PREPARING FOR GOVERNANCE: ORIENTATION STRATEGIES OF ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

by

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ABSTRACT

This research focused on gaining insight into orientation programs for trustee members at Illinois community colleges for the purpose of developing their skills as governance leaders. Orientation programs inform and prepare new trustees to function in board meetings, making financial and strategic decisions for their community college. In Illinois, trustees are elected and represent their constituency as stewards of that public trust and typically do not have prior experience with higher education systems or governance. The purpose of this study is to identify the content and successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body.

This qualitative case study employed purposeful sampling with multiple data sources used for a robust insight of the study purpose. The findings reveal Illinois community colleges vary in the time allocated to board orientation and in the depth to which these programs are able to delve. All colleges in the study place value on conducting board orientation programs, and most conduct a single session in a lecture format. The volume of information as revealed in orientation documents that new trustees are expected to process in a short time is overwhelming, delaying the trustees' ability to function at a high level until their second or third board meeting.

As a result of the findings, the Seiler Transformational Board Orientation Model is presented. The model guides orientation in trustee-centered learning to develop governing potential. The model recommends conducting orientation in a multiple-session format throughout the year, adding meaning to the information by connecting the orientation to the board calendar. Implementing this model can assist the community college board liaison to better prepare trustees for their governance role as they lead community colleges through the ever-changing landscape of higher education.

KEY WORDS: Community college, board of trustees, governance, orientation

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Richard, without whose continued love and support I could not have completed this program. Taking this journey with you has strengthened our relationship in many ways: renewing the wonder we first had in each other; as a catalyst for deep, honest conversations; and reinforcing the trust necessary to a lasting relationship. We have been by each other's sides throughout this entire process, providing words of encouragement and motivation to see it through to the end. You have allowed me to follow my dreams and to grow into the person I am today. I will be forever grateful for you.

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INTRODUCTION

The boards of trustees for community college are the stewards of their institutions and are responsible for guiding those institutions both strategically and financially. According to Cindra J. Smith (2000), a major part of their fiduciary responsibility is to hire and assess an institutional president to lead and direct the administration and operations of the college. Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (2005) acknowledged that the official responsibilities of a nonprofit board are episodic and cyclical in nature, limitingly rewarding due to their unsatisfying oversight function, and undemanding in their lack of meaningful engagement. Strategically, trustees determine and support the direction the institution takes toward student success and completion initiatives, while maintaining a focus on the mission of community colleges.

Whether new or seasoned, all trustees are expected to be prepared for the breadth and depth of responsibilities they have accepted. This includes fully understanding the issues that impact their community college, being responsive and responsible to the constituencies they serve, comprehending the ramifications of their decisions and non-decisions, and advocating for and representing their institution to the world outside their institution (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [AGB], 2010). The higher education environment facing community college trustees today has become more complex and difficult to lead confidently even for seasoned trustees, let alone new trustees to the board. In recent years, accountability has become a major focus for many stakeholders and therefore has become an expectation for governing boards. Smith (2000) referenced "the trends toward greater accountability and use of performance standards at the federal and state levels" (p. 141), which impact the functions of community colleges across the country. Students and their families expect their tax and tuition dollars to be used responsibly, so government bodies need to demonstrate that they are allocating those tax dollars appropriately. According to Fishman (2017),

> Despite high public appreciation for higher education, state investment has decreased by over $1 billion over the past decade . . . the greatest burden has fallen on students and families, who increasingly bear significant upfront expenses once school starts and face costly loan payments upon leaving school. (p. 11)

Community colleges in the state of Illinois face even greater challenges due to the state budget crisis, which will negatively impact these institutions for years to come. Trustees of community college boards must understand what it means to be a member of a board and be willing to function within that construct. To achieve this understanding, orientation programs need to recognize trustees as adult learners and implement andragogical practices to meet their learning needs. Connecting orientation programs to adult learner motivations will better fulfill the expectations of the participating trustees as they strive to become effective governance leaders.

Given the turbulent times in which community colleges must now function, there is a need for appropriate onboarding and orientation processes for new trustees that will provide the confidence and content for the decisions they will be facing. New trustees can be prepared and informed stewards for their community colleges by engaging in appropriate training early in their term as a trustee. Trustee educational opportunities exist at the national, state, and institutional levels. The inconsistency of current orientation programs across community colleges in Illinois allows for a varying degree of an understanding of the role as a member of a board of trustees and therefore varying degrees of board performance excellence. The intent of this study is to gain insight into orientation programs for trustee members at Illinois community colleges to appropriately develop their skills through andragogy, to prioritize the function of a trustee as a member of a board in group decision making and generative governance, and to identify effective implementation strategies for board orientation programs.

THE PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to identify the content and the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body.

THE DRIVING QUESTIONS

The driving questions arising from the purpose statement are:

1. How do current orientation programs facilitate trustees' understanding of their function as a board in group decision making and effective governance for their community college?
2. What orientation program implementation strategies are employed by Illinois community colleges to develop their trustees as effective leaders in college governance?
3. How and in what ways do orientation programs for trustees of Illinois community colleges meet their needs as adult learners?

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD OF STUDY

The boards of trustees of Illinois community colleges are transitional in nature. For most of the community colleges in Illinois, seven trustees serve staggered 6-year terms; every odd year, an election takes place for two or three of those seven board seats, according to Illinois State Statute 110 ILCS 805 (Illinois General Assembly, 2017b). Some trustees seek re-election and may face a challenger for their board seat. Other trustees choose not to run for a second term and leave the door open for new board members. A few trustees have remained on their community college board for more than 20 years. This revolving door means that members are at various stages of familiarity and experience with the responsibilities and context of the decisions they will be making. Long-term trustees risk becoming too familiar with the role and take that role for granted, particularly if they have not taken advantage of the professional development opportunities that are offered to maintain their understanding of the ever-evolving higher education environment.

These elected volunteers serve without pay and live in community college districts they are elected to represent. They come from every walk of life and need only to meet a residency requirement in order to run for this office. Obviously, newly elected community college trustees in Illinois do not necessarily come into this position knowing all they need to know about community colleges in general and Illinois community colleges specifically. This lack of knowledge regarding community colleges, the culture of their college and their board, the issues that are important to their constituents, and the questions to ask as they make decisions for the institution creates the conditions for ineffective, uniformed governance of the institution.

The uncertain climate in which Illinois community colleges must now function underlines the need for meaningful orientation processes for all trustees. Regular orientation/reorientation will provide the confidence and context for the decisions they will be facing. New trustees can become prepared and informed stewards for their community colleges by engaging in appropriate training early in their term as a trustee. Current trustees can maintain and refresh their engagement as a trustee through such orientation programs. Supporting this need, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT, 2017) identifies continued trustee training for board effectiveness in its current strategic plan, ACCT Strategic Plan: 2020 Vision.

The higher education environment facing community college trustees today has become more complex and difficult to lead confidently. According to Sullivan & Jordan (2017), “People across the ideological spectrum are worried about the cost of education, skyrocketing debt from student loans and rising inequality in access to quality degrees” (p. 1). AGB & Gallup (2017) stated, “While the tone of public criticism of higher education has sharpened, public understanding about the sector’s legitimate challenges and contributions is often lacking” (p. 2). Community colleges in the state of Illinois face even greater challenges due to the 2-year state budget crisis, which will continue to negatively impact these institutions for years to come. James Bustos (2017) reported on the state budget impasse and the continued decline of state higher education enrollment in Illinois. Without a budget, Illinois was not funding Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants, resulting in more students being unable to cover their higher education costs and then not enrolling. Denham (2017) added, “State funding continues to decline for public higher education—and that’s only when lawmakers bother to pass even some funding” (p. 1).

Perceptions of higher education have been changing over time, particularly around the value proposition, that being whether there is a positive economic impact that results from the increasing financial investment made by students and their families (AGB & Gallup, 2017; Denham, 2017; Sullivan & Jordan, 2017). In response to the public demand for greater accountability of community college boards of trustees, state governments are setting ongoing training requirements and professional organizations are evaluating and updating their training offerings. By evaluating best practices of orientation programs for Illinois community college trustees, Illinois community colleges can implement these practices to intentionally prepare their trustees to lead their community college.

This study provides valuable criteria for further development of orientation programs for Illinois community college trustees. First, the research addresses the adult learning needs of community college trustees and how current community college trustee training programs meet these needs. Additionally, the research provides guidelines for the function of group decision making in the auspice of a board of trustees. Attention is given to difficulties that arise from individuals needing to perform as one unit in decision making, and the factors that develop the trustees as leaders in a generative model are identified. Finally, identification of the strategies essential to effective board governance are identified for implementation through a best-practices model.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

This brief literature review provides the context for the theories used to situate the study and analyze the findings. Identifying the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs requires understanding the mission of community colleges, the responsibilities of trustees in serving their community as community college trustees, and the issues particular to Illinois community college trustees and required training. The theoretical framework for this trustee orientation study includes governance leadership theory, the flipped boardroom model, and adult learning theory.

Serving as a board, decisions are made as a governing body in a group dynamic. Boards, as a whole, are expected to speak with one voice; they should discuss and deliberate issues fully, and once decisions are made, each member is expected to actively support the board decision (AGB, 2010). Therefore, an understanding of group decision making provides the context for trustees as they learn about their role in making group decisions through their orientation programs. Beyond making decisions, boards of trustees are leaders for the community colleges they serve; as such, the governance leadership theory provides the structure for the evaluation of the tenets of group leadership that are inculcated through the orientation process. Strategy implementation of orientation programs provides the process by which trustees internalize their role and its responsibilities. The flipped boardroom model is identified as an effective method of presenting and discussing relevant issues within orientation programs. Since community college trustees are adults, and orientation is a type of training and education, adult learning theory provides the basis for evaluating how current orientation programs meet the learning needs of these adults as they prepare to serve as board members.

Brief History of the Mission of Community Colleges

In 1947, the U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education issued its report, *Higher Education for American Democracy,* which set forth the structure of higher education in the United States that still exists today. Community colleges are the first option in that structure that promoted access. The emphasis was on the need for education beyond high school to meet the needs of industry at that time. To bridge the obstacles to education that existed, the location of these 2-year schools was thought through, as were the funding sources. The need for a technically trained workforce in many of the service industries that did not need 4-year degrees, as well as fulfilling the first 2 years of a 4-year degree, became the expectation for this new level of education throughout the country. The different demographic of community colleges that were already established demonstrated the different needs of these institutions of higher education.

Community colleges were to serve the same social purpose of all institutions of higher education, to provide a means for members of the U.S. democracy to participate fully in the functions of democracy and contribute productively to the fabric of society. Their missions were united in the creation of a means of social advancement. The 1988 report *Building Communities* focused on the mission of community colleges and how it should be refined to solidify the idea of community as both a region served and a climate created to foment productive members of society (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1988). Almost 25 years later, the same drive to provide education existed, and the gauntlet was thrown down to address them in a sustainable model for student success and access. By 2009, the need for accountability and outcomes had become more evident. National initiatives by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the Lumina Foundation, Achieving the Dream, the Ford Foundation, the League for Innovation in the Community College, COMBASE, Jobs for the Future, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation had started to look at data and innovation to address shortcomings by community colleges to retain and graduate students (Forbes & Singleton, 2009). U.S. President Barack Obama challenged community colleges to participate in the American Graduation Initiative (White House, 2009).

The AACC (2010) responded with the College Completion Challenge, a commitment "to increasing the number of community college students completing a degree or other credential by 50%—to 5 million students by the year 2020" (p. 1). The AACC's 2014 implementation guide, *Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation's Future: An Implementation Guide*, reinforces the mission connection of student success to socioeconomic advancement. The connection of community college mission and the promise of socioeconomic advancement is indisputable based on historical documents and higher education organizations and expectations.

Illinois Community Colleges: A Brief History and Their Governance Structure

Research on community college boards of trustees is limited and emergent due primarily to the concept of community colleges being relatively new in the state of Illinois. Aside from Joliet Junior College, community colleges in Illinois have been in existence only since 1961, as created through the Public Community College Act (Illinois General Assembly, 2017b). Until significant data can be accumulated on the boards of those community colleges, particularly in the field of decision making, quantitative data will be difficult to access. This study will add to the structures that allow for further research on Illinois community college boards. Several national organizations have manuals and guidelines for the functioning of boards of higher education institutions, and these documents will enlighten the stated goals of such boards as governing bodies and demonstrate the level of information boards should have access to in order to make responsible decisions for their institutions.

In Illinois community colleges, these decisions are made at public board meetings. As a shared governance organization, the trustees represent their constituency and bring various skills and talents to the work of the board. Presentations, exhibits, recommendations, and resolutions are presented to the board to inform their decisions. Members of the community college are responsible for gathering and presenting the information at these meetings. It is necessary that the time spent on each topic is used constructively. Based on the various levels of engagement present in a seven-person board, the critical information must be presented in the manner that best communicates the information to the board in the way they need that information.

Governance Leadership Theory

Making decisions as a group is different from making individual decisions and is prone to group dynamic problems that result in poor decision making. Bass (1983) noted that organizational decision making is the most important role of organizational life. Certain types of group decisions, like board decisions, have formal rules about determining consensus (French, Maule, & Papamichail, 2009). Groups can be both positive and negative influences on decisions. Groupthink, a decision made based on what members believe other members want, occurs when a group has high cohesiveness, insularity, a dominant leader, lack of information, poor evaluation procedures, and low confidence to alternatives contrary to the leader’s preference (Janis, 1972), whereas French et al. offered that groups make better decisions than solo decisions because of the greater knowledge available by participants, an increase in participant motivation, a synergy that increases idea generation, and increased accountability with less ambiguity.

Boards can take their decision making and governing to the level of high performance through the implementation of the governance leadership theory. Chait et al.’s (2005) governance as leadership model establishes the triumvirate of fiduciary, strategic, and generative types of governing as essential for effective governance. The utilization of intellectual, reputational, political, and social forms of board capital becomes necessary to accomplish the work of the board in this model. This next level governing and decision making will be imperative as community college boards address the need to become innovative in meeting the challenges of the current academic climate.

Orientation Implementation Strategies and Flipped Boardroom

Strategy implementation requires an awareness of the people, resources, structure, systems, and culture involved in that strategy (Olsen, 2017). Maintaining the connections and interrelationships between the stakeholders of the strategy is necessary to sustain the implementation (Brinkschroeder, 2014). Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) conducted a thorough evaluation of strategy implementation to identify best practices and concluded that implementation takes many forms, depending on the organization, but should be simple, communicated and coordinated properly, and with intentional follow through. Marabella (2007) emphasized the understanding of the board role as essential to board orientations for nonprofit organizations.

Community college boards of trustees have many resources to guide the development of their orientation processes. The institution itself has its own process. Other colleges have programs that can be shared. States often have legal expectations for specific trustee training, and state organizations have recommended practices for board orientation and training. National organizations such as the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), American Association of

Community Colleges (AACC), American Council on Education (ACE), and The Aspen Institute offer guidelines and sources for orientation, education, and governance training. Combining these practices and processes will provide a guideline for identifying content, delivery, and other factors. Taking a cue from the flipped classroom, Cathy Trower (2015) flipped the boardroom and established a functional method for trustees to process information and come to meetings ready to discuss and actively engage topics.

Adult Learning Theory

Trustees come to the position usually with little experience with community colleges and the governance structure they operate under. Zeig, Baldwin, and Wilbur (2017) indicated that fewer than 15% of trustees have education sector experience, resulting in a learning curve that is steep in the face of increasingly complex challenges for higher education. O'Banion (2018) asserted: "The majority of community college trustees are exceptional community leaders, elected and appointed to champion the community college mission for the community and the students they represent" (p. 1). But community college boards are not like corporate boards; the shared governance environment slows down decision making and community college boards cannot pivot as easily as corporate boards when circumstances require a shift in direction or action. Trustees vary in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, with board orientations typically providing too much information in a short amount of time and little time to process that information (Zeig et al., 2017). This brief, intense on-boarding training does not meet the needs of these adult learners.

An Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) survey indicated the average trustee to be over the age of 50 and a business professional or manager (Madsen, 1997). AGB's (2016) recent data show that more than 70% of trustees serving public institutions across the United States are 50 years old or more. Adults learn differently than small children, as demonstrated by Knowles in his theory of andragogy. According to Malcolm Knowles' theory (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015), adults have a need to know, have a learner's self-concept, bring life experiences to their educational experience, are ready to learn, have an orientation to learning, and are self-motivated. It is further explained by Knowles et al. that andragogy is a transactional model of learning that addresses the learning situation and correlates to Vroom's (1995) expectancy theory, in that the learning motivation of adults is connected to their expectancy, instrumentality, and valence of the learning experience. Eckel and Trower (2017) emphasized that effective boards need to have curiosity, the need to know, in Knowles' terms, and as accomplished professionals, they have learned how to ask the impactful questions that lead to better decision making. This decision making must be done in the context of their role as the financially responsible steward of taxpayers' trust. Trustees need to be given opportunities to learn and know the environment they are governing.

Summary

By implementing these three frames to evaluate and assess the current practices, the aspects that are effective in preparing trustees for their role on an Illinois community college board are identified. Intentional orientation programs are necessary to ensure that the trustees of the community college are prepared to govern their institution. The information derived from this study will provide valuable information to community college board liaisons as they evaluate and implement their orientation processes. The principles of andragogy inform the trustee orientation process directed toward adult learners. The principles of group decision making and governance leadership lead the orientation structure. Implementation strategies inform the content and format of the orientation process.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study uses the qualitative inquiry through a case study in the interpretive paradigm, which is a methodological approach that is systematic and logical. This approach provides an audit trail that can be used to authenticate processes used to collect and analyze data. The research design serves as the strategy to identify the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to successfully serve their institutions as effective leaders. With research on community college boards in general being limited, a paradigm that allows for first-hand observation will assist in broadening this field. For this study, Illinois community college board liaisons were surveyed about their colleges' orientation process, respecting the context and the situational nature of those experiences for each interviewee.

Case Study Methodology

In order to gather the data for this qualitative research, case study methodology was determined to be the most appropriate. Stake (1995) and Yin (2016) both approached case study research through constructivism, which is predicated on socially constructed reality with the subject providing meaning to their own experiences. This study specifically surveyed board liaisons about their experiential realities with their orientation programs and their boards. The intent was to discover what meaning they make of those experiences to inform a best-practices summation. Yin defined case study research as a way to contextually investigate a contemporary phenomenon. Although community college boards have existed since the 1900s, the focus of this study was to identify the current modes and means of providing orientation programming to boards to prepare them to make governance decisions about today's community college issues, problems, and initiatives. Case study research, as defined by Creswell (2013), is a qualitative approach of a bounded system using multiple sources of information for data collection and resulting in a report of the case description and themes. Case study methodology provides the method for exploring a phenomenon for which little research exists and therefore is the method most appropriate for this study.

Site Selection and Participants

This study explored the implementation strategies of Illinois community college trustee orientation programs to develop as effective governing boards. Based on the purpose statement, this study was bounded by Illinois community colleges, of which there are 37 independent institutions. Community colleges that are part of a system are not included because their orientation processes differ from those of independent community colleges. This pool of potential survey participants was therefore manageable in quantity and time expectations. Participants for the study were currently serving as board liaisons/executive assistants who are responsible for board of trustee coordination and communication for their community college. This established the typical sample of survey participants for this study. Purposeful sampling was used for this research. For a qualitative case study, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 96).

Data Collection

This study used a variety of data collection methods to gather relevant information, including an online survey, semistructured interviews, field notes, and institutional documents. Using a variety of data sources strengthens the validity and rigor of this case study.

Online surveys were used to collect baseline and contextual demographic information from participants' colleges and information about their orientation programs. In addition, the process survey demographics were used to identify potential candidates for individual, semistructured interviews, which were sorted by pre-established peer groups in order to maximize the sample.

