DERAILMENT(CD) OR ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE (OO) CATEGORY
AACC/ACCT-1 Regular meetings between the board and the new president to establish expectations, communication, goals, performance assessment	• CD – Mismatched Expectations • CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
AACC/ACCT-2 Introduce the president to key social, political, and business stakeholders and partners	• CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
AACC/ACCT-3 Create a professional development plan	• CD - Lack of Resources • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
AACC/ACCT-4 Develop a communication plan	• CD - Cultural Misunderstanding • CD– Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
AACC/ACCT-5 Identify an individual to manage the onboarding process	• CD – Lack of Resources • OO – Impacts all OO's by managing and coordinating the onboarding process and schedule
AACC/ACCT-6 Evaluate the onboarding process	• CD – Lack of Resources • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback

Source: Adapted from AACC & ACCT (2018)

ACCT Presidential Transition Practices

In addition to the joint publication with AACC discussing executive transitions within community colleges, ACCT also recently published their own community college executive transition model in *5 Keys to a Successful Transition Year, An ACCT Guide for Community College Boards and CEOs* (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020). Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020) observe that there are a significant number of priorities for a new president to take on, including meeting students, faculty, staff, and community members; learning the institutional culture and operations; examining the current strategic plan; understanding the institution's financial condition; outlining new goals for student equity and success; developing their senior management team; and managing the unanticipated crisis that may occur. To successfully determine which priorities are the top priorities and "because the initial year sets much of the tone for an entire presidency, every CEO, in consultation with their board and senior leadership team, should establish a first-year work plan to provide structured opportunities to learn about their institution, in part through extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders" (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020, p. 4). To assist in that endeavor, ACCT created a model including five practices and a recommended timeline to be employed to help provide a successful transition year. These five practices include:

1. Hold a Board/CEO retreat
2. Create communication and transition plans
3. Create a professional development plan
4. Review the transition halfway through the first year
5. Evaluate the CEO at the completion of the first year. (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020)

The onboarding timeline recommended by ACCT in the model begins before the new president assumes their role and includes celebrations for both the outgoing president and the new president, followed by a board and president retreat in the first two months; meeting students, faculty, management team, stakeholders, donors, and others during the first three months; conducting a mid-year review between the board and new president at month six; and engaging in an annual performance evaluation of the new president at the end of the first year (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020). In addition to these specific activities during the first year, a new president is also busy spending time to "become acquainted with internal and external communities, develop an understanding of the campus culture, and learn more about opportunities and challenges" (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020, p. 4) through engaging and listening to stakeholders. This engagement and listening also helps to advance the important work of developing relationships and trust (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020).

As observed by Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020), the board–president relationship is crucial to the success of the new president and a board-president retreat can be used as a tool for the board and new president to get to know each other individually and as a board as a whole. The intention of the board–president retreat is to allow the board and president to get to know each other individually and as a whole board, to discuss and begin building the working relationship between the president and the board, discuss and confirm the approach to take when making significant decisions, and to have clear communication about the direction of the institution and what the strategic priorities are for the new president (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020). Suggested topics for the board-president retreat include discussion of the roles and responsibilities of each party, review and discussion of communication preferences, and determination of three to five key strategic priorities for the new president to focus on during

the first twelve to eighteen months including defining how progress will be measured and the expected timeline for that progress (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020).

The second key practice identified by Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020) as part of a successful onboarding plan for a new college president is to create communication and transition plans. There are significant demands on a new president's time and a transition plan can help the new president ensure that there is adequate time dedicated to learning the culture and history of the institution, learning about the internal constituent groups, and also making sure there is enough time to make progress on the priorities that the new president and board have agreed on (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020). Another purpose of the transition plan is to help the new president develop a calendar or list of meetings and contacts to describe who the contact is with, the frequency of the contact, how the contact happens, and what the broad topics of the contact are (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020). A communications plan should be developed to provide the new president with a general speech or talking points about the institution and what excites the president about the new role, to plan social media coordination between official institutional social media and the new president's personal social media to announce the arrival of the new president and to provide ways to demonstrate the president's engagement with the college and community (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020).

The next key practice in the Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020) model is to create a development plan for the new president that considers both professional development and personal care to support the new president's well-being. The professional portion of the development plan may include travel to various conferences and seminars as well as attending meetings on topics that are relevant to institutional goals or leading the development of a new program at the institution while the personal portion of the development plan is focused on

helping the new president maintain a healthy balance between their personal life and the demands of the position so that the president isn't overworking or exhausting himself or herself (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020).