The semistructured interview was the primary method of data collection as it allows for open, two-way conversational dialogue that reveals more objective data. This also allows for follow-up questions for clarity and deeper exploration of issues. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasized that the semistructured interview "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to the new ideas on the topic" (p. 111).

Field notes were recorded immediately following each semistructured interview to assure recollections were fresh. Two types of field notes were used for the study, observational and reflective. The observational field notes provided details on the setting and context in which the interviews were conducted. The reflective field notes captured researcher feelings, reactions, and critical reflections throughout the data collection process.

Institutional orientation documents provided by the board liaisons were evaluated with regard to frequency, modality, and content (format and substance) of the orientation programs.

The use of a survey, semistructured interview, field notes, and documents allowed for the iterative cycle of data collection whereby what is discovered in one data source impacts the development of the other data collection processes, which improves the depth and understanding of the study (Sargeant, 2012). Further, multiple data sources added strength to the study through the convergence of the data toward the understanding of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Data Analysis

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a well-organized case study database is essential to deriving meaning from the data collected. Making sense of the data collected in a qualitative case study requires intentional organization and ongoing analysis. Developing the codes and themes though the data analysis is an inductive process. Triangulation strengthens the validity of the data sources, which include survey, semistructured interviews, field notes, and documents.

For this study, case study methodology provides the format to evaluate and assess the topic in a comprehensive and thorough manner. The survey provides preliminary categorization of the current programs. The semistructured interviews allow the liaisons to describe their programs and the programs' effectiveness. The field notes provided additional context and texture to the interviews. The document review established the current frequency, modality, and content of these programs. The systematic coding and analysis of the data revealed emerging patterns and themes. The goal is to present implementation strategies that can be used by community colleges as they facilitate trustee orientation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 introduced the research topic, established the purpose statement and frames for the research, and provided a brief literature review and the design of the study.

Chapter 2 highlights the review of literature as related to implementing orientation strategies for Illinois community colleges through which to view this study and its findings. A brief history of the American community college system, Illinois community colleges, and the need for trustee training are central to this research. The conceptual framework, which forms the foundation for this chapter, is introduced and provides an overview of the three frames: (a) Generative Leadership Theory (Chait et al., 2005), (b) flipped boardroom model (Trower, 2015), and (c) Andragogy Theory (Knowles et al., 2015).

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the qualitative case study research design situated within an interpretive paradigm. A discussion on purposeful sampling and maximum variation is included with the explanation of selection criteria that was used for selection of the study sites and participants. A description of the data collection, analysis procedures, and ethical considerations is also provided. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and a section regarding the researcher as the instrument.

Chapter 4 highlights the data collection process and the data analysis strategies used. The data gleaned from the state surveys and college document assessment is summarized in a series of tables, to facilitate understanding of the data that were gathered and to identify emergent themes.

Chapter 5 continues with analysis of the data collected from multiple sources, lending a holistic perspective. Triangulation of data and information obtained from the state surveys, college documents, and participant interviews identify significant emerging implementation strategies. Analysis of the perspectives and information provided by the interview participants formed the basis for the research findings, conclusions, and implications for further study.

Chapter 6 provides the summary and conclusions of the findings with implications for community college trustee orientation programs. As a result of the findings, the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model is presented. Lastly, recommendations for future research are presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Trustees of Illinois community colleges have a wide variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise, and higher education is typically not one of them. The continuous changes in higher education priorities and strategies coupled with annual changes to the Illinois Public Community College Act set an expectation for all trustees to orient and reorient themselves to their educational landscape. An orientation provides the opportunity for the trustee to gain a better understanding of the organization they will be governing. A trustee needs to understand the context of community colleges within higher education, have a solid overview of their particular college, understand their fiscal responsibilities, know the importance of accreditation to their college and how it maintains its status, and grasp the role of shared governance within their institution and contract negotiations for their constituencies.

A community college board of trustees is dynamically unique from the perspective of the governing body and as an individual on that board. The scope of responsibilities needs to be understood by each trustee in order to avoid overreach into operations. For those serving on Illinois community college boards, trustees are elected members and are beholden to the taxpayers of that district. Serving in an elected position for the independent community colleges in Illinois, trustees need to understand that representative aspect and the fiscal responsibility inherent in a publicly elected position that governs taxing and spending. The board is one unit, and a trustee needs to know how to function within that unit (Boggs, 2006).

To effectively address the need for orientation for community college trustees, it is necessary to define the community colleges by looking at the history of their development and the role they serve in society today. Each state organizes its higher education systems as it deems best to serve that state, which means there are different policies, standards, and expectations that guide the community colleges and their board decisions. Whereas this study focuses on Illinois community college trustees, the Illinois community college structure and policies are also examined to inform the orientation strategies. Within existing trustee organizations and associations, there are various documents that identify essential content for the orientation.

Kervinen (2012) defined orientation as the process of familiarizing new employees with the organization, environment, colleagues, tasks, and procedures. Part-time or short-period workers such as trustees of community college boards are typically expected to be effective in their responsibilities in a short period of time. Planning and implementation of orientation program for trustees need to be comprehensive and efficient while avoiding information overload (Kervinen, 2012). Boggs (2006) recommended that candidates for trustee positions start orientation before they are seated so that they are aware of the expectations ahead of time. The differences between higher education and the corporate world can be difficult to grasp, particularly the amount of time it can take in higher education for decisions to be made (MacTaggart, 2017). According to Masterson (2018), to overcome this steep learning curve, orientation needs to be solid, and the trustee should spend time with faculty and students, be on campus between board meetings, spend time with seasoned board members, have clearly written expectations, have midpoint check-ins, and the orientation should be adjusted along the way for each trustee's needs. Understanding the board role is essential to the orientation process, prevents micromanagement of the institution by the trustees, and clarifies the oversight versus operations functions (ACCT, 2018c).

Effective board orientation creates the synergy for an effective board. To establish the parameters for the evaluation of orientation effectiveness, three frames were chosen based on the three aspects being evaluated: content, context, and modality. The content is guided by group decision making and governance leadership theory; context is structured around the successful orientation implementation strategy of the flipped boardroom concept; and modality is formed through adult learning theory. These result in the Seiler Orientation Model of Effective Governance (Figure 1).

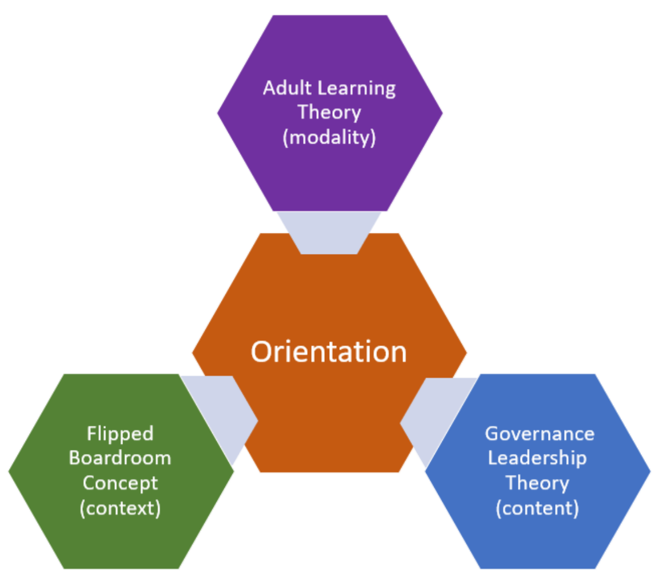

Figure 1. Seiler Orientation Framework for Effective Governance.

HISTORY OF THE MISSION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

This brief history of community colleges in the United States is important for setting the tone and context for community college governance. Community colleges are different from 4-year colleges and universities that serve distinctively different constituencies. Universities are academic and research-focused, attracting students locally and from across the nation, whereas community colleges typically serve those residing in a specific geographic region and are accountable to that constituency and accommodate their offerings to the academic, career, and technical training needs of that community.

Universities were the only option for higher education up to the 20th century, many of which are a result of the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act and the 1887 Hatch Act (Scott, 2018). The second Morrill Act of 1890 provided for what are now called historically black colleges and universities to meet the higher education needs of African Americans in the segregated society. In 1901, the concept of a separate institution to provide the first 2 years of a baccalaureate experience was developed by three notable educators. William Rainey Harper, the first president of the University of Chicago, Alexis Lanage from the University of California, and David Starr Jordan of Stanford University believed that it would benefit universities to offer the first 2 years of undergraduate liberal arts studies at dedicated 2-year institutions (Brint & Karabel, 1989). These institutions were known as junior colleges and later as community colleges. In 1901, University of Chicago President Harper, with Joliet Township High School Superintendent J. Stanley Brown, founded Joliet Junior College in Joliet, Illinois, the first such institution in the nation. Other junior colleges followed. The devastating impact of the

Depression 30 years later necessitated the development of job-training programs at these community-centered institutions to help ease the widespread unemployment.

After World War II, two federal actions were instituted to address obligations to the large numbers of returning military personnel and the social needs in the United States. In 1944, the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights, was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This bill immediately granted veterans unemployment insurance and higher education opportunities, including vocational and on-the-job training, to prepare veterans for civilian jobs (Greenburg, 2008). The number of community colleges increased in response to this expansion of their mission to include offering career programs, technical programs, and developmental coursework for underprepared students (Vaughn, 2006). In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education issued its report *Higher Education for American Democracy* (U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). This document set forth the structure of higher education in the United States that still exists today and outlined the critical role of community colleges in democratizing higher education. The commission recommended establishing a system of public community colleges across the country as a means of providing higher education at a reasonable cost and opening access to higher education to all, including women and people of color.

> The American people should set as their ultimate goal an educational system in which at no level—high school, college, graduate school, or professional school—will a qualified individual in any part of the country encounter an insuperable economic barrier to the attainment of the kind of education suited to his aptitudes and interests. (U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947, p. 36)

The need for a technically trained workforce in many of the service industries that did not require 4-year degrees, as well as fulfilling the first 2 years of a 4-year degree, became the expectation for this new level of education throughout the country. The demands for greater social equality extended to the mission of community college to focus on access and opportunity (Nevarez & Woods, 2010).

During the 1960s, the notion of higher education for all who aspired to attend college took root across the nation. In 1965, the Higher Education Act was passed, which allowed for equal access to higher education through financial aid in the form of guaranteed student loans for those with economic need. During this decade, 2-year colleges were created at an average of one new college per week (Palmer & Katsinas, 2005). Many states passed policies creating the process and funding for new community colleges. This exponential growth of community colleges experienced in the 1960s and 1970s was in part attributable to the value placed on postsecondary credentials and career training for individuals seeking to improve their socioeconomic standing. During the 1970s and 1980s, community colleges provided increased higher education opportunities for baby boomers, defined as those born between 1946 and 1964. These decades also saw the introduction of for-profit 2-year and technical colleges. According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), although community college enrollment growth continued in the 1990s and in early 2000, intense competition for the same students by private for-profit postsecondary institutions was prevalent.

From the colonial days through the start of the 21st century, higher education has been understood as a means to better ends, and community colleges aimed “to provide a port of entry for the underserved” (Thelin, 2011, p. 301). The 1988 report *Building Communities* (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1988) focused on the mission of community colleges and how it should be refined to solidify the idea of community as both a region and a climate in order to foster the development of productive, self-reliant individuals. It established that a community college education had great socioeconomic impact on the individual and society foremost by the number of individuals served; 640 junior colleges enrolled 497,065 college-credit students in 1947, which by 1988 had grown to 1,224 regionally accredited community, technical, and junior colleges enrolling over 5 million college-credit students and 4 million non-credit and continuing education students (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1988).

By 2009, the need for accountability and outcomes had become more evident to meet the challenges of providing education in a sustainable model for student success and access. National initiatives from many directions started looking at data and innovation to address shortcomings by community colleges to retain and graduate students. These organizations included the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the Lumina Foundation, Achieving the Dream, the Ford Foundation, the League for Innovation in the Community College, COMBASE, Jobs for the Future, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (Forbes & Singleton, 2009). U.S. President Barack Obama “placed a strong emphasis on making America’s community colleges stronger, ensuring that they are gateways to economic prosperity and educational opportunities for millions of Americans each year” (White House, 2016) and challenged community colleges to participate in the American Graduation Initiative (White House, 2009, p. 1). The AACC (2010) responded with the College Completion Challenge, a 10-year commitment to increase by 50% the number of completions by community college students of a degree or other credential, which amounted to 5 million additional completions by the year 2020. Without completion, socioeconomic advancement would remain out of reach for the many students who look to community colleges for their higher education needs.

The AACC's 2014 implementation guide, *Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation's Future: An Implementation Guide*, reinforces the mission connection of student success to socioeconomic advancement (AACC, 2014). Overall, community colleges provide the vehicle by which previously disenfranchised groups can develop into contributing members of the increasingly globally competitive workforce and contribute to the public economic and civic good as integral members of their communities, local and national (Forbes & Singleton, 2009). The connection of the community college mission and the promise of socioeconomic advancement is indisputably based on historical documents and the traditions of higher education organizations.

Understanding the history of higher education provides a grounding structure for the governance of community colleges. The decisions that governing bodies of community colleges make are predicated on the history and mission of community colleges in general. Integrating the current issues and data provides the community college's governing body the parameters for the decisions they make within their mission.

ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A BRIEF HISTORY AND THEIR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The governance of community colleges is grounded in its history and bounded by local, state, and federal policies. The decisions that governing bodies of community colleges make are predicated on the history and mission of community colleges in general. Integrating current issues and data provides the community colleges' governing bodies the parameters for the decisions they make within their mission. Community colleges serve their communities by being adaptable and flexible to the needs of that community and providing affordable, quality, accessible education to continue the development of that community. Community colleges are guided in accomplishing their missions by their boards of trustees. Each trustee must have a firm understanding of the mission and governance structure of community colleges in general and their community college specifically in order to govern appropriately.

Community college missions are united toward the creation of a means of social advancement across class divides. Interestingly, the barriers to higher education identified in 1947 are similar to the barriers faced today, that of low-income families and rising educational costs (U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). To bridge the obstacles to education that existed then, the report recommended establishing local and regional 2-year schools that are part of a statewide system and funded by local and state taxes (U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). The increasing diversity of these communities and the further stratification of the class divide necessitates other solutions to address access and completion, including Promise programs and the idea of free college.

The local governing bodies of community colleges are the financial gatekeepers and benchmark setters for ensuring the success of their students. The 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges issued a report in 2012 and set the tone for community colleges to address these issues:

> Recognizing that emerging challenges require unprecedented vision, ingenuity, courage and focus from community colleges, the Commission was asked both to safeguard the fundamental mission of the community college—ensuring that millions of diverse and often underserved students attain a high-quality college education—and to challenge community colleges to imagine a new future for themselves, to ensure the success of our students, our institutions, and our nation. (AACC, 2012, p. v)

This ingenuity is seen in the innovative programs and services that governing bodies are responsible for approving through thorough risk assessment and mission alignment. Both student and institutional success are the responsibility of the governing body in how they fiscally guide their institution and in the success measures they select. The concept of shared governance is unique to higher education. Such structures within each institution provide for the various constituencies to be part of decision making through a recommendation process. Awareness of current and future threats is an essential part of governance, as is preparing the institution for the future by thinking creatively and adapting to the rapidly changing landscape of higher education, including facing the possibility of merging or closing the institution (Berman, 2018).

There are 1,167 community colleges across the United States (AACC, 2019) and each of the 50 states has its own structure and policies by which their higher education institutions are governed. These vary from statewide systems, to regional systems, to independent colleges; states with and without state associations; independent from or systemized with their universities (ACCT, 2014, 2019; Friedel, Killacky, Miller, & Katsinas, 2014; McGuiness, 2014). These state structures or lack thereof can both facilitate and hinder the adaptability of the college. All community college boards are democratically governed by citizens, whether elected or appointed, who are more likely than not professionals in fields other than education. The governing board provides governance and oversight and is entrusted with the legal, fiduciary, and ethical responsibilities of that governance.

Although Illinois is home to the first junior college in the country, Joliet Junior College, established in 1901, Illinois established its community college system only in 1965. Fifteen other Illinois junior colleges were established in the years after World War II: Kaskaskia, Black Hawk, Danville, the City Colleges of Chicago, Elgin, South Suburban, Illinois Valley, Prairie State, Highland, Rend Lake, Southwestern, Morton, Illinois Eastern, Southeastern, and Spoon River (ICCTA, 2018). The Illinois Public Community College Act was passed July 15, 1965, which includes Illinois Compiled Statutes Chapter 110, Act 805 with related acts as amended through P.A. 1000-1181 (Illinois General Assembly, 2017b). The Community College Act expanded the higher education concept in Illinois and created geographic community college districts, establishing comprehensive community colleges for the state. Comprehensive community colleges are expected to offer programs in baccalaureate, occupational, adult basic, and remedial education; community service activities; and continuing education non-credit offerings.

The 1965 Act regulates the higher education functions of Illinois community colleges. This includes, but is not limited to, the state board, district boards and their election processes, district board meeting requirements, taxation and financial policies, facilities, academics, and labor relations. Each community college district then establishes its own board policy, defining those policies that are designated to the district, such as tuition and board organization. State policies supersede district policy; district policies are supportive of state policies and are specific to the district. These 48 community colleges are designated into peer groups by the Illinois Community College Board, a board that reports to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (see Table 1).

Table 1: *Illinois Community College Peer Groups*

PEER GROUP	COLLEGE NAME
Peer Group I	Carl Sandburg College Shawnee Community College Southeastern Illinois College Spoon River College John Wood Community College
Peer Group II	Danville Area Community College Highland Community College Kaskaskia College Kishwaukee College Rend Lake College Sauk Valley Community College
Peer Group III	Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Illinois Valley Community College Kankakee Community College Lake Land College Lewis & Clark Community College John A. Logan College McHenry County College
Peer Group IV	Black Hawk College Heartland College Illinois Central College Lincoln Land Community College Parkland College Richland Community College Rock Valley College Southwestern Illinois College
Peer Group V	Elgin Community College Morton College Prairie State College South Suburban College Waubonsee Community College

PEER GROUP	COLLEGE NAME
Peer Group VI	City Colleges of Chicago Richard J. Daley College Kennedy-King College Malcolm X College Olive-Harvey College Harry S. Truman College Harold Washington College Wilbur Wright College
Peer Group VII	College of DuPage William Rainey Harper College Joliet Junior College College of Lake County Moraine Valley Community College Oakton Community College Triton College

(ICCB, 2019)

Moreover, trustees of Illinois community college boards must understand what it means to be a member of a board and be willing to function within that construct. “Board members who are elected representatives should be reminded that in the role of board member, they serve the whole institution” (AGB, 2010, p. 31). The development opportunities for new and long-term community college trustees have evolved over time, as has their understanding of their responsibilities. Orientation training for Illinois trustees of community college boards is not required in order for the trustees to serve and is not stated in state statutes 110 ILCS 805 (Illinois General Assembly, 2017b). The board training provided by Illinois community colleges is not standardized and varies in breadth and depth, with some training being superficial and others being extremely thorough. There is some specific training the state does require. These mandated trainings and their statutes are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: *Illinois Statute-Required Community College Board of Trustee Training*

STATE OF ILLINOIS LEGISLATION	TEXT OF LEGISLATION
5 ILCS 120	Open meeting training
5 ILCS 430	Ethics training for all State of Illinois officials and employees
Public Act 99-0692	All trustees elected or appointed after January 1, 2017, to complete 4 hours of ICCB-approved training during their first, third, and fifth years holding office, which must then be certified and submitted to the state

(Illinois General Assembly, 2017b)

This ICCB-approved training statute was in response to the legal issues encountered in 2015-2016 by a large Illinois community college reflecting their lack of trustee training. Procedural mistakes were made due to the trustees' misunderstanding of the Open Meetings Act and of the required prior disclosure of contracts before being voting on in open session (Sanchez, 2017). In not having any standardization or expectations regarding trustee orientation and training, it not reasonable to expect that all participating Illinois community college trustees have the same understanding of their leadership role as a governing board. Community colleges across the nation continue to face issues with trustees that go rogue and do not follow their training to work collectively with their board and college president to resolve questions (Burke, 2020). The onboarding and orientation process for new trustees, learning their own college processes and procedures, is also not standardized across the state as to content and depth with regard to their role as a member of a board.

The Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) does offer resources to guide college and trustees in their governance responsibilities. They provide a new trustee handbook that consolidates fundamental information about Illinois community colleges, trustee responsibilities, and various requirements that all trustees must legally follow (ICCTA, 2019). ICCTA was incorporated as a state association in 1970 for the purpose of communicating information that affects Illinois community colleges, offering educational opportunities for trustees, and as a government advocacy group for community colleges at the state and federal levels. Member colleges pay dues to fund the activities of the association. Trustees of member colleges can be elected by member trustees to the ICCTA board and take an active role in the actions of this organization. Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is an advisory group department under the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) that regulates and monitors the community colleges in Illinois according to state legislation and policies (IBHE, 2019). The IBHE approves community college curriculum, monitors enrollments and success measures, and sets budgets for state disbursements.

In Illinois, the budget crisis of 2016-2018 made supplemental board of trustee training, education, and professional development a low priority for community colleges, especially since most external training is costly because of the registration fees and the travel involved. There are financial ramifications for the college for the training that is now mandated. Although trustees at Illinois community colleges perform their duties without compensation, their incidental expenses are usually covered by the community college, including fees and travel for professional development opportunities.

Serving on a community college board of trustees is a responsibility for which many enter unprepared. Community college boards are not organized or run like other boards of corporations or foundations and are restricted by laws and policies at federal and state levels.

The constituency is the taxpayers of the district who are vocal in their expectations about what is done with their taxes. There are multiple reasons to actively involve the community in the college, including curriculum advisory committees, resources for programs and classes, career information and recruiting, and fundraising. Trustees of community colleges understand that this is what makes their college a vital and respected community organization.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Considering there are more than 1,000 community colleges across the United States, it is not surprising that there are a variety of associations and organizations that serve the community college sector. These organizations provide guidance, best practices, research, lobbying functions, current issues, and a forum to discuss these issues. One area all these organizations do include is trustee education and professional development. Their efforts toward developing and training members of boards of trustees are broad and diverse. These include publications and magazines, conferences, seminars, webinars, institutes, regular meetings, and initiatives. On the national level, there exists the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Aspen Institute, and Association of College Excellence (ACE). For Illinois, there is the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) and the Illinois Community College Presidents Association (ICCPA). Their emphasis on professional development and training indicates the level of need for this information. The opportunities provided by these organizations is best demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3: *Professional Development Resources for Community College Boards of Trustees by Organizations and Associations*

Organization	Website information	Publications	Conference
AGB	X	X	X
ACCT	X	X	X
AACC	X	X	X
Aspen Institute	X	X	
ACE	X	X	
ICCTA	X	X	X
ICCPA		X	

Often, these organizations will identify best practices for governance, discuss governance issues, and guide trustees to resources to make informed decisions. The publications have a variety of forms, including online, magazines, reports, brochures, pamphlets, and books. An article may appear in a number of formats, such as being published online as well as in the organization's magazine. AGB has book series specific to governance roles and responsibilities called Board Basics and Board Essential Series that cover a number of topics, from the president's role, to the board professional's role, to board responsibilities, to new trustee orientation. Other AGB publications share the legislative goals of the organizations for which some organizations pool their resources. AGB and ACCT also provide services to higher education institutions like consulting, retreat facilitation, and specialized conferences.

The purpose of these documents is to provide boards with information to improve their ability and effectiveness as governing bodies. As a shared governance organization, the trustees represent their constituency and bring their various skills and talents to the work of the board.

While professional associations for trustees offer programs, guidelines, and recommendations for trustee orientation and education, there is no impetus to encourage community colleges to partake of these offerings. For example, ACCT offers Governance Leadership Institutes (GLI) for new trustees, which covers 10 topics all new trustees should understand: (1) fundamentals of being an effective trustee, (2) fiduciary responsibilities, (3) trends in higher education, (4) board-CEO relationship, (5) campus safety and security, (6) building relationships with the media, (7) student success, (8) accreditation, (9) diversity and inclusiveness, and (10) board self-assessments (ACCT, 2019). This institute is held every year with an average of 30 trustees attending, often from repeat institutions, and some institutions have never sent trustees to the GLI. AGB offers consulting for reviewing governance policies, practices, and relationships; workshops on board and institutional responsibilities; and long-term options to guide the board's role in institutional academic oversight and degree-completion initiatives. These opportunities have associated costs, which many smaller institutions cannot justify in their budgets.

The Association of Community College Trustees is currently developing Governance by Design "in partnerships with national organizations to facilitate trustee orientation education and training" (ACCT, 2017). These sessions provide an opportunity for trustees to look at the issues facing all community colleges, including the continued trend of decreasing state and federal funding, the increasing need to raise tuition, dual credit reducing demand at the community college, recommendations by state legislators to revamp state higher education structures, the changes that come with a new governor, and federal Department of Education changes that impact community colleges. It is expected that there will be an online component to allow access to all community college trustees.

Professional development for trustees is ongoing and begins with some form of on-boarding or orientation. Ideally, someone interested in serving on a board does some initial work to understand what being a trustee means before they serve on a board. Orientation brings all trustees to the same level of information and hopefully understanding. Serving on a board is not about the individual trustee. It is about the trustees acting as one board; once a decision is made, the members of the board publicly support that unified decision (AGB, 2010). In the same way an individual makes a decision or investigates a problem, a board considers all the possibilities, weighs the potential consequences, and makes a decision that all must the support. Ongoing training and professional development hone their skills and provide venues for understanding the complex issues facing higher education. As the environment continues to change, community college boards need to be ready to meet those challenges and adapt to those changes. Carver (1997) placed emphasis on the trustee's need to think strategically about these issues, stating "successful strategic leadership demands powerful engagement with trusteeship" (p. 212).

Orientation is important to the development of new members. According to Brown (2012), "Citizen governing bodies, like our democracy, must be continually renewed and nurtured, and trustees must work to ensure the board's perpetuity through new trustee orientation, in-service training, board self-evaluation, and periodic retreats" (p. 43). Ingram (2003) provided a guiding handbook for board orientation that addresses public trusteeship and how different this is from a corporate board. He advised setting expectations for trustees early and included a responsibilities list for the board and for the individual trustee. Reed (2017), in a board professional manual, emphasized the need for intentional, well-conceived board structures and practices, including an essential board orientation that provides a smooth transition for novice trustees to become effective board members. Smith (2000) emphasized local trustee orientation to educate new trustees about their policy roles and responsibilities and inform them about their college's history, programs, and culture.

There are common aspects of effective orientation that are identifiable across the professional sources. These are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: *Topics for Board Orientation*

ORIENTATION CATEGORY	TOPICS
Institutional information	History, mission, vision, values, traditions, niche, competitors Strategic planning and challenges Meetings with campus divisions, leaders Shared governance, tenure, unions Faculty curriculum development Tour of campus and facilities
Community colleges	Federal policies State higher education history and structure Accreditation Town-gown relations
Trusteeship	Trustee responsibilities Fiduciary duties, budget and finance Board policy Trustee manual Mentoring

(Compiled from AGB, 2010, 2014; Bornstein, 2006; Cieslak & Mersereau, 2008; Ingram, 2003; Reed, 2017; Smith, 2010)

Placing high priority on well-planned, well-executed orientation programs can make an enormous difference to the effectiveness of the board. Smith (2000) emphasized, "There is much to learn to be an effective trustee. . . . Gaining skills in boardsmanship requires learning what those skills are and using them in daily life" (p. 29). Orientation program design and content will be affected by aspects of the institution and the board culture. The college president and board chair should plan and conduct the orientation and involve key administrators, and this should occur before their first board meeting (Ingram, 2003). Conferences sponsored by state and national associations may include an orientation to trustee roles and responsibilities as well as state and national issues (Smith, 2000). Ongoing trustee education and professional development is essential to maintaining an effective board (AGB, 2014; Reed, 2017), and long-serving trustees should participate periodically in orientation to refresh their knowledge and assure their assumptions are current (AGB, 2014; Bornstein, 2006).

GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP THEORY

A community college board of trustees is a group decision-making body. In group decision-making, each member decides and votes as an individual representing their constituency and then the group acts on that decision as a single unit. Organizational decision making, according to Bass (1983), is an organizational board's most important role. Consensus is determined in formalized ways for group decisions, like board decisions (French et al., 2009). Members of Illinois community college boards need to understand group decision-making theories and strategies, governance within the structures of the Illinois community college framework, and the necessity of critical governance decisions. The effectiveness of community college board of trustee orientation programs to develop their trustees as governance decision makers will be evaluated through the frame of governance leadership theory.

Governance by a board necessitates a thorough understanding of group decision-making theories and strategies. The group dynamic allows for representative decisions and is prone to various problems based on that dynamic, which can result in poor decision making. Group decision making differs from individual decision making, with both positive and negative consequences that result from the group dynamic on decision making. French et al. (2009) offered that better decisions are made by groups than by individuals due to four factors: greater knowledge available based on more participants in the decision-making process, increased participant motivation toward an effective decision, group synergy that elevates idea generation, and more accountability with less ambiguity.

A study by Ahmed and Omotunde (2012) defined various aspects of the decision-making process by groups. By looking at the kinds of decisions, theories of decision making, approach and procedure employed, strategies to making decisions, techniques, and steps to decision making, the complexity of group decision making becomes more evident. These aspects are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: *Group Decision-Making Aspects Based on Ahmed and Omotunde (2012)*

Group Decision-Making Aspect	Group Decision-Making Factor
Kind of decision	Decisions of whether Decisions of which Conditional or contingent decisions
Theories of decision making	Causal decision theory (rational choice) Evidential decision theory (best outcome based) Game theory (strategic) Bayesian theory (probability)

Group Decision-Making Aspect	Group Decision-Making Factor
Approach and procedure employed	Authoritarian (leader makes decision, communicates the decision, and group accepts) Group (group analysis and decision) Automating system (computer automated decisions based on programmed logic)
Strategies to making decisions	Optimizing (choose best option) Satisficing (first satisfactory alternative, small and quick decisions) Maximax (maximizing the maximums, high risk) Maximin (maximizing the minimums, risk averse
Techniques	Decision tree PMI technique Consultation Experience Cost-benefit analysis Simulation Linear programming
Steps to decision making	1) Create a constructive environment 2) Generate potential solutions 3) Evaluate alternatives 4) Choose the best alternative 5) Check your decision 6) Check your decision and move to action

Ahmed and Omotunde (2012) discussed consensus decision making, which involves reaching an agreement with which all participants agree, valuing collaboration, cooperation, participation, and inclusivity, but they cautioned that it may result in a least-common-denominator decision that does not have the best outcome. Two approaches to consensus decision making are the Quaker model (everyone weighs in once before anyone speaks a second time, neutralizing dominant individuals) and CODM (consensus-oriented decision making with seven steps: frame topic, open discussion, identify underlying concerns, collaborative proposal building, choosing a direction, synthesizing a final proposal, and closure).

CODM is similar to the shared governance that exists in higher education and Illinois community colleges by which faculty and staff share in many of the decisions that are made by the college through shared governance committees submitting recommendations.

Defective or ineffective group decision making has mechanisms or symptoms that are identifiable. Ahmed and Omotunde (2012) and Janis (1982) have identified similar factors that lead to ineffective decision making, as demonstrated in Table 6.

Table 6: *Factors in Ineffective Group Decision Making*

AHMED & OMOTUNDE MECHANISMS OF BAD DECISION-MAKING	JANIS SYMPTOMS OF DEFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING
1) Not having a sufficient number of alternatives	1) Incomplete survey of alternatives
2) Lack of information, not enough time to decide	2) Incomplete survey of objectives
3) Ignorance of evaluation techniques	3) Failure to examine risks
4) Inaccurate forecasting of the effects off specific actions	4) Failure to reappraise rejected alternatives
5) Inaccurate forecasting of external influences	5) Poor information search
6) Uncritical acceptance of others' judgments	6) Selective bias in processing information
7) Uncritical acceptance of subjective needs and feelings	7) Failure to work out a contingency plan

(Ahmed & Omotunde, 2012; Janis, 1982)

Less effective decision making occurs when the concept of groupthink is at play. From Table 6, Ahmed and Omotunde's (2012) sixth mechanism is most similar to Janis' groupthink concept. Janis (1982) defined groupthink as a self-deceptive thought pattern of consent by conformity to group ethics and values. This may lead to the least resistant and most expedient decision but may not be the best decision for the situation. Groupthink is a decision

1. based on what members believe other members want
2. occurring when a group has high-cohesiveness and insularity
3. made by a group with a dominant leader
4. made with a lack of information
5. involving poor evaluation procedures
6. by a group having low confidence to alternatives contrary to leader’s preference

(Janis, 1972, 1982).

Janis’ recommendations to prevent groupthink include:

1. an open climate for giving and accepting criticism
2. impartial leaders
3. multiple groups working parallelly on the same problem
4. subgroups to assess effectiveness and feasibility
5. members encouraged to discuss privately with trusted others outside the group to report reactions and feedback
6. outside experts to challenge core member views
7. devil’s advocate role for each meeting
8. utilizing conflict to interpret warning intentions and construct alternatives
9. reconsidering decisions before going public (Janis, 1982).

The decisions of the board affect the entire organization; making effective decisions requires a comprehension of the strategic direction of the organization and a self-awareness of what criteria their decision is based upon and for what purpose (Lovett, 2017). They must understand their mission, the organization, its structure, their responsibilities as a board, and their limitations as a board (AGB, 2014; Lovett, 2017). Trustees are responsible for enrollment management and need to know the trends, what to ask, and what their oversight role looks like (Rhinerson, 2017). Petrisko (2017) emphasized that trustees need to understand institutional and programmatic accreditation, what their role is regarding accreditation, and the impact accreditation has on their institution's financial aid funding. The decisions made at the board level are potentially seen as adding value to the organization or limiting its functions. The perspective of the people working in the organization can be very different from that of the board. It is the board's responsibility to understand and acknowledge the employees' expertise and opinions while maintaining the integrity of the institution. It is equally valuable for the board to effectively communicate their actions and involve the community in those decisions. As a lay board, it is their connections to the community that make the board relevant to the community they serve (Smith, 2000).

Integrating institutional capabilities and community needs allows the board to articulate and deliver on their institutional mission. Understanding decision-making processes and issues allows a decision-making body to develop processes that fit within their form of governance. Illinois community college boards have a distinctive organizational structure within which to function. The higher education landscape continues to be impacted by external forces: political, economic, public policy, regulatory, technological, and consumer choice. Boggs and McPhail (2016) advocated for professional development for members of the board and thorough awareness of the issues impacting higher education. Richard D. Legon (2018) considered trustees better positioned than college presidents to lobby government at every level for the needs of their college. Serving as stewards and fiduciaries, Legon states, trustees need to embrace their responsibility to advocate at the state and national levels in order to reclaim the public's fading trust in higher education. Advocacy is just one responsibility of trustees of community college boards. The board-CEO relationship takes effort and intention; effective boards work in tandem with their college president as trusted partners to achieve the goals of the institution (MacTaggart, 2017). Additionally, ACCT (2017) stated its core values as boardsmanship, advocacy, student success, innovation, diversity, and service. The second goal of their strategic plan is to "prepare trustees for the evolution of the community college" (ACCT, 2017), which includes formalized orientation processes.

Carver and Mayhew (1994) defined community college board governance as complex and difficult, while participants have little information about how it should be performed. They acknowledged that good governing principles are well defined, that of focusing on strategic leadership through policy and performance and delegating management responsibilities to the president but cautioned that boards often spend too much time micromanaging. The concept of policy governance was Carver and Mayhew's (1994) answer to how boards should effectively govern. As demonstrated in Table 7, ACCT (2016) proposed principles of effective boardsmanship that echo and reinforce this model.

Table 7: *Governance and Boardsmanship Comparison*

CARVER'S POLICY GOVERNANCE	ACCT PRINCIPLE OF EFFECTIVE BOARDSMANSHIP
The trust in trusteeship (civic trusteeship)	Act as a unit
The board speaks with one voice or not at all	Represent the common good
Board decisions should predominantly be policy decisions	Set policy direction for the college
Board should formulate policy by determining the broadest values before progressing to more narrow ones	Employ-support-evaluate the college's chief executive
A board should define and delegate, rather than react and ratify	Define policy standards for college operations
Ends determination is the pivotal duty of governance	Monitor institutional performance
The board's best control over staff is to limit, not prescribe	Create a positive college climate
A board must explicitly design its own products and process	Support and advocate the interests of the institution
A board must form a linkage with management that is both empowering and safe	Lead as a thoughtful, informed team
Performance of the president must be monitored rigorously, but only against policy criteria	

(Adapted from ACCT, 2016; Carver & Mayhew, 1994)

Brown (2012) defined the role of the board as guiding institutional functions through mission and policy setting. Board training and continuous improvement is emphasized; within the renewal and nurturing of these citizen governing bodies are new trustee orientation, in-service training, board self-evaluations, and continuous improvement retreats. Potter and Phelan (2008) stated, “Developing a good training or orientation program for new board members can help prevent problem board members." That orientation should include board culture, policies, practices, and emphasis on ethical standards (ACCT 2018b; Potter & Phelan, 2008).

Governance leadership theory proposes to take board decision making to a high-performance level. In this theory, Chait et al. (2005) advocated a triumvirate of fiduciary, strategic, and generative types of governing as essential for effective governance. Bolman and Deal (2013), in their organizational leadership model, identified four organizational frames of leadership engagement: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Similarly, the governance leadership theory utilizes intellectual, reputational, political, and social forms of board capital to accomplish the work of the board. Chait et al. posited that current roles within organizations have been reversed for non-profit organizations like community colleges, as managers are becoming leaders with their duties reflecting governance, and the trustees are becoming managers by becoming too involved in the operations. The governance leadership theory reclaims the steward, strategic, and sense-making role of the board to set the goals and direction for the institution in collaboration with the institution's executives. Governance leadership employs generative governing, which has six generative resources, as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: *Generative Governing Resources*

RESOURCE	APPLICATION
Mental map of the organization	Goals are ambiguous if not contested The future is uncertain Meaning matters
Generative landmarks	Ambiguity Saliency Stakes Strife Irreversibility
Working at the boundary	Internal External
Looking back: the future in the rearview mirror	Retrospective questioning Dominant narratives
Deliberating and discussing differently	Suspend the rules Promote robust dialogue
Mind the mode	Assessment

(Chait et al., 2005)

Chait et al. (2005) defined the qualities of the three types of leadership that comprise the governance leadership theory, depicted in Table 9. Functioning in each of these types allows a board to meet each of its responsibilities and plan for the future.

Table 9: *Three Types of Governance: Distinctive Characteristics*

	TYPE I FIDUCIARY	TYPE II STRATEGIC	TYPE III GENERATIVE
Nature of organization	Bureaucratic	Open system	Nonrational
Nature of leadership	Hierarchical	Analytical/visionary	Reflective learners
Board’s central purpose	Stewardship of tangible assets	Strategic partnership with management	Source of leadership for organization

	TYPE I FIDUCIARY	TYPE II STRATEGIC	TYPE III GENERATIVE
Board's core work	Technical: oversee operations, ensure accountability	Analytical: shape strategy, review performance	Creative: discern problems, engage in sense-making
Board's principal role	Sentinel	Strategist	Sense maker
Key question	What's wrong?	What's the plan?	What's the question?
Problems are to be	Spotted	Solved	Framed
Deliberative process	Parliamentary and orderly	Empirical and logical	Robust and sometimes playful
Way of deciding	Reaching resolution	Reaching consensus	Grappling and grasping
Way of knowing	It stands to reason	The pieces all fit	It makes sense
Communication with constituents	Limited, ritualized to legitimate	Bilateral, episodic to advocate	Multilateral, ongoing to learn
Performance metrics	Facts, figures, finances, reports	Strategic indicators, competitive analysis	Signs of learning and discerning

(Chait et al., 2005, p. 132)

Applying these criteria to current Illinois community college board orientation processes will identify for those programs the parts that provide the content necessary for comprehensive trustee development and where there can be improvement. Developing the orientation process should be an intentional exercise in identifying what materials are necessary to bring a novice community college trustee up to the level of knowledge required to successfully execute the responsibilities of this role.

The governance leadership theory forms the first frame for analyzing the current actions of Illinois community colleges' orientation programs for their boards of trustees. It answers the question: What are the essential parts of an orientation program that develops trustees toward governance leadership?

FLIPPED BOARDROOM

Board of trustee orientation is not the same for all institutions and may not be the same each time it is implemented at the same institution (Smith, 2000). What is done in an urban institution will not be done the same at a rural institution. What an institution does for orientation with one trustee may not be the same as what is done for orientation for a group of five trustees. The implementation strategy for board orientation should meet the needs of the community college while meeting the individual trustee's needs for orientation. Just as there are commonalities and differences among the community colleges in Illinois, there will be similarities and differences in how these community colleges implement orientation strategies. Orientation is the means to equip community college trustees with a strong understanding of and commitment to their roles as college governors (ACCT, 2017). The dynamics of the board are impacted by new members for which ACCT (2018b) recommends implementing an ongoing, comprehensive orientation program developing the trustee's understanding about their role. The implementation strategy for Illinois community college boards of trustees needs to address these concerns. The flipped boardroom theory (Trower, 2015) of strategy implementation for board orientations provides a comprehensive model for developing governance leadership in Illinois community college boards of trustees.

People, resources, structure, systems, and culture are factors in strategy implementation (Olsen, 2017). Institutions vary in their context for orientation by areas of focus, community, resources, and needs. Brinkschroeder (2014) advocated maintaining the connections and interrelationships between the strategic stakeholders. For the orientation to have meaning and impact, what is included in the orientation should address the context directly and be sustainable beyond the orientation. An evaluative study of strategy implementation identified best practices and concluded that implementation takes many forms, depending on the organization, but should be (a) simple, (b) communicated and coordinated properly, and (c) have intentional follow through (Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). Marabella (2007) stated that nonprofit organization boards of trustees should focus on the trustee understanding their board role. The community college needs to identify its context in order to have an effective orientation for their board of trustees, addressing the situation in which the board functions.

Many resources are available to guide the development of community college boards of trustees' orientation programs. The institution's existing program is the starting point. Programs used by other colleges can be consulted. State laws often require specific trustee training. State organizations recommend practices for board orientation and training. Guidelines and resources for orientation, education, and governance training are also offered by national organizations such as the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), American Council on Education (ACE), and the Aspen Institute. Selecting the attributes from these practices and processes that meet the needs of the institution and the trustee provides a foundation for identifying content and context. Based on the various levels of engagement present in an eight-person Illinois community college board, the critical information must be presented in the manner that best communicates the information to the board in the way they need that information.

According to Zeig et al. (2017), the role of orientation is to provide the means for trustees to adjust their board role expectations from the familiar corporate, top-down system to the shared governance that exists in higher education. This orientation should facilitate trustee understanding of their role through guiding questions. AGB (2014) identified features of successful orientations, including orientation being multiple sessions throughout the first year, encouraging more discussion than lecture and presentation, tours to meet key institutional leaders in their areas and to learn about the institution they are governing, prereadings for discussion, board leadership presence and participation, the history and evolution of institution, assigning and including mentors in the orientation process, and an opportunity for participants to evaluate the program. Zeig et al. (2017) furthered these expectations to include emphasizing the ownership trustees must take of their learning and engagement as new members by encouraging them to ask questions, seek to understand the issues beyond the surface, strive for collaborative outcomes, and share information and learning with other institutions' trustees.

Chait (2016) delineated specific factors that indicate healthy board functioning and unhealthy board functioning (see Table 10). These factors reinforce the idea of ownership of their role as board members. Using this as part of the board orientation and applying it to the implementation of the orientation program emphasizes the institution's goal of having a board that functions in a healthy manner.

Table 10: *Factors That Indicate Healthy and Unhealthy Boards*

HEALTHY BOARDS	UNHEALTHY BOARDS
Content here	Data or info here
Distributed influence	Dominant inner circle
Collective wisdom	Individual convictions
Open-minded listeners	Close-minded speakers
Constructive dissent	Back-channel agitation
Transparency	Opacity
Confidentiality	Seepage
Diligence	Disengagement
Respect and trust	Disregard and distrust
Clear expectations	Ambiguous expectations
Mutual accountability	Collective impunity

(Chait, 2016)

Chait (2016) further established archetypes of individuals functioning within boards. The lone ranger functioned as a free agent/public watchdog; the regulatory agency functioned as group member/public watchdog; the consultant functioned as a free agent/institutional guardian, and the orchestra functioned as a group member/institutional guardian. To include these delineations in the board orientation can pointedly demonstrate the high-functioning level to which trustees should strive, that of orchestra.

The idea of accountability by trustees for their adapting to community college board culture is reinforced in Legon's (2014) strategic governance concept. Legon identified 10 characteristics and habits of boards that govern strategically: (1) create a culture of inclusion,

(2) uphold basic fiduciary principles, (3) cultivate a healthy relationship with the president, (4) select an effective board chair, (5) establish an effective governance committee, (6) delegate the appropriate decision-making authority to committees, (7) consider strategic risk factors, (8) provide appropriate oversight of academic quality, (9) develop a renewed commitment to shared governance, and (10) focus on accountability. He posited that constant change, like that which currently exists in higher education, requires strategic governance engaging all stakeholders in the decision-making process. Strategic thinking is a way of seeing, holistic big-picture thinking supported by data and information, vision of execution of mission, understanding of key trends that impact the institution while remaining focused on "why" (Long, 2017). Trower and Eckel (2016) identified five areas of community college board accountability: (1) uphold the mission, (2) select-compensate-evaluate-fire the president, (3) oversee institutional fiscal health and integrity, (4) oversee program and services quality, and (5) ensure board performance and conduct. Accountability is integrity (Trower & Eckel, 2016).

Trower (2015) applied the flipped classroom concept to the board, whereby the board meetings, trainings, and orientation become interactive and engaging experiences instead of the traditional presentation and response limited by Robert's Rules of Order formality. In flipping the boardroom, Trower observed that obstacles to governing are avoided by:

1. the setting of goals
2. requiring thinking and preparation before meetings
3. providing right amount of data
4. using questions as catalysts

5. encouraging trustees to ask questions
6. engaging in dialogue and debate
7. holding deliberations separate from decisions
8. utilizing small groups for deep dives
9. distributing leadership
10. establishing accountability for collective learning.

Applying these principles to board orientation consolidates many of the strategies for effective orientation implementation proposed in this chapter. These criteria set the expectations about how the board is to function and how the trustee is to function within that board.

As reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Tugend, 2019), some colleges and trustee organizations have put this concept into practice by offering online video modules and pre-orientation materials. Doing so has led to engaging trustees in collaborative discussions at their on-campus orientations instead of their sitting, listening to lectures. Participants report that it has accelerated their understanding of their trustee role and removed perceived obstacles to their participation in their first board meetings.

This flipped boardroom theory of strategy implementation forms the second frame for analyzing the current implementation of Illinois community colleges' orientation programs for their boards of trustees. It answers the question, In what manner should an orientation program be implemented to develop trustees toward governance leadership?

ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Orientation is ultimately a learning experience and needs to be treated as such. It is an educational experience for adults toward a specific end, to develop them as governance leaders. The learning experience and process is different for adults. Traditional pedagogy is not effective when applied to adults who bring their breadth of life experiences and have different expectations for what their learning experience should look like. Toward this end, Knowles' theory of adult learning provides the right structure for orientation programs for Illinois community college boards of trustees.

The Association of Community College Trustees reports that 6,500+ elected and appointed trustees govern the more than 1,000 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States, which serve more than 11 million students (ACCT, 2018a). An AGB survey revealed that the average trustee is a business professional or manager over the age of 50 (Madsen, 1997). AGB's 2016 data showed that more than 70% of U.S. public-institution-serving trustees are over the age of 50. These trustees have little experience with or exposure to community colleges and the governance structures when they begin serving their term; fewer than 15% of trustees have any experience in the education sector, according to Zeig et al. (2017). With the increasingly complex challenges facing higher education, this results in a steep learning curve for these trustees. "The majority of community college trustees are exceptional community leaders, elected and appointed to champion the community college mission for the community and the students they represent" (O'Banion, 2018, p. 1). They are typically not prepared for the slowed decision-making process in higher education nor the inability of community college boards to pivot quickly in a new direction as easily as corporate boards. Individual trustees' understanding of their roles and responsibilities varies, as does their grasp of the new concepts and culture at their community college. Likened to a firehose, board orientations typically provide too much information in an extremely short period of time with little time to process that information (Zeig et al., 2017). To develop trustees toward governance leadership, their orientation must address their adult learning needs by allowing time and providing the circumstances for them to absorb and internalize this information.

The adult learning theory developed by Malcolm Knowles acknowledges these learning needs, identifying the transactional nature of adult learning that addresses adult learners' motivations and self-direction (Knowles et al., 2015). This theory correlates to Vroom's (1995) expectancy theory with the learning motivation of the adults connected to their expectancy, instrumentality, and valence of the learning experience. Understanding adult learners' motivations and methods of learning provides the pathway to address these needs and provide information in a way that is conducive to actualizing what is learned. A progressive and iterative approach allows the trustees to build their knowledge base and apply their experience to the issues they face as community college trustees.

In their research on leadership training programs, Weissner and Sullivan (2007) stated that adult learning events take place with the "goals of theory building, discipline-based research, training, or professional development" (p. 100). Providing multiple ways to engage trustees increases their understanding and ability to engage the information. Effective boards should have and be encouraged to have curiosity, according to Eckel and Trower (2017), or what Knowles refers to as the "need to know." Trustees are accomplished professionals who are responsible for decision making in the context of their role as the financial steward of the taxpayers' trust. Therefore, trustees need to be given opportunities to learn and know their governance environment.

No one strategy for trustee education can meet all the needs identified by boards and individual trustees due to the different desires, goals, learning styles, and time constraints of each trustee (Smith, 2000). Adult learning acknowledges learning as a transactional, transformative experience that is individual to each adult learner socially, culturally, and situation specifically, as well as cognitively, by personality, and based on prior knowledge (Knowles et al., 2015). Thoughtfully developed through the principles of adult learning theory, an effective orientation will guide the trustee toward effective governance while addressing these individual needs. The focus is to engage the adult learner in mental inquiry as opposed to passive information reception (Knowles et al., 2015). Trustee education should allow for the time it takes to internalize and master the material necessary for the trustee to perform their role successfully. Multiple sessions over time that are focused on developing their skills and knowledge to contribute to the work of the board by being critical thinkers and active learners (Smith, 2000).

Key to developing an orientation that is appropriate for trustees as adult learners is providing an experience that meets their adult learning needs. Implementation of adult learning theory is assisted by the concept of Knowles' adult learning design theory:

1. preparing the learners for the program
2. setting a climate that is conducive to learning (physically comfortable and inviting; psychologically mutually respectful; collaborative; mutually trustful; supportive; open and authentic; pleasurable and human)
3. involving learners in mutual planning
4. involving learners in diagnosing their learning needs
5. involving learners in forming their learning objectives
6. involving learners in designing learning plans

7. helping learners carry out their learning plans
8. involving learners in evaluating their learning outcomes and diagnosing additional learning needs (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 308).

Actively involving learners in their learning makes the learning more meaningful and purposeful. Board associations and organizations currently have recommendations for orientation programs that align with these concepts. AGB (2014) recommends providing new board members with a briefing packet that correlates with Knowles' first point: preparing the learners for the program. Giving potential board members a full picture of the position prior to their running for or agreeing to serve as a trustee (Masterson, 2018) also meets the first criterion. Assigning a mentor is also advised by AGB, aligning with item 5: learners forming their learning objectives, as a mentor responds to and addresses a trustee's specific needs. Criterion 2, setting a climate conducive for learning (Knowles et al., 2015), is accomplished in many ways, for which AGB recommends orientation taking place over a series of sessions throughout the first year. A combination of theory and practice (Kervinen, 2012) allows for the trustee to meet criterion 7, carrying out their learning plans. AGB (2010) encourages an open and friendly dynamic among board members, which reflects criteria 3, involving learners in mutual planning, and 6, involving learners in designing their learning plans, in that all trustees are able to be part of the planning process in an open environment and are able to assess their skills gaps in these open discussions. Board assessment involves individual trustee personal assessment of their preparation to be a governance leader and builds on their experiences (AGB, 2010), which fulfills criterion 8, involving learners in evaluating their learning outcomes and diagnosing additional learning needs. Criterion 4, involving learners in diagnosing their learning needs, is met through the orientation program being open to questions and comments as the trustees process and internalize what they are learning. These questions guide the orientation session toward the development of the individual trustee's knowledge.

Adult learning theory is based on a specific set of principles, which state that adults

1. have a need to know
2. are self-directed learners
3. have prior educational experiences
4. are ready to learn
5. have an orientation to learning and problem solving
6. have a motivation to learn (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 169).

Applying these principles to board orientation for Illinois community college trustees will assess the ability of that orientation to meet the needs of the trustees as adult learners. Designing the orientation program to address these principles provides the opportunity for new trustees to be engaged in the learning necessary to perform their role as a trustee.

Adult learning theory forms the third frame for analyzing the current implementation of Illinois community colleges' orientation programs for their boards of trustees. It answers the question: How should an orientation program be structured for the adult learner to develop trustees toward governance leadership?

SUMMARY

This chapter provides the background for the research into the orientation strategies for Illinois community college boards of trustees. Understanding community college history, Illinois governance and structure, and associations and organizations that support community college governance establishes the boundary for the subjects of the study. The frames of governance leadership, flipped boardroom, and adult learning theory bound the analysis of the research toward effective governance.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

This research is a qualitative study in the interpretive paradigm utilizing case study methodology. The research design addresses the purpose of this study, which is to identify the content and successful implementation strategies of orientation programs for Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions as an effective governing board. This study also provides insight into the board liaisons' perceptions of their institutions' orientation program and its effectiveness in preparing their trustees for their governing role. This chapter explains the participant selection, instrumentation and data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness and validity of the study.

THE QUALITATIVE PARADIGM

In order to identify the strategies and content of orientation programs for Illinois community college trustees, qualitative inquiry in the interpretative paradigm was selected to gather the relevant data. Silverman (2000) noted, "The choice between different research methods should depend on what you are trying to figure out" (p. 1). Identifying what and determining how guide the design of the research. The first choice a researcher makes is between quantitative research and qualitative research. Quantitative research requires available numerical data over a specified period of time for objective assessment answering a definitive thesis. It is experimental, uses a very large sample size, and the results are generalizable. Qualitative research is context-based phenomenological research using a variety of sources to understand the topic. This research question is not quantitative, but qualitative in nature; it is seeking to understand an isolated phenomenon within the context of that phenomenon using a specifically defined sample.

Qualitative inquiry through an interpretive paradigm utilizes the observation of a naturally occurring phenomenon to answer open-ended, subjective questions in a methodological approach. Qualitative inquiry is characterized as defining how people make sense of their world and their experiences by focusing on meaning and understanding, by being an inductive process that is richly descriptive, and by utilizing the researcher as the primary instrument (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With research on community college boards in general being limited, a paradigm that allows for first-hand observation assists in broadening this field of research. These parameters position this study in the realm of qualitative inquiry in the interpretive paradigm.

Qualitative inquiry addresses a social phenomenon in which personal reflection and experience are the data being collected. According to Denzin (1989), these types of data have rich detail, meaningful social and historical contexts, and emotionally significant content, which allow the researcher to interpret in context the responses, opinions, and recollections of whoever or whatever is being studied. Qualitative data analysis uncovers emerging themes, concepts, insights, patterns, and understandings (Patton, 2002). The data to be gathered situate the participants in their natural environments, not in a laboratory. This dynamic provides context for the individual's recollections and the materials submitted, giving meaning to events and situations through that context. Quantitative research's objective reality does not account for the personal world constructs that individuals have, whereas qualitative research seeks to understand the subjectivity of those individual realities.

The interpretive paradigm, according to Yvonna S. Lincoln (1995), is scientific inquiry that commits “to new and emergent relations with respondents”; to professional, personal, and political stances “toward the use of inquiry and its ability to foster action”; and “to a vision of research that enables and promotes social justice, community, diversity, civic discourse and caring” (p. 277). There is an intention to understand the phenomenon in its natural setting as perceived by the individual experiencing the phenomenon. Reeves, Albert, Kuper, and Hodges (2008) noted that “qualitative researchers . . . rely heavily on theories drawn from social sciences and humanities to guide their research process and illuminate their findings” (p. 1). The interpretation by the researcher of the qualitative data collected makes subjective meaning of the input to arrive at an understanding of the phenomenon observed. By applying theories to the phenomenon being researched, this understanding takes shape within the proscribed context and can then be adopted by others and extrapolated to other circumstances reliably. In order to identify successful strategies for board orientation, this study surveyed Illinois community college board liaisons about their institutions’ orientation process, respecting the content, context, and modality of the board orientation.

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

Case study research, as defined by Creswell (2013), is the detailed, in-depth data collection of a bounded system/case over time involving multiple sources resulting in a case description and case-bounded themes. Identifying themes of successful orientations is one of the goals of this research. Yin (2003) has four conditions for which case study approach is ideal;

the research (a) concerns how and why, (b) utilizes no manipulation of participants, (c) has contextual conditions that are relevant to phenomenon studied, or (d) has phenomenological and contextual boundaries that are not clear. This study has three conditions that align it with the case study approach: looking at the specific actions and the effectiveness of planned orientation programs for community college trustees: how and why; participants are not manipulated; and context is relevant. Yin (2009) explained that in case study methodology the researcher makes sense of and explains findings of what is and is not observed using careful interpretations and creative insight.

With the intent of this study being to discover what makes the orientation experiences successful, Stake's (1995) and Yin's (2016) constructivism approach to case study research is applicable. Constructivism is predicated on socially constructed reality with the participants of the case study providing meaning to their own experiences. Case study methodology is used to understand "a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research" (Soy, 1997, p. 1). Case study research empirically investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2016). These aspects of case study lend this methodology to the study of the identification of the current modes and means of orienting trustees to their role as a governing body.

Simons (1996) emphasizes the experiential aspect of the researcher becoming acquainted with the subject through their prolonged engagement in the fieldwork. This experiential aspect provides the inductive context for analyzing the results and developing the conclusions that will lead to a model for engaging a community college board. Case study methodology provides the method for exploring a phenomenon for which little research exists, and therefore is the method most appropriate for this study. For this research, case study methodology was determined the most suitable methodology.

Case Selection

According to Sargeant (2012), qualitative research is used to understand a phenomenon and requires a different research procedure for selecting participants than quantitative research. For a qualitative case study, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated, “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 96). This reflects Creswell (2012), who posited purposeful subject selection in qualitative research provides for selecting participants who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study. This direction provides the boundaries for the qualitative sample selection using the research study to establish the criteria for the ideal subjects who will provide the most useful data. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005) reinforced that for a qualitative case study, the sample selection is a subset of the full population and that purposeful sampling uses relevant criteria to select the survey participants. Therefore, the purposeful sampling starts with an analysis of the purpose statement, integrating the concept framework and the driving questions to derive a sampling that will provide the data essential to case study. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) have advised that intentional and strategic decisions be made about the research sample to align with the purpose statement and driving questions, and that the sample size needs to be manageable. Additionally, “two levels of sampling are usually necessary in qualitative case studies” (Merriam

& Tisdell, 2016, p. 99), with the initial survey informing the selection of the subsequent individual interview subjects.