The fourth and fifth recommended practices relate to evaluating and assessing the transition process as well as the new president. Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020) recommend that there be a scheduled check-in between the board and the new president mid-way through the first year for the purposes of reviewing how the transition is going so far, discuss progress made towards the agreed upon priorities, and understand the impact of challenges and other opportunities that have arisen during the first six months. The final practice is the evaluation of the performance of the new president at the completion of the first year of service to include measurement of progress towards priorities set forth at the initial board-president retreat and the institution's strategic plan, a review of challenges and opportunities that occurred during the year and how the president and the institution responded, the provision of feedback to the president of priorities or goals that the board would like to see additional focus on going forward, and to establish the priorities and goals for the future (Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray, 2020).

The five specific activities as part of the onboarding model created by Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020) can be directly related to one or more of the seven onboarding program objectives and/or within one of the five causes of derailment identified previously in Chapter Three by this author through a review of relevant academic and practitioner literature. Table 10 summarizes the five actions and links them to the onboarding components and/or causes of derailment previously identified by the author in Chapter Three. The sequence numbers in Table 10 are used in the matrix developed later in this chapter.

Table 10. ACCT Transition Action and Linkage to Cause of Derailment and Onboarding Objective

ACCT Transition Action	Link to Author's Causes of Derailment (CD) or Onboarding Objective (OO) Category
ACCT-1 Hold a Board/CEO retreat	• CD – Mismatched Expectations • CD – Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
ACCT-2 Create communication and transition plans	• CD - Cultural Misunderstanding • CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO – Orientation • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
ACCT-3 Create a professional development plan	• CD - Lack of Resources • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Training and Executive Coaching • OO - Work/Life Balance
ACCT-4 Review the transition halfway through the first year	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • CD - Lack of Resources • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
ACCT-5 Evaluate the CEO at the completion of the first year	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • CD - Lack of Resources • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Training and Executive Coaching

Source: Adapted from Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020)

Practical Executive Onboarding Model from Office of Personnel Management

As defined by the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) (2011), executive onboarding "is a way of acquiring, accommodating, assimilating, and accelerating new leaders into the organizational culture and business" (p. 21). OPM (2011) developed an executive onboarding model for federal agencies to use when bringing in new leaders in the publication *Hit the Ground Running: Establishing A Model Executive Onboarding Program*. The model indicates a need for involvement in the program by senior leadership, development of objectives for the program, leadership development for the new executive, learning opportunities in multiple formats and at multiple times, a timeline of approximately twelve months, accountability to assure completion, evaluation of the program's results and outcomes, and support of the new executive's work/life balance including support of the executive's family when or if they are part of a relocation (OPM, 2011). OPM (2011) provided a list of key onboarding goals and purposes to be included when developing an executive onboarding program along with suggested tasks to accomplish that purpose that are denoted by a suggested timeline with six time periods. The six time periods are pre-board, day one/week one, first 30 days, first 90 days, six to nine months, and one year (OPM, 2011). Table 11 provides a listing of the onboarding goals and purposes as defined by OPM (2011) in their executive onboarding model and a sampling of the suggested tasks. The onboarding goals and purposes along with their representative tasks included in the OPM model can be directly related to one or more of the seven onboarding program objectives and/or within one of the five causes of derailment identified previously in Chapter Three by this author through a review of relevant academic and

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practitioner literature. The sequence numbers in Table 11 are used in the matrix developed later

in this chapter.

Table 11. Office of Personnel Management Onboarding Goals and Purposes and Linkage to Cause of Derailment and Onboarding Objective

ONBOARDING GOAL AND PURPOSE	EXAMPLES OF TASKS	LINK TO AUTHOR'S CAUSES OF DERAILMENT (CD) OR ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE (OO) CATEGORY
OPM-1 Preboard Prepare for the executive's arrival in order to ensure a successful entrance to the organization	• Create a list of key stakeholders • Assign a mentor and a coach • Schedule any required training needed	• CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Orientation • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
OPM-2 Day 1/Week 1 Introduce the new executive to senior leadership and acclimate him/her to the organization to help the new executive understand pitfalls and critical issues	• Introduction to and meetings with direct reports, senior leaders, and staff • Begin to schedule introductory calls/meetings with key stakeholders • Hold an executive briefing including topics of organizational history and culture, current issues needing attention, brief introduction to key systems and procedures • Provide resources, time, and tools to accomplish assigned onboarding tasks	• CD - Cultural Misunderstanding • CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • CD - Lack of Resources • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
OPM-3 First 30 Days Begin building relationships and partnerships and establish roles and responsibilities so there is a clear understanding of expectations regarding performance, development, and ethical behavior	• Formal feedback session with executive's supervisor (e.g., Board of Trustees) to finalize performance objectives • Facilitate networking opportunities for the executive • Gather feedback from the executive on their experience in the first 30 days • Provide resources, time, and tools to accomplish assigned onboarding tasks	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • CD - Lack of Resources • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships

ONBOARDING GOAL AND PURPOSE	EXAMPLES OF TASKS	LINK TO AUTHOR'S CAUSES OF DERAILMENT (CD) OR ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE (OO) CATEGORY
OPM-4 First 90 Days Continue to set the path for success by providing opportunities to build competence in the expected job duties, to gather feedback from stakeholders via open discussion, and to provide feedback on three-month performance.	• Identify professional development needs • Review performance objectives with manager or other individual the executive reports to • Provide resources, time, and tools to accomplish assigned onboarding tasks	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • CD - Lack of Resources • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
OPM-5 6-9 Months Provide opportunities to give guidance and feedback to the new executive to help ensure continued success and see longevity with the organization	• Create leadership development plan • Provide resources, time, and tools to accomplish assigned onboarding tasks • Continue meetings with coach or mentor to reflect on role and experiences	• CD - Lack of Resources • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
OPM-6 1 Year Observe and provide feedback on executive's performance and development and understand executive's goals and desires so s/he remains engaged in advancing the mission of the organization	• Develop executive's plan for long-term success in the organization • Complete a leadership assessment process in addition to a regular annual performance review • Get feedback from the executive on their first-year experience • Provide resources, time, and tools to accomplish assigned onboarding tasks	• CD - Lack of Resources • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Training and Executive Coaching

Source: Adapted from OPM, 2011

Executive Onboarding Program from Business World Case Study

Bauer (2010) developed a summary list of best practices associated with the Four Cs (compliance, clarification, culture, connection) Model of onboarding and also provided a real-world example of some of the best practices in action. Bauer (2010) reviewed Conger and

Fishel's (2007) case study of Bank of America's executive onboarding processes and created a table (repeated below) summarizing the onboarding tool or best practice implemented and the reason that particular practice is used in Bank of America's program. The primary purposes of an effectively designed executive onboarding program, as observed by Conger and Fishel (2007) in their study of executive onboarding in use by Bank of America, are to reduce the likelihood of the new executive derailing, provide opportunities for the new executive to achieve performance results more quickly, and provide a smooth transition and socialization experience for the incoming leader. An executive onboarding program achieves these purposes by "helping them to rapidly acquire an understanding of the business environment, socializing them into the organizations culture and politics, building a network of critical relationships, and familiarizing them with the operating dynamics of the executive team" (Conger and Fishel, 2007, p. 444). Table 12 provides the onboarding tools, or best practices, present in the design of Bank of America's executive onboarding program and the reason for including the tool or practice in the program as noted by Bauer (2010) and Conger and Fishel (2007) in the first two columns. The seven onboarding practices and their purposes as noted by Bauer (2010) and Conger and Fishel (2007) can be directly related to one or more of the seven onboarding program objectives and/or within one of the five causes of derailment identified previously in Chapter Three by this author through a review of relevant academic and practitioner literature. The sequence numbers in Table 12 are used in the matrix developed later in this chapter.

Table 12. Bank of America Executive Onboarding Program Practices and Linkage to Cause of Derailment and Onboarding Objective

ONBOARDING PRACTICE AND TIMING	PURPOSE	LINK TO AUTHOR'S CAUSES OF DERAILMENT (CD) OR ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE (OO) CATEGORY
CF-1 Formal Orientation Program – first day in the new role	Educate executive on the business, history, culture, and values	• CD - Cultural Misunderstanding • OO – Orientation • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture
CF-2 Written Onboarding Plan – provided during first week on the job	Help the executive understand, organize, and prioritize the executive onboarding process	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • OO - Orientation • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback
CF-3 Stakeholder Meetings and periodic Check-Ins – initial meetings within first two months and check-in meetings during months three and four	Provide opportunity to set expectations, share information, note potential problems, and develop solutions	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
CF-4 Leadership Tools – during the first week on the job	Educate new executive about the leadership framework of Bank of America	• CD - Cultural Misunderstanding • CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Provide Thorough Knowledge of Institutional Culture • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships • OO - Training and Executive Coaching
CF-5 Leader-Team Integration Opportunities – during the second and third month	Enhance the development of relationships with the new leader's executive team	• CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships

ONBOARDING PRACTICE AND TIMING	PURPOSE	LINK TO AUTHOR'S CAUSES OF DERAILMENT (CD) OR ONBOARDING OBJECTIVE (OO) CATEGORY
CF-6 Peer Integration and Executive Networking – initial meetings during months two and three and forums held quarterly thereafter	Provide opportunities for executive to network and build relationships with colleagues and executive team	• CD - Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships
CF-7 360 Degree Feedback – takes place after 6 months on the job	Provide feedback to the new executive on key goal performance and leadership competencies from perspective of stakeholders	• CD - Mismatched Expectations • CD – Inability to Develop Effective Relationships • CD - Lack of Training and Development • OO - Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback • OO - Confirm Expectations, Goals, and Responsibilities • OO - Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships • OO - Training and Executive Coaching

Source: Adapted from Bauer, 2010 and Conger and Fishel, 2007

PREVIOUS RESEARCHER RECOMMENDED ONBOARDING ACTIVITIES LINKED TO THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT ONBOARDING MATRIX

Aspen Institute (2017), AACC and ACCT (2018), Wakefield, Allen, Victor, and Gray (2020), OPM (2011), Conger and Fishel (2007), and Bauer (2010) all developed recommended practices, suggested activities, transition actions, proposed onboarding steps, onboarding goals and purposes, and program practices. As depicted in Tables 7 through 11, the author made connections between these activities, steps, practices, etc. and the author's onboarding objectives and causes of derailment likely to be impacted using the definitions, descriptions, or examples provided by each of the researchers. The intersection points of the onboarding objectives achieved and the causes of derailment avoided as a result of the recommended practices, suggested activities, transition actions, proposed onboarding steps, onboarding goals and

purposes, and program practices put forth by the researchers as noted in Tables 7 through 11 are

presented in the version of the New Community College Onboarding Matrix shown below.

Table 13: New Community College President Onboarding Matrix with Previous Researcher Activities Plotted

	Mismatched Expectations	Cultural Misunderstanding	Inability to Develop Effective Relationships	Lack of Resources	Lack of Training and Development
Orientation	AACC/ACCT-1	ACCT-2 CF-1		AACC/ACCT-5 CF-2	
Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback	ACCT-1 ACCT-4 ACCT-5 AspenGB-3 AspenGB-4 AACC/ACCT-1 CF-7 CF-3 OPM-3	ACCT-5 AspenGB-4	ACCT-5 AspenGB-4 CF-7	ACCT-5 AspenGB-4 AACC/ACCT-5 AACC/ACCT-6 OPM-6 OPM-5	ACCT-4 ACCT-5 AspenGB-4 AACC/ACCT-3 AACC/ACCT-6 OPM-6 OPM-5
Confirm expectations, goals, and responsi-bilities	ACCT-1 ACCT-4 ACCT-5 Aspen-3 AspenGB-3 AACC/ACCT-1 CF-7 CF-3 OPM-4 OPM-3 OPM-2		CF-3	ACCT-3 Aspen-3 AspenGB-3 AACC/ACCT-5	
Provide thorough knowledge of institutional culture		ACCT-2 Aspen-2 AspenGB-1 AACC/ACCT-1 AACC/ACCT-2 CF-1 OPM-2	CF-4	AACC/ACCT-5	

	Mismatched Expectations	Cultural Misunderstanding	Inability to Develop Effective Relationships	Lack of Resources	Lack of Training and Development
Provide ample opportunity to establish and build internal and external relationships		ACCT-2	ACCT-1 ACCT-2 Aspen-1 Aspen-5 AspenGB-2 AspenGB-3 AACC/ACCT-1 AACC/ACCT-2 AACC/ACCT-4 CF-6 CF-5 OPM-3 OPM-2	AACC/ACCT-5 AACC/ACCT-4	
Training and executive coaching	ACCT-5 AspenGB-4			AACC/ACCT-3 AACC/ACCT-5 OPM-4	ACCT-3 ACCT-4 Aspen-4 AACC/ACCT-3 CF-7 CF-4 OPM-4
Work/Life Balance				AACC/ACCT-5	ACCT-3 Aspen-6 Aspen-7 AACC/ACCT-3

Matrix Key
Additional details for all items noted above can be found in the following tables:

This version of the New Community College President Onboarding Matrix can be used by governing boards and new presidents to look for examples of existing onboarding activities in the current literature that fit the circumstances of the transition they are, or soon will be, experiencing. The parties can use the activities noted in the matrix as they are, or they can use these activities developed by other researchers as a starting point for conversation to create their own version of the activity. In the next chapter, the implications of the New Community College President Onboarding Matrix will be discussed.

When analyzing the data and developing the five causes of executive derailment, the affinity diagraming exercise resulted in the largest number of common findings in the categories of ineffective relationships and cultural clash which suggests that these two categories are of utmost importance to address for new executive leaders. When analyzing the data and developing the seven objectives of onboarding programs, the affinity diagramming exercise resulted in the largest number of common findings in the objectives of Engage, Empower, and Feedback; Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships; and Training and Executive Coaching which suggests that these three objectives receive significant consideration in the new president's onboarding process. Therefore, it should not be surprising to see the intersection point on the onboarding matrix with the largest number of activities, steps, practices, etc. is where the onboarding objective of Provide Ample Opportunity to Establish and Build Internal and External Relationships intersects with the cause of derailment of Inability to Develop Effective Relationships. Similarly, the onboarding objective category of Engage, Empower, Provide Feedback has the largest total number of potential activities to be considered of any of the seven onboarding objectives.

SUMMARY

The New Community College President Onboarding Matrix presented in this chapter is presented as a tool that can provide a framework for governing boards and newly hired community college presidents to discuss development of a transition plan. The matrix provides a way to connect the objectives of an executive onboarding program with the potential causes that a new executive might fail in their first year, or derail. The connection being to develop activities that accomplish an objective of an onboarding program while at the same time make it less likely for one of the causes of executive derailment to occur. Two versions of the matrix are provided. The first is a blank matrix showing the connections between the onboarding objectives and the causes of derailment. The second version of the matrix is filled in with activities, recommendations, and best practices from academic and practitioner literature that the author has connected to the onboarding objective and cause of derailment intersection points on the matrix that appear most likely to be impacted by the activity, recommendation, or best practice. The blank matrix provides an opportunity for a governing board and new president to discuss which intersection points on the matrix are the most important given the current operating environment of their institution. The second version of the matrix is a further resource that provides recommended activities and best practices in existing literature expected to have an impact on each intersection point. These recommended activities and best practices can be used as written and can also be modified to fit the circumstances of the institution. The next chapter will discuss the implications of the New Community College President Onboarding matrix and provide thoughts for future directions of research in this area.

CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

<small>USING THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT ONBOARDING MATRIX</small>

The matrix presented in Chapter Five provides a framework for governing boards and newly hired presidents to have informed discussions about developing an onboarding plan for the new president. The matrix is not intended to imply that any of the specific examples of activities provided by other researchers must be undertaken nor that onboarding or transition activities must be conducted in a specific step-by-step order. Together, the parties can make decisions about onboarding activities and practices that will be most impactful by selecting activities that land in the most intersection boxes on the matrix or land in the intersection boxes that the board and new president have determined are most important.

Each presidential transition at an institution is unique based on the operational circumstances of the institution at that point in time and governing boards and new presidents should use the matrix as a tool for dialogue to develop an onboarding plan and use what is relevant from the matrix based on their circumstances. The blank version of the matrix (Figure 2) allows governing boards and new presidents to have discussions regarding the potential causes of executive derailment and they can assess how the circumstances at their institution may make a cause of derailment more or less likely to happen. They are also able to have discussions about which onboarding objectives are most important to achieve based, again, on the circumstances of their institution. From these conversations, the governing board and the president can jointly develop an onboarding plan to address their primary concerns and then plot the activities on the matrix to document the onboarding plan.

The version of the matrix in which the recommended practices from the business world case study, the government sector model, AACC, ACCT, and the Aspen Institute have been plotted (Table 13) can be used by governing boards and new presidents to look for ideas of onboarding activities either in place of or supplementing activities they may create. Based on the circumstances of the institution and the upcoming presidential transition, there may be a particular intersection point of the matrix that represents an important onboarding objective the parties want to achieve and a cause of executive derailment that is a concern of the parties that they wish to prevent or significantly diminish the likelihood of. That intersection point will contain references to existing activities or practices developed by other researchers that are believed to impact the onboarding objective and the cause of derailment at that intersection point.