Starting with a broad survey, this case study then selected individuals from the survey participants to conduct semistructured interviews, which provided the necessary depth for this qualitative study. Tuckett (2004) reinforced the use of small individual interview samples to attain depth and detail about the research topic, recommending 4 to 6 subjects.

Participants for the study were those at the community college who are responsible for board relations, the board liaison. They need to have hands-on, direct contact with the functioning of the board of trustees. Board liaison is defined as the individual currently working at the community college who is responsible for communications, meeting preparations, and administrative support for and with the trustees of the community college board. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), those selected should provide the first-hand, contextual, reflective perspectives necessary for a qualitative case study.

Site Selection

This study explored implementation strategies of Illinois community college trustee orientation programs to develop as effective governing boards. Based on the purpose statement, this survey was limited to the 37 independent Illinois community colleges. Those Illinois community colleges that are part of a system were not included in this sample because it is believed that their orientation processes differ significantly from those of independent community colleges. This created a manageable pool of potential survey participants and allowed for the second phase individual interviews to be completed in a timely manner by the researcher.

Participant Protocol

The protocol for the data collection is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: *Data Collection Protocol*

DATE	DATA COLLECTION STEP
May 2019	Send out introductory email with online survey link
May and June 2019	Send reminder for non-responses
May 2019	Start aggregation of data and identify interview subjects
June 2019	Send reminder for orientation materials
June 2019	Schedule interviews
June 2019	Conduct interviews

Included in the survey was a request for their institutions' board orientation documents. As part of the survey, a question was included to identify those willing to participate in individual, face-to-face interviews. Pursuant to receiving the completed surveys, the surveys were sorted by the six identified peer groups. Appendix F identifies these peer groups and the colleges included in this study. The first survey respondent from each of these six peer groups who self-identified as willing to participate in a face-to-face interview was contacted to arrange the individual interview. This dual-level survey process enhanced the sample's maximum variation and revealed the orientation implementation practices throughout the state of Illinois by peer group.

The process of surveying board liaisons within this defined group and then conducting one-on-one interviews provided multiple sources of understanding. The survey provided a broad perspective of orientation program information as perceived by board liaisons. The interview identified specifics about effective and ineffective strategy implementation of board orientation programs and how these programs are utilized to prepare the members of boards of trustees for their roles as effective governance leaders. Understanding the situational context of community college board orientation programs allowed for greater analysis of how the board members perceive their role and responsibilities and adapt to this paradigm. The board orientation programs' ability to address board members' adult learning needs, to understand the group decision-making task and effective governance responsibilities, and to identify successful implementation strategies informed the effectiveness of these programs. Survey and interview participants were asked to sign a consent form to be part of the study (see Appendix C).

Data Collection

Qualitative study requires a rigorous and thoughtful data collection process (Creswell, 2012). A well-planned process is vital to the reliability of the data, the outcomes, and the resultant conclusions. According to Merriam (1998), within the qualitative paradigm, data are represented by words and reflections. These words and reflections are gathered from interviews, observations, and relevant documents for qualitative research (Creswell, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data collection methods used to gather relevant information for this study included a survey, semistructured interviews, field notes, and institutional documents. Discovering the implementation strategies for trustee orientation programs provided a context for engaging community college trustees in effective preparation as governance leaders in an implementable orientation model.

Data collection is intentional and planned in qualitative research, using purposive sampling. The subjects are purposely chosen to address the research questions based on their familiarity and alignment with the research topic (Creswell, 2012). The collection process follows a detailed procedure to carefully gather, track, maintain, and analyze the qualitative data to ensure the integrity of the research. Creswell provided five interrelated qualitative data collection process steps:

1. Identify participants and sites to be studied and to engage in a sampling strategy that will best help you understand your central phenomenon and the research question you are asking.
2. Obtain permissions to the individuals and sites.
3. Consider what types of information will best answer your research questions.
4. Simultaneously with 3, design protocols or instruments for collecting and recording the information.
5. Administer the data collection with special attention to potential ethical issues that may arise. (p. 205)

This protocol is an emergent design, whereby what is learned at each phase is reflected in the information sought in the subsequent phases. According to Lofland and Lofland (1984), the flexible nature of the qualitative research design allows for modifications over time to focus on areas of importance and reduce time spent on unproductive questions.

Surveys

For this research project, a survey (Appendix B) was sent to the board liaisons of each of the 37 boards of trustees of the independent Illinois community colleges. The survey format was a questionnaire that included questions for demographic data and open-ended questions to elicit deeper input. The online survey tool SurveyMonkey was used to gather the information. This tool allowed for data gathering and assisted in archiving the results for further reference. The last part of the survey identified potential candidates for individual interviews. These were sorted by previously identified ICCB peer groups in order to maximize the sample across Illinois (ICCB, 2019). The data gleaned from the survey identified the variety, frequency, and content of board orientations currently utilized. The experiential aspect of the survey structure provided the inductive context for analyzing the results and developing the conclusions. The data provided background information for the semistructured interviews. Those completing the survey were asked to self-identify if they would be willing to be interviewed. However, those agreeing to be interview participants were chosen in accordance with the selection criteria.

Semistructured Interviews

Semistructured interviews were the second data collection method for this study. Creswell (2012) explained that interviews provide the first-person account of feelings and interpretations of a specific situation that cannot be observed. According to Merriam (1998), "In qualitative research, interviewing is often the major source of the qualitative data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study" (p. 91). Patton (2002) observed that interviewing "allows us to enter into the other person's perspective. Interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 341). Semistructured interviews allowed the board liaisons to share their firsthand experiences of providing board orientation in a level of detail and with the personal insights that would reveal those factors that indicate success or futility of those processes. As such, board liaison perceptions of the orientation process at their college could not be known unless they divulged those feelings and interpretations about the current orientation program effectiveness to the researcher. The semistructured interview questions are mapped to the driving questions and can be found in Appendix G.

As the online surveys were completed and returned, a tracking system was used to maintain participant anonymity while identifying those individuals who were willing to participate in the interviews. Semistructured interview candidates were identified by peer group and contacted by email to arrange the interview logistics, including location, format, duration, permission, and recording of the interview. The personal interviews were conducted on the campuses of the board liaisons. The format was semistructured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), with guiding questions to collect information about their current orientation program and informal questions to probe their perceptions of the effectiveness of that orientation. (The semistructured interview protocol is provided in Appendix D.) This allowed for responsive flexibility in the interview process while assuring that specific data were obtained in this process. The individual interviews with selected board liaisons were audio-recorded and transcribed later to allow the researcher to fully participate in the interview. Two recorders were used to allow for the possibility of technical failure of one of the units.

Documents

The online survey asked for orientation documents from each of the participant colleges. Yin (2009) advocated for document collection for three reasons: (a) documents can be helpful in verifying correct information, such as names and titles; (b) documents can be useful in corroborating information from other sources; and (c) information contained in the documents allows inferences to be made. Institutional documents used in board orientations were analyzed for content and indicated differences and similarities in the materials used by each college and provided depth and understanding to the study. Sargeant (2012) emphasized the iterative data collection cycle created by the use of multiple sources whereby what is discovered in one data source impacts the development of the other data collection processes, improving the depth and understanding of the study topic. Documents utilized as a supplementary data source benefit the data collection in that they existed prior to that collection and therefore cannot be altered in response to the researcher's request and are not subject to participant recall bias.

The board orientation documents identified the content the colleges prioritize as essential to their orientation program their trustees engage in as they prepare to lead their institutions as board members. Survey participants provided the agenda and included the packet or set of materials that their college uses for trustee orientation. Documents were redacted as necessary for confidential information.

Field Notes

Two types of field notes, observational and reflective, were used for the study (Creswell, 2008). The observational field notes provided details on the setting and context in which the interviews were conducted. These were visual and other cues that might not be captured by the recording or handwritten notes. The reflective field notes captured researcher feelings, reactions, and critical reflections throughout the data collection process. These provided the setting description, reflective perceptions, and dialog themes of substance captured during or after the event. According to Creswell (2012), field notes should be compiled after each personal interview to assure recollections are fresh and to enrich the data gathered through researcher observation. Reflective field notes are beneficial to the study because the researcher is the primary tool in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative research. A field note form (Appendix E) was completed immediately after each interview. The researcher went to a quiet location to recollect and record the environment, the interaction, and the reactions and thoughts about the interview in order to capture those ideas and not rely on the researcher's memory at a later date.

Data Collection Pilot

The online survey and semistructured interview were piloted to identify problems before performing the actual study. The intent of piloting was to test the questions, identify gaps in the interview protocol, and verify the time necessary for each method to ensure consistency and accuracy throughout the actual data collection process, as well as providing practice to the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Three content experts were selected to sample the online survey to ensure the functionality and logic of the survey. Two content experts acted as test interviewees for the semistructured interview for which two recorders and a timer were tested to ensure all equipment was functioning. The pilot participants suggested no changes to the protocol. All data collected and recorded during the pilot were erased or destroyed immediately following each session and none of the data was used in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative research, collected data are analyzed to make sense and find meaning in a directed and circumscribed manner. The type of data analysis for a given study should be appropriate to the type of study being conducted. A qualitative research study collects data through surveys, interviews, observation, and documents. The analysis of this data should answer the research questions and result in the data being categorized to facilitate sense-making. Sargeant (2012) emphasized the iterative cycle of data collection and data analysis, each informing the other to build the case study. Creswell (2007) explained qualitative analysis as pulling data apart and putting it back together in meaningful ways. Stake (1995) emphasized the ongoing nature of analysis, meaning being given to the first data impressions and continuing through the final compilations. Using various collection methods, what is discovered in one data source impacts the development of the other data collection processes. Multiple data sources add strength to the study through the convergence of the data toward the understanding of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a well-organized case study database is essential to deriving meaning from the data collected.

Making sense of the data collected in a qualitative case study requires intentional organization and ongoing analysis. A data analysis plan is developed to ensure the collected data is properly handled and evaluated. It is important to start the data analysis early in the data collection process, because, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated, “Data analysis is not easy, but it can be manageable if you are able to analyze along with data collection. To wait until all data are collected is to lose the opportunity to gather more reliable and valid data” (p. 236). It also minimizes the prospect of being overwhelmed by the volume of data that will be collected in a qualitative study and will provide the opportunity to inform the data collection as it progresses. Yin (2016) labeled the phases of data analysis compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding.

The qualitative paradigm is an inductive data analysis process to construct contextually rich, descriptive narratives. This study began with a survey questionnaire, which, along with the theoretical framework of decision making and generative leadership, flipped boardroom strategic implementation, and adult learning, informed the personal interview protocol. Beginning the analysis process as soon as the first data were collected from this questionnaire provided for more intentional interview questions. In qualitative research, relational strategies are used to facilitate the reasonable interpretation of the data.

Creswell (2007) identified stages in his spiral data analysis model, which bring structure and meaning to vast amounts of data and information: (a) data management; (b) reading and memoing; (c) describing, classifying, and interpreting; and (d) representing and visualizing. Implementing these stages for this study provided the systematic approach needed to ensure the trustworthiness and validity through careful and meticulous handling of the data and thoughtful interpretation.

Data Management

Managing the data for a research study is of primary importance. A data management system assures that the data are accessible, sortable, trackable, and auditable. The digital records were secured on a password-protected cloud storage drive. Paper files were organized by participant and institution, color-coded, and securely stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. The data will be maintained for 3 years and destroyed thereafter.

Reading and Memoing

The iterative review of the data needs to be documented for initial insights and fresh recollection of thoughts. When reading the institutional documents submitted and relistening to the recorded interviews, it is important to utilize a reflective process in order to discover themes and patterns for interpretation; this provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on the information and gain perspective. The memoing process is described by Johnson and Christensen (2004) as reflective notes about what the researcher records and is learning from their data. This is done expeditiously for accuracy to record the thoughts in the moment and not rely on memory. The ongoing process of creating reflective notes from the field notes and memoing enhances the data analysis process. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) advised, “In raising questions about what is observed or speculating as to what it all means, the researcher is actually engaging in some preliminary data analysis. The joint collection and analysis of data is essential to qualitative research” (pp. 151-152).

As documents were identified and the first personal interview was completed with field notes, the data analysis organized these data and began the coding to identify categories and themes. This initial analysis was used to enhance the interview protocol by identifying additional questions to ask in the subsequent interviews and additional information to gather based on emergent themes. Creswell (2007) noted the interrelativity and often simultaneousness of data collection and data analysis. Collecting the data is not an end-point, but the beginning of the analysis and becomes integrated with the analysis process as these processes overlap and become synchronous. Yin (2016) went further and emphasized the importance of rereading interviews, field notes, and documents and relistening to the tape recordings throughout the analysis process in order to be intimately familiar with the material, to assimilate its contents, and to contextually inform the categorization and findings beyond the initial coding. This was done while the interview transcriptions were reread by the researcher and before they were sent to each interviewee for verification.

Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting

Developing the codes and themes through the data analysis is an inductive process and can be done manually or with the assistance of coding software. For case studies, Creswell (2007) referenced searching for patterns and making naturalistic generalizations in the data. These codes and themes are further refined into categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which is done by applying the purpose of the study, the framework of the study, the developing patterns within the data to the developing categories in an iterative process as the data become available. This thematic content analysis is useful for tracking trends and clusters, linking commonalities, and identifying outliers. As the data are being discovered and verified, analyzing them both at face-value and contextually can provide further insights as more data are incorporated into the database. One method Yin (2016) identified in the reassembling phase is using arrays or matrices to organize the data. Yin noted that this involves discretionary choices and cautioned researchers to be aware of their biases and to mitigate these by constantly comparing the data being coded, being aware of negative or contrary data, and considering rival thinking or alternative conclusions. By allowing the data to speak for the case being studied, the qualitative research about board orientations and content of those orientations revealed what works and what doesn't work with regard to preparing trustees for their roles as governance leaders.

Orientation documents provided by the board liaisons were evaluated with regard to frequency, modality, and content (format and substance) of the orientation programs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documents from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), and the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) that discuss the orientation process for trustees as they serve on boards for higher education institutions were included in the data collection. Gathering the external resources trustees currently use to guide their functions as trustees provided a baseline of general data to analyze regarding trustee expectations about the orientation they receive as governance leaders for their community colleges and informed the questionnaire protocol and the interview protocol.

The final categories are settled on once all the data have been collected and inferences made through the analysis to answer the study questions. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested the categories meet the following criteria: be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, be sensitive to the data, and be conceptually congruent. These categories become the findings of the study and lead to the identification of the interrelationships between the categories, which lead to a model or theory to explain the data. Yin (2016) noted the recursive nature of the analysis to fully analyze and reanalyze the data and conclusions in order to "bring unity to the entire rest of the study" (p. 220). Individual studies have "highly specific, and possibly even unique" (Yin, 2016, p. 235) conclusions, which include lessons learned and implications of the research.

Strategies that facilitate trustee understanding of group decision making and effective governance were codified to determine commonalities or differences. Also, implementation strategies of orientation programs were tracked to determine best practices for content, context, and modality. Emergent themes were captured to assure these data are not overlooked.

Representing and Visualizing

Once coded for themes and patterns, diagrams and tables are useful in concatenating the qualitative data into categories that provide a typological classification that organizes the data into relationships. Diagrams and tables become modes of exploring themes and theories within the data. Johnson and Christensen (2004) recommended diagrams for sensemaking, deducing linkages and causal relationships in the analysis of the data.

After coding, themes and patterns were identified. These themes and patterns were constructed into diagrams and tables to make further sense of the data. These findings provided insights into emerging trends in trustee orientation programs.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND VALIDITY

Multiple data sources add strength to the study through the convergence of the data toward the understanding of the phenomenon rendering the conclusions trustworthy (Baxter & Jack, 2008). By using a detailed protocol for this research process, this qualitative research study is relevant, reliable, and repeatable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited four elements of trustworthiness for qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability using triangulation, thick description, an inquiry audit, and an audit trail of the research process. Yin (2003) delineated four tests for judging the quality of research designs: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability. These two methods are aligned in Table 12. By implementing these methods through study design and analysis, the findings of the study are transferable and dependable. Orientations are not limited to community college boards of trustees; therefore, what is discovered in this study is applicable and transferable to other orientation processes. The research process is well defined so that it is repeatable; an audit trail is established, documentation is rich, and the data are triangulated.

Table 12: *Trustworthiness and Quality Methods for Qualitative Studies*

TRUSTWORTHINESS ELEMENT	LINCOLN & GUBA TECHNIQUE	YIN FOUR DESIGN TESTS
Credibility	Triangulation: using multiple data sources for deeper understanding of phenomenon Member-checking: confirms participant intentions and aspects of data shared	Construct validity
Transferability	Thick description: the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context	External validity
Dependability	Inquiry audit: having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and product of the research study	Reliability
Confirmability	Audit trail: transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of findings; includes raw data, data reduction and analysis, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, intentions and dispositions materials, instrument development information Triangulation: to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed Reflexivity: attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process (awareness of researcher bias)	Internal validity

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2003)

The planful analysis of the data in this study establishes the rigor and validity of the qualitative study. Creswell (2007) confirmed that one or more method of validation provides the necessary rigor to the research. The implementation of a data analysis plan facilitates handling the volumes of data inherent in qualitative research and reduces the data to their essence through the process of applying the research study frameworks to the coded and themed data. Yin (2009) offered that internal validity is established through the data analysis tactics of pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations, and using logic models. The repetitious nature of data analysis allows for emerging insights to be discovered and explored within the context of the study to answer the research questions, which lead to defendable conclusions.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a well-organized case study database is essential to deriving meaning from the data collected. Making sense of the data collected in a qualitative case study requires intentional organization and ongoing analysis. Yin (2009) cited data collection tactics of multiple sources of evidence and establishing chain of evidence for construct validity and using a case study protocol and a case study database to establish reliability of the study. Developing the codes and themes though the data analysis is an inductive process. Triangulation strengthens the validity of the data sources, which include survey, semistructured interviews, field notes, and documents. Documentation of the research process allows for future duplication of the research.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations for any study are to protect the participants and to conduct the research in a responsible and confidential manner that safeguards the research process. For this study, the protocol included Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval of the research project and consent forms, establishment of an audit trail, codification and storage of the data received, and relevant document identification and codification. IRB approval is the first layer in this process, which evaluates the research protocol and assures ethical research standards are met. This IRB approval is required by Ferris State University, the institution through which this research was conducted. According to Creswell (2012), IRB approval includes a description of the project, the design of the consent forms, and review of the project procedures. The consent form can be found in Appendix C.

The online survey included an electronic consent form at the beginning of the survey. An informed consent form for the semistructured interview was provided to each participant for signature, with one copy kept by the participant and one kept in the research file. The consent form assures the participant and participating institution anonymity and confidentiality and the proper use of the information gathered. The transcriptionist was the researcher, providing an additional layer of confidentiality by limiting the potential exposure of the participants. The final ethical consideration is security of the data. Recordings were destroyed once the transcription was complete and verified as accurate. All data, notes, and documents will be kept in a secure, locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. All data and documents will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study.

Limitations

There are inherent limitations in all research associated with design and methodology of the research (Price & Murnan, 2004). This is minimized by careful, deliberative steps to document the research process to protect the integrity of the research study. Case study is limited by the survey and interview questions and by the guiding questions of the research study. This study was limited to the orientation aspect of the trustee experience and did not explore other aspects of trusteeship.