LIMITATIONS OF THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT ONBOARDING MATRIX

This dissertation is a meta-analysis of existing academic and practitioner literature to design a framework that governing boards and their newly hired presidents of community colleges can use as a tool for dialogue in the development of an onboarding or transition plan. This framework is an early foray into the small, but growing, body of literature discussing community college president onboarding or transition planning. The framework does not equate or correlate a new president's onboarding or transition plan with the potential success or struggles of the new president or the institution during or after the transition.

While it is important to review the AACC Focus Areas for presidents and the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream's five core qualities of a president in the development of an onboarding program, the matrix does not make a direct correlation to these traits and characteristics. These traits and characteristics will have been an important tool used by the

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governing board in the search process to hire the new president. In addition, the focus areas and core qualities will be critical tools used in the creation of a training and professional development plan for the new president as part of the onboarding program. Training and professional development is an onboarding objective that has been included in the matrix.

The focus of this dissertation is the development of an onboarding matrix for governing boards and new presidents to consider onboarding activities rather than creating an assessment of leadership traits and characteristics or a development plan for leadership traits and characteristics. An objective of an onboarding program is training and executive coaching, and a potential cause of derailment is a lack of training and development. Should a governing board and new president define one of the focus areas or core competencies as a development need, a separate plan for development could be created. Further, these traits and characteristics develop on a continuum during a president's career and onboarding activities and programs developed through the use of this matrix occur primarily during the first year of the new president's tenure.

This matrix does not define the sequencing of when the onboarding activities are best suited to take place during the onboarding process, nor does it recommend a specific length of time for the onboarding program. The circumstances of each new presidential onboarding and what each governing board and new president deem to be most important in their individual onboarding process are likely to be different and this uniqueness does not lend itself to adherence to a specific timeline or sequence of events.

Similarly, this matrix does not provide a prescribed list or a recommended list of onboarding activities from the practices identified in existing research. The matrix is intended to facilitate discussion between the governing board and the newly hired president and to allow the

two parties to jointly develop onboarding activities to address their particular concerns and circumstances.

As noted previously in this chapter, the matrix developed in this dissertation is intended to serve as a framework that governing boards and their newly hired presidents of community colleges can use as a tool for dialogue in the development of an onboarding or transition plan. With the development of a framework for onboarding of a new community college president, future research will be necessary to validate the components of the framework as well as the impact of community college presidential onboarding on the success of the new president. Additional research to understand to the impact of personal characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, for example) of the new president on the onboarding and transition plan will be crucial to understanding how the framework might be used and adapted to help in the onboarding of an increasingly diverse pool of community college presidents. Similarly, additional research to understand the impact of institutional characteristics on the onboarding and transition of a new president will also be crucial to understanding how the framework might be used and adapted. For example, should the onboarding and transition plan for a new community college president be different if the community college is a single campus rural community college district or a large, multi-college urban community college district, if the district used the services of a professional search firm to assist in the hiring of the new president, or if the district has an independent governing board or is governed as part of a larger state system.

AACC focus areas and the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream core qualities provide a thorough discussion and list of crucial traits and characteristics for a community college president to have and continue to develop during their career to be successful. Further

research could be done to determine if a correlation exists between the focus areas and core qualities and the likelihood of one of the causes of derailment to occur. If so, the correlation could be used to assist governing boards and new presidents in narrowing their focus on specific areas of the New Community College President Onboarding Matrix when designing onboarding activities.

Additional research to determine if the timing or sequencing of onboarding activities has an impact on the success of a new community college president onboarding program would be beneficial and add additional information to the conversation generated between governing boards and new presidents using the New Community College President Onboarding Matrix.

CONCLUSION

While executive onboarding has been used in the business and government sector, it is only recently gaining attention and traction in community college presidential transitions. Given the impact and significance of a presidential transition on a community college, it is important for governing boards and new presidents to have a framework for discussing and developing an onboarding program. Further study of the effectiveness of executive onboarding in higher education, and in community colleges in particular, should be explored to continue developing a body of evidence as to why it is a crucial element of a presidential transition.

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