For participants, they are limited by their memories and powers of recall. Based on this limitation, each participant was asked to provide institutional documents used for their trustee orientation, which is to reinforce their input and help their recall.

Researcher as Tool

In qualitative research, the researcher is an integral instrument of the research, and with the researcher comes researcher bias. Since qualitative research unavoidably includes the researcher's point of view, Creswell (2012) concluded that all research is biased. In that light, as the researcher for this study, I am disclosing my background to allow for these biases to be known. I have worked in community colleges for 14 years, nine of which I was responsible for supporting an Illinois community college board of trustees. In that role, I facilitated four board of trustee elections and the consequent orientations, two trustee appointment processes to replace trustees who resigned and the orientations for those appointees, and annual training and workshops for the trustees; I also managed the board meeting process for the college. I worked closely with the state board for the implementation and communication of state policies for community college boards of trustees, including the addition of required training for trustees regarding the expectations of that role.

This researcher's interests include higher education policy, advocacy, and innovation. I am currently a coordinator of an Illinois community college apprenticeship program. This researcher was vigilant about potential biases and expectations that might impact data analysis based on past personal observations and perceptions of orientation information provided to trustees.

Other research bias can occur through the participants in their ability to recall specific experiences during the interview. To mitigate this bias, the questions were provided to the interview participants ahead of time to allow them to prepare some thoughts, and additional probing questions were asked to encourage recall and response. The documents requested also provided a context and verification for the recollections. Consciously recognizing and acknowledging any anticipated results as they were observed revealed the bias inherent in this qualitative research.

SUMMARY

For this study, case study methodology situated in the qualitative paradigm provided the format to evaluate and assess the topic in a comprehensive and thorough manner. The online survey provided preliminary categorization of the current orientation programs. The semistructured interviews allowed the board liaisons to describe their programs and their perceptions of program effectiveness. The field notes provided additional context and texture to the interviews. The document review established the current frequency, modality, and content of these programs. The systematic coding and analysis of the data revealed emerging patterns and themes. The goal is to present implementation strategies that can be used by community colleges as they facilitate trustee orientation.

CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

Data collection in qualitative research is an intentional process to answer research questions through observation, query, and reflection. The data collected and techniques implemented are determined by the purpose of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This chapter highlights the data collection processes used for this study and the strategies to be implemented in analyzing that data. This chapter includes (a) the participant contact protocol, to affirm the credibility and confirmability of the research; (b) the subject peer group and participant data, to provide a context for understanding and dependability; (c) a summary of the data collected in the research; and (d) data analysis processes.

The purpose of this study is to identify the content and the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body. Guiding questions, which were derived from the purpose of the study, explore the factors that impact the structure of orientation programs and how the colleges meet trustee orientation needs. Data gathered from multiple data sources allow for the triangulation of data through the theoretical framework presented in this study and for data convergence for phenomenological understanding.

PARTICIPANT CONTACT PROTOCOL

This study is limited to the 37 independent Illinois community college institutions. Contact information for these colleges' board professionals was obtained through the Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) office. Initial contact was made through an email invitation to participate in an online survey. The survey gathered demographic information about their board, general trustee training information, and basic content and format for their trustee orientation. The survey also requested voluntary orientation documents and semistructured interview volunteers. The contact protocol began in April 2019 for survey responses and concluded in October 2019 with the final interview. The timeline is shown in Table 13.

Table 13: *Timeline for Online Surveys and Semistructured Interviews*

DATE	SURVEY AND INTERVIEW ACTIONS
April 29, 2019	Initial email inviting participation in the online survey
May 10, 2019	Follow-up email for online survey responses
June 7, 2019	Follow-up email for online survey responses
July 2, 2019	Follow-up email for online survey responses
July 30, 2019	Follow-up email for online survey responses
June 11, 2019	First in-person interview
June 19, 2019	Second in-person interview
June 24, 2019	Third and fourth in-person interviews
September 12, 2019	Outreach email for peer group specific interviews
September 20, 2019	Fifth in-person interview

SUBJECT PEER GROUP AND PARTICIPANT DATA

IBHE has designated peer groups for community colleges across Illinois as defined by institutional size and geographic location. Since institutions that are part of systems were not included in this study, one institution was omitted from Peer Group 3 (Illinois Eastern Community Colleges), and Peer Group 6 was omitted in its entirety (City Colleges of Chicago). The 37 remaining colleges are divided into peer groups, as indicated in Table 14.

Table 14: *Participants by Peer Group*

Peer group designation	Number of colleges	Number participating
Peer Group 1	5	1
Peer Group 2	6	4
Peer Group 3	6	3
Peer Group 4	8	2
Peer Group 5	5	2
Peer Group 7	7	3

Anticipated participants for the study were currently serving as board liaisons/executive assistants who are responsible for board of trustee coordination and communication for their community college. In some instances, the president of the college chose to answer the survey and/or be the individual interviewed for this study. Per the research design, the first volunteer from each peer group would be the participant for the semistructured interview, totaling six semistructured in-person interviews. Designating interviews by peer group allows for maximum variation in the subjects in order to obtain the widest variety of perspectives possible across the case sample to reflect the likelihood of differences based on those designations, as recommended by Creswell (2007).

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED

The data for this study were collected through four methods: online surveys, institutional orientation documents, field notes, and semistructured interviews.

Online Surveys

The online survey was used to gather initial information about the colleges that chose to participate regarding their trustee demographics and orientation programs. There were 15 total respondents, as indicated in Table 14 above, of which two colleges responded that they chose not to submit the survey. There were 13 colleges that provided survey response data to be analyzed in this study. The online survey collected information on (a) the survey demographics of the survey participant and each college's board, (b) board meeting management, (c) board engagement and opportunities for professional development, and (d) orientation program.

Survey Demographic Information

The survey gathered information about the person answering the survey and the college board. As discussed previously, the anticipated participant was the college's board professional, which often is the executive assistant to the college president. The respondents for this survey include three presidents, four executive assistants to the president, three board liaisons/secretaries/recording secretaries, and two gave no response regarding title. Most respondents have served in this capacity for 6 years or less and have facilitated at least two board of trustee elections (see Tables 15 and 16).

Table 15: *Participants' Years in Role*

YEARS IN ROLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
6 or less	8
7–15	3
more than 20	2

Table 16: *Participants' Years Facilitating Board Elections*

NUMBER OF ELECTIONS FACILITATED	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
2–3	7
6 or more	5
none	1

The board demographics of the colleges surveyed briefly describe the eight-member board, seven of which are elected officials and one is the student trustee. Some respondents reported seven trustees and others reported eight trustees, indicating a vacancy not yet filled. The 13 colleges reported the female to male ratio as presented in Table 17.

Table 17: *Responding Boards Female to Male Ratios*

FEMALES : MALES	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
1:6	2
2:6	2
2:5	2
3:5	1
3:4	2

FEMALES : MALES	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
4:3	3
5:2	1

The elected members of the boards of trustees serve 6-year terms; student trustees serve 1-year terms. The elected term ends by law are in odd numbered years; the current term ends are 2021, 2023, and 2025, with two or three members up for election every 2 years. The term end breakdown of the boards surveyed is presented in Table 18.

Table 18: *Trustee Term End Breakdown of Colleges Surveyed*

2021:2023:2025	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
2:2:2	1
2:2:3	4
2:3:2	4
2:3:3	1
3:2:2	2
3:2:3	1

Board Meeting Management Information

The survey requested information regarding board management, specifically about their board packet/book. The terms *board packet* and *board book* are used interchangeably and refer to the material shared with the board for each board meeting, usually including the agenda, board exhibits, financial reports, and any other information that will be addressed at the meeting. Only two colleges utilize a board packet/book software system to manage the packet used at board meetings. Such systems require a login and some level of training to use the system, and they often make it easier to manage the materials being shared. The other 11 colleges use a pdf-formatted board packet/book, and some of those do still print out the packet for their boards. Participants at seven colleges reported that their boards are comfortable with the format used for the board packet/book, whereas five participants acknowledged their board of trustees have some level of discomfort with the technology they are asked to use in their role as trustee.

Board Engagement Information

The level of board engagement with trustee organizations was relatively consistent. All 13 colleges reported participation by their board members with the Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA). Of these, seven reported ICCTA board and committee participation by their trustees. At the national level, 12 colleges reported trustee participation with the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Only five colleges reported trustee participation on ACCT board and committees. Only one college reported trustee involvement with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB).

Orientation Program Information

The survey also requested information about their board training and orientation programs. Orientation is part of the professional development for board members, and some colleges are more intentional in how these training opportunities develop the board members into a governing body. By understanding the training each college offers its board, orientation is put into a comprehensive context. All participants indicated that their trustees participated in some form of training with state-mandated training and board retreats being the most common. Most offered board of trustee orientation programs. Some offered individual training, seminars, and full board trainings. Few offered small group trainings (see Table 19).

Table 19: *College Board of Trustee Training and Orientation Programs*

Type of training	Number of respondents
State-mandated trainings	12
Board retreats	11
Orientation programs	10
Individual trainings	9
Seminars	9
Full board trainings	8
Small group training	2

College-initiated training takes place on an ongoing basis at four colleges, twice a year at two colleges, annually at five colleges, and every 2 years at two colleges. Only one college utilizes a mentor system in the training of their trustees. An outside consultant/facilitator is used by 11 of the 13 colleges for different types of training and functions, including board self-evaluations, “boardsmanship,” mission and vision, equity and governance, and retreats.

Orientation is conducted commensurate with the board elections every 2 years with annual training for the student trustee, who changes every year. The reported time necessary for orientation ranges from 1 hour to 4 hours. The session may be led by the college president, the board chair, another board member, the board secretary, senior administrators, or any combination of these. Orientation may consist of an extended lunch meeting and/or a series of meetings with senior administrators, and may include an extensive binder of information or a list of board resources. Content of the session varies by college. Frequency of common topics is shown in Table 20.

Table 20: *Common Topics in Board Orientation*

Topic	Colleges reporting inclusion in orientation
College institutional information	13
College facts	13
Mission/purpose	12
Budget/finances	12
Code of conduct	12
Operations	11
Calendar	11
Trusteeship	11
Trusteeship as individual	11
Trusteeship as a board	11
Meeting protocol	11
College history	10
Unions	10
Community colleges in general	10
Trustee expectations	10
Trustee responsibilities	10
Enrollment	9
Shared governance	9

Topic	Colleges reporting inclusion in orientation
Accreditation	9
State and national legislation	9
Group decision making	9
Advocacy	7
State issues	6
Trustee position description	6
Academic freedom	4
National issues	4
Regional issues	3

Under other topics covered, colleges offered conflict of interest, strategic plan, and master facilities plan. The subjective aspect of this reporting reflects how the college representative classified what they provide in orientation and if they felt the topics listed were inclusive. The colleges reported using a variety of sources for their orientation materials, leveraging ICCTA and ACCT materials and web-accessible information, providing print materials and web links.

Institutional Orientation Documents

The survey participants indicated whether they would provide an orientation agenda and/or other materials for the research study. These documents are evidence of college trustee orientation frequency, modalities, and content. In conjunction with the survey, the documents provide a fuller picture of the information provided to trustees through their orientation. Eight colleges agreed to share their orientation agenda. Seven agreed to share their orientation materials with their agenda. Agendas were received from nine colleges, and agendas plus materials from five colleges.

All colleges participating in the survey have an organized process for orienting their new board members. The agendas were clear in what was to be covered. There were commonalities among the materials referenced and provided to trustees as part of their orientation, as shown in Table 21.

Table 21: *Board Orientation Agendas and Materials by Topic*

Topic	Number of Colleges Mentioning
Open Meetings Act	9
College facts/history	8
Board calendar	8
Administration information	7
Statement of economic interest/ethics	7
Board policy manual	6
ICCTA new trustee handbook	6
Strategic plan	6
ICCTA information/ICCB information	6
ACCT information	6
Board responsibilities/duties	5
Legal responsibilities	5
College finances/budget	5
Campus master/facilities plan/construction	4

Topic	Number of Colleges Mentioning
Illinois Community College Act	3
Trustee training opportunities	3
Student trustee	3
Accreditation	3
College enrollment information	2
Tuition and fees	2
FOIA information	2
Board travel policy	2
Illinois legislative information	2
Emergency operations plan	2
Collective bargaining/unions	2
Annual report	2
Foundation and grant funding	1
Board memberships	1
FERPA/HIPAA	1
Mission/vision/values	1
Environmental scan	1
Sustainability plan	1
AACC information	1
Federal legislation (financial aid, Title IX, grants)	1
Operational plan	1
Institutional effectiveness measures	1

Again, being a topic list, the college agendas for orientation listed general topics that may have included more than was listed. The agenda and materials are a guideline for the actual orientation session to which each college brings its own interpretation and understanding.

Field Notes

Both observational and reflective field notes were used for this research. The field notes describe the experiences and observations made by the researcher throughout the interview process, about the participants, the interview session, and the researcher's reflections. Field notes were recorded immediately following each interview to capture the reflections while they were still fresh in the researcher's mind. This reflective context for each interview provides the rich, descriptive information to supplement the interpretation of the findings and conclusions drawn in this study.

Semistructured Interview

As the primary method of data collection, the semistructured interview allows for open, two-way conversational dialogue to reveal objective data about each college's orientation program. The interview allows for researcher response to emerging perceptions of the responses, gaining clarity and exploring more deeply the ideas discussed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

There were five individual interviews for this study from the eight survey participants who indicated they were willing to be interviewed. Per the established protocol, the first positive response from each peer group was interviewed, which meant some who were willing to participate were not included in the interview phase of this research. As indicated, board professionals were the expected candidates. Some of the volunteers were senior-level executives and presidents of their colleges. Since their response indicated they were the individual responsible for their college's orientation, they were eligible for inclusion in this study. The first three interviews were executive assistants to the president, all female. The other two were presidents, both male. Interviews were conducted in their offices on their campuses.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCESSES

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a well-organized case study database is essential to deriving meaning from the data collected. Making sense of the data collected in a qualitative case study requires intentional organization and ongoing analysis. Developing the codes and themes through data analysis is an inductive process. Triangulation strengthens the validity of the data sources, which include the online survey, semistructured interviews, field notes, and institutional documents.

For this study, case study methodology provided the format to evaluate and assess the topic in a comprehensive and thorough manner. The survey provided preliminary categorization of the current programs. The semistructured interviews allowed the liaisons to describe their programs and the programs' effectiveness. The field notes provided additional context and texture to the interviews. The document review established the current frequency, modality, and content of these programs. The systematic coding and analysis of the data revealed emerging patterns and themes. The goal was to present implementation strategies that can be used by community colleges as they facilitate trustee orientation.

This section provides an overview of the strategies used to analyze the data gleaned from the six participants. Marshall and Rossman (1999) vividly described this important step in the research process as “bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat” (p. 111).

The analysis of the data followed Creswell’s (2007) spiral framework, as articulated in chapter 3. This spiral includes four stages: (1) data managing; (2) reading and memoing; (3) describing, classifying, and interpreting; and (4) representing and visualizing. The first two stages are explained in this section. In addition, an initial discussion of Stage 3, which includes describing, classifying, and interpreting, is presented. This discussion provides the framework for the detailed analysis presented in chapter 5. Stage 4, which includes representing and visualizing, is presented in chapter 6.

Initial Coding

Throughout the data analysis process, it is vital to maintain confidentiality. As such, the data throughout the analysis was designated only by the peer group represented to protect the identities of the colleges and the participants. Table 22 summarizes the peer group designations and the corresponding designations that are used to present and analyze the data.

Table 22: *Designations of Peer Group Interviewees, Survey, Documents, and Field Notes*

Peer Group	Interviewee Designation	Survey Designation	Documents Designation	Field Notes Designation
1	PG1-I	PG1-Sa	PG1-Da	PG1-FN
2	PG2-I	PG2-Sa	PG2-Da	PG2-FN

Peer group	Interviewee designation	Survey designation	Documents designation	Field notes designation
		PG2-Sb	PG2-Db	
		PG2-Sc	PG2-Dc	
3	PG3-I	PG3-Sa	PG3-Da	PG3-FN
		PG3-Sb	PG3-Db	
		PG3-S3c		
4		PG4-Sa		
		PG4-Sb		
5	PG5-I	PG5-Sa	PG5-Da	PG5-FN
7	PG7-I	PG7-Sa	PG7-Da	PG7-FN
		PG7-Sb	PG7-Db	
		PG7-Sc	PG7-Dc	

A Priori Themes

The analysis framework is a combination of theories and concepts derived from the literature review chapter. The transient nature of community college boards of trustees means that there are always new members who are more than likely unfamiliar with the nature of higher education and the governance of these institutions. The intent of this study is to gain insight into orientation programs for trustee members at Illinois community colleges to appropriately develop their skills, to prioritize the function of a trustee as a member of a board in group decision making and governance, and to identify effective implementation strategies for board orientation programs.

A priori themes were derived from the study's conceptual framework. These concepts and theories of (a) group decision making and board governance, (b) flipped boardroom model, and (c) adult learning theory are manifested in the following ways:

1. *Governance responsibilities*: Does the current orientation process prepare the new trustee to govern?
2. *Flipped boardroom model*: Knowing a flipped classroom aids in student success and comprehension of materials, have efforts been made to flip the boardroom?
3. *Adult learning theory*: Is the college orientation structured to meet their needs as adult learners?

Coding and analysis of the data collected from interviews, online surveys, documents, and field notes were aligned to these a priori themes. Emerging themes were also captured and coded to ensure that data were not lost. The three themes align with the purpose of the study and its driving questions, as summarized in Table 23.

Table 23: *Linkage of the Driving Questions to A Priori Themes*

DRIVING QUESTION	THEME
How do current orientation programs facilitate trustees' understanding of their function as a board in group decision making and effective governance for their community college?	Governance Leadership Model • Fiduciary • Strategic • Generative
What orientation program implementation strategies are employed by Illinois community colleges to develop their trustees as effective leaders in college governance?	Trower's Flipped Boardroom Concept
How and in what ways do orientation programs for trustees of Illinois community colleges meet their needs as adult learners?	Knowles' Adult Learning Theory

SUMMARY

The volume and complexity of data collected in qualitative research makes transparency a challenge. This chapter has focused on displaying and articulating the data in a clear and concise manner, confirming transparency and credibility. These data from the surveys indicate that the colleges have orientations for their boards of trustees and offer other opportunities for development as governance bodies. The information they cover in their orientations is similar, with a focus on preparing the trustees for their first board meeting, but it does have some variation in how it is prioritized and how expectations are communicated. It is often presented in a traditional format of presenter and audience, and some is given to them as resources for individual exploration. The next chapter will analyze the semistructured interview data.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and is organized by the questions posed to the participants interviewed for this study. The purpose of this research is to identify the content and the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body. The driving questions were developed from the purpose statement with the intent to gain insights into board orientations as they exist and identify those factors that constitute an effective orientation program. These driving questions informed the data collections methods, interview questions, and surveys, which were designed to identify the content, context, and modality of current board orientation programs.

The first section examines how current community college trustee orientation programs facilitate the trustees' understanding of their function as a board in group decision making and generative governance for their community college. The questions explore development as a group to make group decisions and the three roles trustees have in a generative governance model: fiduciary, strategic, and generative. The analysis looked for indicators of the depth of training for each of these areas identified.

The second section looks at orientation program implementation strategies that are employed by Illinois community colleges to develop their trustees as effective leaders in college governance. These questions are intended to identify how trustees are engaged in their orientation training. Analysis involved identifying the factors that drive the decisions the colleges made in implementing their orientation program and applying the flipped boardroom theory to result in the trustees being responsible for their level of engagement.

The third section explores the ways orientation programs for trustees of Illinois community colleges meet their needs as adult learners. Trustees come to their role at various stages of preparedness and knowledge of the community college system. All indicate their desire to learn what is necessary in their self-actuating behavior of running for this elected position. The data are analyzed based on the flexibility of the orientation in meeting the preferences of each trustee as an adult learner.

The participants were interviewed at their specific community college to put them at ease during the process. The participants were provided the interview questions in the week prior to their interview for their review and preparation, included in an email describing the nature of the research and confirming their willingness to participate. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. After the taped interviews were transcribed, member checks were performed with the participants, allowing each participant the opportunity to review and correct the interview transcript prior to coding and theming. No changes were submitted by the participants.

Data analysis followed the Creswell’s (2007) steps in his data analysis spiral, which provided the analysis framework for the study. Creswell’s spiral progresses through four stages: (1) data managing; (2) reading and memoing; (3) describing, classifying, and interpreting; and (4) representing and visualizing. Stage 1, as applied in this study, has been described in chapter

4. Stage 2, reading and memoing, and Stage 3, describing, classifying, and interpreting, are the processes executed and described in chapter 5. Chapter 6, Conclusions, corresponds to Creswell's Stage 4, the representation and visualization of that data analysis and the resulting conclusions.

Following Creswell's (2007) second stage of the data analysis framework, the transcripts were read multiple times, checking for word/concept alignment and frequency. Initial reactions, annotations, thoughts, reflections, and themes were captured in memos as they emerged from the data. These memos provided the basis for the next step in the analysis.

Proceeding in this iterative process, Stage 3 of describing, classifying, and interpreting was implemented by coding the transcripts in a first and second cycle. First cycle coding for this study included In Vivo Coding and Descriptive Coding (Saldana, 2016). Saldana (2016) recommended In Vivo Coding for qualitative studies that prioritize participants' voices in that it is verbatim coding, coding that uses the actual words of the participants. Descriptive Coding utilizes topics to categorize the data, providing an organizational grasp of the study (Saldana, 2016). This is similar to what Creswell (2007) identified in the categorical aggregations. Major themes are identified that are integrated around the central core leading to the eventual research conclusions. This process of coding and categorizing was repeated and reviewed multiple times. This continuous reductive process of defining and testing codes as they emerge from the data lies at the heart of the qualitative analysis process (Creswell, 2008).

As identified in chapter 4, the interviewees were coded by peer group, as highlighted in Table 24. These designations were used to assure the participants' confidentiality.

Table 24: *Designations of Peer Group Interviewees, Survey, Documents, and Field Notes*

PEER GROUP	INTERVIEWEE DESIGNATION	SURVEY DESIGNATION	DOCUMENTS DESIGNATION	FIELD NOTES DESIGNATION
1	PG1-I	PG1-Sa	PG1-Da	PG1-FN
2	PG2-I	PG2-Sa	PG2-Da	PG2-FN
		PG2-Sb	PG2-Db	
		PG2-Sc	PG2-Dc	
3	PG3-I	PG3-Sa	PG3-Da	PG3-FN
		PG3-Sb	PG3-Db	
		PG3-S3c		
4		PG4-Sa		
		PG4-Sb		
5	PG5-I	PG5-Sa	PG5-Da	PG5-FN
7	PG7-I	PG7-Sa	PG7-Da	PG7-FN
		PG7-Sb	PG7-Db	
		PG7-Sc	PG7-Dc	

SECTION I: GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP IN ORIENTATION

The unfamiliar nature of community colleges to most new trustees is a paramount consideration for some type of role orientation. Their role as a member of a governing board may also be a new experience for them, requiring not only detailed new information but how it then correlates to practical application. In order to properly assess and align the goals of their orientation programs, community college board professionals need to prioritize their college's orientation objectives. The first conceptual framework for transcript analysis is governance leadership, addressed in four questions.

Orientation Program Objectives

The board professionals interviewed were asked to identify the three or four main objectives of their college's board of trustee orientation program (see Table 25).

Table 25: *Community College Main Objectives of Trustee Orientation*

Q: What are the three or four main objectives of your college's board of trustee orientation?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	Introduce that person to (our college) . . . who we are and what we do, through the years we've had board members who don't really know what we are . . . their role and our role.
PG2-I	Primary responsibilities is to be sure the board is well oriented, well informed and continually work the board; there are state requirements for orientation in their 1st, 3rd, and 5th years, the ICCB training.
PG3-I	Familiarize them with college operations, and introduce them to the administrative team, and let them know what is required of them legally, Open Meeting Act training, trustee training 1st, 3rd, and 5th years.
PG5-I	Get them familiar with the institution as a whole, to know about the board's governance role and how they operate, to be knowledgeable across the board about the college, the community, and then the state of Illinois.
PG7-I	Looking at the materials we provided them this year, trusteeship, communications, and we provided organizational structures. So in that also is the strategic plan.

The responses from all participants were similar, indicating that because the trustees were new to their community college board, the trustees were likely unfamiliar with the college they have chosen to govern. The three areas that were brought forth include that the board orientation needs to help new trustees gain an understanding of their role as a member of a governing board and as a college trustee in relationship to the role of the college president and the college administration, specifically, learning what their governance responsibilities are versus college administrators' operational responsibilities in an intentional effort to pre-empt micromanagement by the board. Interestingly, the Carver Model of Board Governance was specifically mentioned as the governance model used by one college, PG5-I:

> We use the Carver Model, it's basically they set policies, and they don't get to decide how we do things . . . they say "Hey, we want to increase the success rate by 5%" and that's it. They set the goal and we figure out how to get there. (PG5-I)

This model clearly defines what is governance and what is operational, provides guidelines for how a governing board should function, and defines those roles within the governance system from chair to secretary to trustee. Common modes of orientation engagement mentioned by the participants included annual board retreats, ICCTA seminars, and sessions before or during board meetings. The importance of the orientation was emphasized by all participants as the mechanism that provides the knowledge necessary for the trustee to perform the role to which they were elected.

Fiduciary Duties

As part of governance leadership, the financial duties include their budget responsibilities, fiscal accountability, funding and sources, and operations (Chait et al., 2005). To prepare their trustees for these responsibilities, most colleges briefly cover the finances in the initial orientation and then arrange for a one-on-one meeting with the college's chief financial officer (vice president, executive vice president, or other title) to go into detail and answer specific questions. The use of a subject matter expert was noted by all of those interviewed. They identified the need for trustees to understand the funding model and how that has shifted over time to rely more heavily on tuition versus an equal portion coming from the state. This leads to their input into alternative sources and funding models. See Table 26.

Table 26: *Orientation Preparation for Fiduciary Responsibilities*

Q: How does your orientation prepare your trustees for their fiduciary responsibilities?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	Probably not as much as it should . . . we talk about tuition rates, establishing tax rates, that type of thing, but when we get to that meeting where the board adopts the budget, prior to that we have 2 retreats that address that specifically. The budget is addressed very detailed with our vice president who is our CFO.
PG2-I	Each of my cabinet members has time with them to give detailed orientation to what they deal with. A lot of time with the CFO, to not only understand how we budget and how we are going to be presenting their materials to them, but also you get into the levy, you get into tort, you get into these different things that they need to understand.
PG3-I	Meeting with the CFO would prepare them for that and with the president, because they'll have an appointment with each of the members of the cabinet.
PG5-I	The financial, fiduciary is very, very important and so we spend time showing them all the books . . . materials are available, books, publications, audit reports, everything, we don't hide anything.
PG7-I	Our college leadership team is present during the orientation, so our college vice president of business and finances provides budget information, so he provides the part of the presentation that includes the budget touching on the accounts and our annual budget.

Trustees must understand their fiduciary duties and responsibilities in order to make those decisions for their college. Orientation and time with the campus vice president begin that process, which is facilitated by other training sessions, like the state seminars, national conferences, and additional resources new trustees can participate in to gain fiduciary expertise, as mentioned by PG2-I, PG3-I, and PG5-I.

Strategic Duties

The strategic duties of governance leadership include strategic partnerships, the strategic plan and planning, setting and reporting measures and indicators, and advocacy at all levels (Chait et al., 2005). Preparing trustees for their strategic planning and accountability responsibilities was a topic many colleges handle superficially with their boards, informing them about the plan instead of involving them in the planning process. Often, the topic is discussed one-on-one with the chief planning officer (PG1-I, PG2-I, PG5-I, PG7-I), or reviewed at the annual board retreat (PG3-I, PG5-I), with updates on the metrics given regularly throughout the year. Again, the use of a subject matter expert is to be noted. The state seminars the trustees attend also were mentioned as a resource for the trustees to increase this area of knowledge, both the required sessions and the voluntary sessions. One college specifically mentioned the national conference run by ACCT as a resource used by their trustees (PG5-I). See Table 27.

Table 27: *Orientation Preparation for Strategic Planning and Accountability*

Q: In what ways does your orientation prepare your trustees for the strategic planning and accountability responsibilities?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	Not detailed in this (orientation) agenda . . . a senior board member . . . follows this agenda but then kind of it becomes more, it becomes less structured, to toss out a topic and give that member an opportunity to ask questions.
PG2-I	Each cabinet member has time with them to give a detailed orientation to what they deal with . . . so a lot of time with our chief planning officer, talk about the strategic plan, talk about the metrics we have that display where we are regarding the strategic plan.
PG3-I	The orientation does not. We give them a copy of the strategic plan what’s going to prepare them for this is they’re having a board retreat in June to talk about the tactics and strategies.

Q: In what ways does your orientation prepare your trustees for the strategic planning and accountability responsibilities?	
Peer group	Response
PG5-I	They are part of the strategic planning process, and so if it falls at the time when we are going through the process then they are part of it. But otherwise part of their orientation is to share with then the strategic plan, how we got there and . . . what we are doing.
PG7-I	We did this year, we're in the process of a new strategic plan, so the president did present the strategic plan where we are. The board is going to be adopting that hopefully at the August meeting. (The president) has quarterly meetings . . . where we are in the strategic plan process.

Community college trustees are responsible for the strategic direction of the college and therefore must prioritize their role in that plan. The orientation, board retreat, and time with the chief strategic planning officer provide multiple opportunities for the new trustees to comprehend how the strategic plan and the strategies implemented support the college mission and determine the direction the college takes to fulfill that mission. Interview participants acknowledge a cursory review of the current college plan and the board's role in the strategic planning process. Some emphasized the board's involvement in the development of the strategic plan (PG3-I, PG5-I, PG7-I).

Generative Duties

Governance leadership makes clear that governing includes the generative duties of leadership, creativity, sense making, and learning/discerning (Chait et al., 2005). It is evident from the interviews that most colleges have not leveraged their boards of trustees' broad knowledge to develop institution-wide, mission-focused goals nor to assist in direction setting. It is also possible that those interviewed are not able to articulate the role their board plays in making institutional decisions beyond vetting the ideas presented and voting whether or not to financially support the goals that are presented to them. One board intentionally does not have committees for the express purpose of keeping all members involved in all processes and all decisions (PG2-I). The cyclical nature of the strategic planning process was noted by a few colleges (PG1-I, PG5-I). For most, it consists of the president's cabinet members informing the board of the actions being taken and the recommended decisions for a particular issue, and then reporting back on the status of those initiatives at regular intervals (PG2-I, PG3-I, PG5-I). The use of subject matter experts in this regard should be noted. See Table 28.

Table 28: *Orientation Preparation for Institution-Wide, Mission-Focused Goal and Direction Setting*

Q: How does your orientation prepare your trustees for their institution-wide, mission-focused goal and direction setting role?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	It's kind of cyclical, because it's the strategic plan that's actually presented by the president and then his evaluation with board goals or he are tied to the strategic plan.
PG2-I	Not very well. We have our strategic plan . . . but it's difficult to actively engage the board with that, with the way my board is because my board doesn't want to micromanage. We don't have committees . . . they are really proud that everybody is involved, and they don't want, like with finance, for a couple of people to be sort of directing the board, dictating that.
PG3-I	That's what they learn in meeting with the cabinet members.
PG5-I	We have a retreat in June, every June . . . and that's when they do their planning . . . they get to be part of it and they get a better input process, and it's here you get information, and you provide input also.
PG7-I	New president . . . held community and staff chats and work sessions and out of that has developed that we have to tweak our mission and our vision, so we are also presenting that with our new mission and vision and values has been part of the new strategic plan as well to make that change all at one time.

The participants indicated that generative governance for their trustees was limited to how the trustees engaged with the development of the strategic plan for the college and in the review and update of the mission, vision, and values as part of that process. Even when the college mission, vision, and values are reviewed and updated, the participants reported that the board role is not substantial but that the trustees are just another source of input to the process, often with the same weight as other constituent groups (PG7-I).

SECTION II: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The implementation strategies for trustee orientation reflect the college's prioritization of information and ability to meet trustee needs. Trustee engagement in orientation is impacted by these decisions and the college's responsiveness to their identified needs. Limitations as identified by the participants are also highlighted.

Factors Determining Arrangement

Arrangements and modality for the orientation session are individual to each college and limited by college resources and the technological ability of the trustees involved. The flipped boardroom model recommends a format that expects trustees to prepare for discussions prior to the meeting, providing the data necessary for that discussion, using catalyst questions, encouraging dialogue and debate, and separating deliberations from decisions (Trower, 2015). This separation of deliberation and decision suggests a two- or three-meeting schedule for the decision process, possibly a committee of the whole meeting for discussion the same month as the board meeting, or stretching out the decision process over multiple monthly meetings, which means clear planning and scheduling to meet specific calendar year deadlines.

The Open Meetings Act (Illinois General Assembly, 2017a) requires official notices and open meeting protocols when a specific number of trustees are gathered for the purpose of board business, including training. This was a factor mentioned by most of the participants with regard to not holding a full board orientation and in arranging individual meetings with the new elected trustees.

Interview participants noted a variety of formats for their orientation sessions. Paper packets and electronic packets are split among the colleges, with the preference of the trustee being accommodated. Orientation is face-to-face for all respondents, some in small groups and most are one-on-one to best address each trustee's needs in regard to the level and depth of information and as noted with regard to the Open Meetings Act. Ongoing orientation was emphasized by two interview participants (PG2-I, PG5-I), who indicated that the information shared is more relevant and better understood when that issue is being addressed in the yearly cycle of the board actions instead of once at the beginning of their term and relying on them to remember this information later. Orientation was referred to as "on-the-job training" by one college (PG5-I). The state orientation materials were used by most colleges, along with enforcement of the state requirement for 1st year, 3rd year, and 5th year trustee training (PG1-I, PG2-I, PG3-I, PG5-I, PG7-I). See Table 29.

Table 29: *Factors Determining Orientation Arrangement*

Q: What were the factors that determined how you arranged the orientation sessions (face-to-face, online, packets, modules, etc.)?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	We are electronic for board materials . . . preference is face-to-face orientation . . . we go to them . . . either breakfast or lunch, that type of thing, it's usually a couple of hours, they are provided this (agenda). All of our board members receive a college-issued surface tablet for accessing our website, to get to Sharepoint.
PG2-I	We do face-to-face, and we know that there's a state online or DVD (orientation), . . . our stuff is face-to-face with all kinds of handouts that they can take and then ask questions anytime. It really is an ongoing orientation.
PG3-I	Face-to-face and we give them this, we give them a list of links, the org chart, (etc.) . . . . Some of them want to have a paper packet, others, very few, want to have an electronic.
PG5-I	We start with the orientation before the orientation and that's face-to-face, and I like it that way because they have to be on campus, come to the campus, . . . and then I open it up to them if they need any further information online or by email. (The post-election orientation) we try to do it before seating if we are able to do that (on an individual basis). . . . We try to learn what motivates them, what are their issues and concerns and I take notes and information that is not clear we need to get them publications because even though I have given them information in general already by April/May. So part of it is formal and part of it is informal and part of it is on-the-job training.
PG7-I	Our trustees determine that . . . . Our new trustee though wanted everything in paper form, was not very tech savvy, let's say. So, I think the answer to that question is it depends on who's elected and their capabilities.

Orientation starts before the election for one college.

> We start our orientation after they file to run for the board, which is different, we don't wait for them to be elected before, it is when they are running because they may have so many misconceptions about what a board member does or (what) it entails. (PG5-I)

Accommodating the need for education about the role before the election is admirable. It recognizes the lack of knowledge that exists in general about the role and its commensurate responsibilities and seeks to fill that need before the election takes place. This intentionality ensures that the trustee candidates know the expectations and limitations of the role before being seated and are not caught by surprise, including that it is a non-paid elected role.

Effectiveness of Arrangements

Most participants responded that the face-to-face arrangements for their orientation allowed for the trustees' questions to be addressed as they arose. The resources provided allow the trustee to access information to develop their knowledge in their own time about the issues they choose to address (PG1-I). The arrangements and format do not seem to reflect the flipped boardroom model, which embeds effectiveness by goal setting, using small groups (committees) for discussions and activities, distributive leadership, and collective learning accountability (Trower, 2015). Materials are also not provided prior to the orientation for the trustee to review and come prepared for the orientation with questions. The orientation offered does not seem to effectively develop their governance leadership skills as thoroughly as it could. See Table 30.

Table 30: *Orientation Engagement Based on Arrangements*

Q: Do you feel these orientation arrangements work to engage the trustees in the material necessary to develop the trustees as governance leaders?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	Yes, and you'll see there we try to provide them with everything from the statutes to the Open Meetings Act, or where they can go to find that. But we kind of leave it to a certain point up to the individual board member it's his or her responsibility, we can provide materials but it's his or her responsibility to review those and become informed.
PG2-I	The length of orientation (for a member with previous experience with a governing board) will be much different than a person who has a no idea about how we're funded and what account receivables are, etc.
PG3-I	Some prefer paper packet to electronic packet. Orientation appointments with the cabinet are scheduled at their convenience individually. This combined with the training that they get to take. The ICCTA offers training, our attorney

Q: Do you feel these orientation arrangements work to engage the trustees in the material necessary to develop the trustees as governance leaders?	
Peer group	Response
	offers, this is the trustee training as required by Statute I the 1st, 3rd, and 5th year of their term, that also helps.
PG5-I	(adjust based on member needs)
PG7-I	Yes, we provided the trustee with a lot of materials as well.

The orientations described rely on the individual trustee to acclimate to the group governance they are implementing without metrics of effective execution, measuring how well they understand that role. Some institutions intentionally provide topical background information throughout the year as part of the annual cycle of responsibilities in recognition that new trustees have a steep learning curve about their various responsibilities (PG3-I, PG5-I).

SECTION III: ADULT LEARNER NEEDS

As adult individuals, trustees have varying needs and preferences for how they process information and learn new concepts. Since trustees are at varying stages of knowledge about community college governance, the orientation needs to be flexible and responsive to each trustee’s needs and schedule.

Responsiveness to Individual Needs

Orientation for adult learners recognizes that trustees have a need to know, takes into account their prior experience, and is therefore responsive to their learning style (Knowles et al., 2015). The colleges recognize that most new trustees are unfamiliar with higher education and the culture that comes with it.

> [The] first board meeting for them can be overwhelming, we try to make them feel at ease . . . we just make sure there's a quite a bit of dialogue about the duties of the board in the orientation and legal responsibilities. (PG1-I)

The acronyms used by the college and by higher education in general are not familiar to most new trustees. This is addressed in board orientation as a separate topic, with the trustees often provided a reference sheet with the common acronyms identified and explained. See Table 31.

Table 31: *Orientation Adjustment Capabilities*

Q: Are you able to adjust your college's orientation to meet individual trustees' needs?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	We have a (current) trustee who kind of chairs the process, actually does that, basically just here's what we're going to do, here are the resources we are going to reference, . . . the agenda that's separate for that sets the stage for here's what we're going to do for the next few hours and here's what we hope you feel we have accomplished.
PG2-I	We have handouts . . . that's up to the individual cabinet member to decide the best way of doing that (paper or electronic). You set the stage about the importance of it by starting with mission, vision, values and then letting them understand their role within that, and then . . . there's a script in that, this is what I want to cover, but it is a dialogue.
PG3-I	No.
PG5-I	We project the PowerPoint on the wall and provide a copy for them . . . we (assume) you don't know the college well.
PG7-I	We use our boardroom . . . we work with the trustee to find an appropriate time that works with their schedule and we have the entire team in the boardroom presenting.

Some colleges make the effort to adjust orientation to each new trustee based on their demonstrated knowledge and past experiences. For example, someone who has previously worked with higher education will not necessarily need the same orientation as someone who has no prior knowledge of how community colleges are funded or the laws that govern their functions (PG1-I). For many of the interviewed colleges, the structure is determined by the trustee as to location and mode (paper or electronic), is set up as a dialogue as opposed to a lecture and is responsive to the questions the trustees have about any given topic (PG2-I).

Actions to Facilitate Learning

The colleges responded that they feel they are responsive to and accommodating of the needs of each trustee when it comes to the orientation. Adult learning theory allows for an orientation that is self-directed, acknowledging the adult's readiness to learn and motivation to learn, and provides an environment conducive to learning (Knowles et al., 2015). The actual learning is up to "the individual board member, it's his or her responsibility, we can provide the materials but it's his or her responsibility to review those and become informed" (PG1-I). There is an agenda for the face-to-face orientation and resources for them to explore outside of the orientation (PG1-I, PG2-I, PG5-I, PG-7). The colleges provide the necessary materials and resources; it then becomes the self-motivation of the trustees to develop the skills and knowledge they require to become effective governance leaders. See Table 32.

Table 32: *Setting the Stage for Orientation*

Q: What do you do to set the stage for learning and engagement during orientation?	
Peer group	Response
PG1-I	Orientations are always individual; we don't do them as a group . . . we try to anticipate their questions
PG2-I	You accept people where they are and then try to get them where (you think) they need to be.
PG3-I	(No answer.)
PG5-I	We do things like what are the demographics of the district compared to our enrollment, the tuition, what is the tuition trend, what does it mean when we say that community college is affordable, . . . enrollment trends and completion . . . we want them to know about the college well enough.
PG7-I	We work with the trustee to find an appropriate time that works with their schedule and we have the entire team in the boardroom presenting.

The participants interviewed emphasized their willingness to accommodate the new trustees in the orientation process. "You accept people where they are and then try to get them where (you think) they need to be" (PG2-I). Facilitating that process can mean providing the right information, being in a conducive environment, and being thoughtful about scheduling orientation sessions.

Evaluating Effectiveness of Training

The ability of the colleges to evaluate the effectiveness of their orientation program is limited by lack of an instrument with which to measure that development. For evaluation of board orientation, adult learning theory recommends an assessment of the adult's understanding and evidence of problem-solving skills within the community college concept (Knowles et al., 2015). There is currently no formal structure that provides that assessment for community college boards. The ongoing nature of orientation as trustees encounter the various aspects of their board governance role makes a one-time assessment unfeasible. See Table 33.

Table 33: *Assessment of Trustee Understanding After Orientation*

Q: How do you know they understand their role, the material, the expectations of being a trustee once orientation is complete?	
Peer Group	Response
PG1-I	I don't think you do. I don't think you know until you get into the first few meetings or you have those issues that might be a little more difficult. . . . I think the goal of the orientation is to make them feel as prepared as they possibly can be until they have those (issues) . . . the questions that they would have we try to anticipate.

Q: How do you know they understand their role, the material, the expectations of being a trustee once orientation is complete?	
Peer group	Response
PG2-I	By how they perform as board members. . . . They choose to get elected, they find value in it, and I think they find ongoing value and part of what I do in my president's report is make sure they see that value. We have a lot of celebrations . . . they're onstage for the graduation, they're invited to events, they see what is going on. . . . I think the whole culture of our board encourages them to really be, to stay up on things so they can give valuable input.
PG3-I	Have to wait and see . . . I think a lot of that depends on whether they've served on a board before and they know what's expected or whether this is their first time out. Depends a lot on their personality as well.
PG5-I	It's their level of participation, we have the retreats shortly thereafter and usually a day and a half, and so very informal, and we go over things, and to what extent they ask the questions and the concerns, and so forth, we are able to tell. We know there is a lot of material available for them and so we go over a period of time introducing more and more materials, one of them is professional development. There is a handbook for our (board) professional development.
PG7-I	That's a difficult question, that's a tricky one. I think the best answer to that is their interaction at board meetings that follow up, the questions they ask then you understand whether they grasp the process or not.

The participants responded that they can gauge its effectiveness only by how well the trustees participate and engage in their role, the material, and the expectations of being a trustee at the first board meeting or thereafter (PG1-I, PG2-I, PG3-I, PG5-I, and PG7-I). Observation and personal interaction with the trustees also provide some indication of how well orientation prepared them for their role. The ongoing nature of the trustees' learning through the iterative, annual college cycle means ongoing evaluation would be necessary.

FIRST CYCLE AND SECOND CYCLE CODING

Stage 3—describing, classifying, and interpreting—is accomplished in the first cycle through In Vivo Coding, as conducted in the previous section, which revealed commonalities and variations in responses. Based on memos and this analysis, it became evident that the level of response and expectations of orientation differ by administrative position. Those that are administrative professionals in the role of board liaison had a limited view of board orientation. Those in a president role viewed orientation as part of ongoing professional development of the board, particularly since it's difficult to prepare a trustee for a situation that has not occurred, may not occur, or for which the board member has no context.

The Descriptive Coding of the interviews as part of the first cycle coding led to a group of descriptors for the relevant construct for orientation programs for community college boards. See Figure 2.

Introduction to college	College role	Tribal knowledge – acronyms
Mission, vision, values	President role	Training timely to situation
Introduce CC system	College budget and finances	Context and background
Trustee role, limitations	Strategic plan and its cycle	Annual retreats
Policy governance	Trustee training	Exec cabinet involvement
Legal expectations	Face-to-face orientation	Board evaluation
Trustee engagement	Agenda	ICCTA, ACCT and assoc
Trusteeship	Meet them where they are	Committees or not
President's evaluation	Pres hiring and accountability	

Figure 2. Descriptive Coding Descriptor Chart.

From this chart, like terms and groupings can then be identified. Second cycle coding takes these descriptors and further groups and reduces them into Theoretic Coding themes.

There are three theme categories that arise: (1) identifying necessary information, (2) learning modality, and (3) frequency. Identifying necessary information includes the variety, extent, depth, and organization of the information for effective board action. Learning modality involves the type of engagement, materials, need for subject matter experts, and applicability to the board role for board action. Frequency includes timeliness, urgency, and essentialness within the cyclic board functions. These themes are further developed to define an orientation model in chapter 6.

SUMMARY

Analysis of the data revealed that the study participants all conducted board orientation programs for new trustees and that these were all conducted face-to-face and often one-on-one. They tend to be one-time events, although the cyclic nature of the business they conduct was acknowledged. There was no development of the board as a unit. The colleges do conduct retreats, typically held in the summer, to address the more complex topics like the strategic plan and the budget, which would then be up for board approval in the fall.

One effective strategy used by all the colleges was to have subject matter experts for the various topics that the trustees must learn in orientation to be effective governance leaders. These are often the president’s cabinet members who advise the trustees on their specific departments and how they function. This role can also be fulfilled by external presenters and facilitators, state seminars, and conferences attended by the trustees.

It was also recognized that orientation per se has too many elements to be done effectively in one sitting and therefore is best implemented as an ongoing process. Presenting timely, engaging orientation topics throughout the term of the trustee is often necessary to address the cyclical nature of the matters the board addresses, which do not occur every month but are periodic. Allowing the time for this orientation makes the difference in the trustees' understanding and ability to function as a governance leader.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study explored board orientation programs of Illinois community colleges in an effort to identify successful implementation strategies. The participants of the study were Illinois community college board professionals or those who were responsible for the orientation program for their board at their college. The governance topics covered by the orientation programs for community college boards, the formats used to engage the trustees in the orientation programs, and the ways the programs provided and assessed the learning experiences were reviewed and analyzed. The processes articulated and the perspectives shared by the participants provided insights into the purpose of this research and addressed the driving questions. This final chapter will provide: (a) brief summaries of chapters 1 through 5, which provide the lens for contextualizing the research findings; (b) a summary of the research findings and implications for implementation, which are guided by the driving questions; (c) a recommended orientation model, the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model; and (d) recommendations for further research studies.

Chapter 1 briefly introduced the issue, the purpose of the research study, and the driving questions for the study. Brief overviews of the related literature and the study design were also included. Also discussed were the significance of the findings, which will assist board professionals in their implementation of effective orientation strategies for Illinois community college boards of trustees.

In Chapter 2, the literature review provided context for the study. The historical context identified the mission of community colleges in a broad context, which drives the work of community college boards of trustees. A brief history and governance structure of Illinois community colleges focused the study within the state of Illinois and the particulars of that state system of higher education. Community college associations and organizations were identified with their impact on the work of Illinois community colleges and their orientation programs. The a priori themes of group decision making and generative theory of governance leadership, flipped boardroom implementation strategy, and adult learning theory were summarized and presented.

The detailed research design for this case study was provided in chapter 3. This case study methodology included case selection, site selection, participant protocol, data collection, surveys, semistructured interviews, documents, field notes, and the data collection pilot. Data analysis included data management; reading and memoing; describing, classifying, and interpreting; and representing and visualizing. Also included were trustworthiness, validity, and ethical considerations. The researcher as tool was specifically addressed to provide transparency in this aspect of qualitative research.

Chapter 4 described the process of data collection and identified the data gathered. This study drew from multiple data sources, including online survey, documents, field notes, and semistructured interviews. To summarize the data in manageable forms and to allow key themes to emerge, tables were implemented. The data analysis discussion detailed the use of a priori themes derived from the theories and concepts. These theories and concepts include group decision making and generative theory of governance leadership, flipped boardroom, and adult learning theory.

In Chapter 5, the data collected were analyzed by a priori themes, richly supported by quotes and reflections from the multiple data sources. The analyses of the participants' perspectives and observations were the basis for the following findings and implications, conclusions, and model development for this research study.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify the content and the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body. The study was designed to gain insight into orientation programs for trustee members at Illinois community colleges in three areas. The first is how they prioritize the function of a trustee as a member of a board in group decision making and governance leadership. The second area is to identify effective implementation strategies for board orientation programs. The third area is how they appropriately develop their skills through adult learning theory. The semistructured interview questions were mapped to the driving questions, and this mapping can be found in Appendix G.

Driving Question 1

How do current orientation programs facilitate trustees' understanding of their function as a board in group decision making and effective governance for their community college?

The participants in this study were clear and focused on the role orientation has in the development of the board governance mindset for new trustees. Each college had an orientation program that identified content and reflective of state laws regulating trustee training. The interview participants were aware of the need to allow the new trustees to ask whatever questions necessary to understand their new role. Because of the sensitive nature of some of the topics, most colleges conducted orientation sessions after the election and before the trustees were formally seated. These were typically conducted as one-on-one sessions with the president and/or board chair, with separate one-on-one sessions with each of the president's cabinet members. Some colleges held a session with just the new trustees and their executive staff in attendance to present their area of focus, and they allowed for separate one-on-one meetings as necessary based on new trustee needs. The colleges chose to arrange their orientations in this way because they are aware that the Illinois Open Meetings Act considers a gathering of three or more trustees an official meeting and requires a meeting notice, minutes, and public access. One-on-ones or limiting trustee attendees means that they do not have to post the notice or minutes of these sessions and the public cannot attend. This allows for more candid discussions and less potential negative judgment of new trustees based on their level of understanding.

The topics for orientation are identified by the college president and the chair. The limited time allotted for orientation and the amount of material to cover precludes the thoroughness that might otherwise be desired. Giving trustees too much information in one session results in overload and is ineffective in developing governance leaders. This results in colleges breaking up the information into sections that trustees learn along the way through board meetings. The trustees therefore do not necessarily come to the board table ready to function in their governing role.

As indicated by the time devoted to developing the trustees' understanding of their fiduciary, strategic, and generative duties, formal orientation is brief. The fiduciary content is typically covered by the chief financial officer. The effectiveness of this training depends on a number of factors. Some of these factors include the financial acuity of the trustee, the ability of the cabinet member to communicate what is necessary, and the ability of the trustee to understand the financial limitations on community colleges versus common business practices. Strategically, the board should be actively involved in the direction of the college since it is the governing body. The ability of the college to provide the level and depth of knowledge trustees need in their first year to participate in such decisions is limited. In many regards, attending a conference may be required to provide a full-immersion experience for the new trustees. As a governance leadership developer, orientation gives the mere baseline of information. Governance leadership requires the confidence to ask hard questions, which necessitates a deep understanding of the responsibilities of the college, to generate ideas to address issues for exploration and discussion, and to evaluate programs at other colleges to determine if such a model is appropriate for their college.

Interestingly, developing the group decision-making function seems to be more of an on-the-job action. Whereas the trustees are informed of how a board makes decisions and the responsibilities of the board members after the decision is made for them to actively support the decision, the practice of participating in a decision and following through is left to their actual behavior in board meetings. Some colleges provide media training for all trustees for the purpose of instructing trustees on how to speak about topics and issues in public, and others provide it just to the board chair and vice chair with the other trustees deferring to chair or vice chair for any official comment. Apparent is the idea of presenting a unified block to the public and in their voting, which is something developed by some but not all boards over time. Carver's Policy Governance Model recommends discussion occur separate from decision making, which allows for other opinions or disagreement to be heard, while the board makes a decision as a whole at a later meeting (Carver & Mayhew, 1994). If a trustee is going to vote against the rest of the board, for some colleges it is expected that the president and chair are made aware so there are no surprises at the public board meeting.

Implications for Community Colleges

The election or appointment of new trustees to an Illinois community college board sets in motion some type of required orientation process. The amount of information that trustees are expected to process and understand in that orientation precludes their ability to act on that information in an effective manner. The idea that orientation is a one-and-done event needs to be set aside. In order for community colleges to fully develop the trustees in all the areas, the orientation needs to be effective. An initial orientation at which a lot of information is given briefly is necessary for the trustee to be able to participate in their first board meetings. Consideration should be given for a formalized one-year or longer orientation, including sessions and conferences that actively immerse the trustee in the work of the board.

Sessions that involve the whole board are necessary to develop the board governance philosophy. Facilitation of the trustees engaging more deeply in the strategic functions and developing their generative acumen should be given priority. The board should not be a rubber stamp on recommended policies and programs, but instead be a governing body that is valued as an active contributor and vetting body for the college. This requires restructuring the orientation purpose to raise the board to the level necessary to govern in a more effective manner.

Driving Question 2

What orientation program implementation strategies are employed by Illinois community colleges to develop their trustees as effective leaders in college governance?

Study participants identified face-to-face as the most common and most effective method of board orientation. The reasoning followed that their needs can be more quickly assessed and questions addressed in person. Information is typically provided in paper form with access to various online resources. The needs of the trustees are prioritized with materials provided in their preferred method. Colleges that do have an electronic packet often offer a paper packet for those uncomfortable with technology. There was very little variation among the participant colleges in how orientation sessions were conducted. The colleges either held a group orientation with all necessary subject matter experts present to communicate their area of information, or orientation was done in a series of one-on-one sessions at the trustees' convenience with each subject matter expert.

Few colleges provided information ahead of the orientation session, which would be reflective of the flipped boardroom model and would allow the trustee to come to the orientation having thought about the information and bringing their own questions. No college conducted a formal assessment of the trustees' understanding after orientation. The colleges relied on observation of how the trustees functioned in their first board meetings, such as whether they asked questions or contributed positively to the discussions. Demonstration of trustee preparedness could take a number of board meetings to manifest, depending on the trustee.

The flipped boardroom model advocates for small group work to facilitate the group aspect of decision making, distributive leadership to help establish the leadership function within the trustee, and collective learning accountability to reinforce the group decision-making function. This model creates conversations instead of lectures on topics trustees need to be governance leaders. Orientations as they exist now are lecture-based and do not engage the trustees at the level they should in order to develop the governance skills needed to do the governance work trustees were elected to do.

Implications for Community Colleges

It would benefit community colleges to look seriously at the format of their orientation program and consider how to better engage their trustees in learning about the work they are to undertake as a board member. Enhancing the level of engagement by implementing a flipped boardroom model can increase trustee understanding and better prepare them to perform as governance leaders. It is also evident that multiple orientation sessions intentionally planned to address specific topics throughout the cyclic calendar year would assist new trustees in their preparation to fully perform their duties.

This is a construct limitation, the inability of the college to see beyond the potential possibilities of how orientation could function. Many do not look at technology as a useful tool but as a cumbersome hurdle. Colleges have not embraced the potentiality of short videos that can be viewed by trustees away from the board meetings and prior to the orientation. This opportunity for information processing prior to meeting would facilitate the retention of the knowledge the trustee needs and provide for more discussion. Pre-orientation materials should be the norm to prepare the trustees for the conversations they are about to engage in before making decisions for their colleges. Orientation programs should provide more interactions and application of knowledge through case studies and scenarios, which also allow for measuring the trustees' understanding of the material. These actions would support the main outcome of trustee orientation, which is to develop the trustees' knowledge of and comfort level with their governing responsibilities.

Driving Question 3

How and in what ways do orientation programs for trustees of Illinois community colleges meet their needs as adult learners?

The participants interviewed indicated that their orientation programs are responsive to trustee needs by the college being able to schedule the sessions to meet trustee needs and by the college's ability to meet with the new trustees one-on-one. This makes it possible to respond any questions they may have and to allow the trustee to guide the conversation by their input. The colleges also provided a resource list for the trustee to access on their own time. Beyond that, the concept of adult learning did not play a role in the structure of the orientations currently taking place at the community colleges in Illinois that took part in this study. Again, the ability to evaluate what they know and what they learn is lacking as far as the implementation of any pre- or post-diagnostic tool. The lack of recognition of the need for a conducive learning environment is a bit ironic given that these are institutions of higher education that do in fact serve exclusively adult populations, and most do have adult education departments.

Implications for Community Colleges

There is an opportunity to adapt current orientation content into a conducive adult learner format for community college trustees. There are multiple ways to make this transition. Ideally, colleges could provide prereading and/or short videos for the trustees and have intentional conversations and questions as part of the orientation programs. Multiple-part orientation programs would allow for greater depth into complicated topics. Specific agendas based on the cyclical calendar of community college board business would facilitate trustee preparation for these issues in a timely and efficient manner. Holding sessions in different areas across campus allows the trustees to put the issues into relevant context and adds another dimension to how the trustees understand those issues. Having separate meetings for issue discussion and issue decision would allow the trustees the appropriate time to process the issues and proposed solutions before they are expected to vote. These actions respect the learning style and ability of trustees as adult learners and meet the needs of orientation in feasible, reasonable ways.

CONCLUSIONS

Orientation to a community college board takes more time than most people realize or anticipate. The many individual factors that impact that orientation program create the paralyzing conundrum of following traditional methods and meeting trustees where they are to implement an effective orientation program. The legal responsibilities of the trustees in their elected role in Illinois requires that they take their training and decision-making role seriously by making every effort to become a competent governance leader. Current orientation is superficial, covering the basics briefly and throwing trustees into the fray, ready or not.

Viewed in combination with the three themes identified through descriptive coding, there is a need to clearly identify the necessary information, accommodate a variety of learning modalities, and provide the orientation sessions in an ongoing manner to build on the developing information. Orientation could be a transformational experience that takes these expectations into consideration and provides the support necessary to fully develop the trustees for their governance role in their community college.

SEILER TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE ORIENTATION MODEL

To provide the orientation necessary for community college boards to effectively govern, the experience needs to be transformational. Orientation for a trustee on a community college board must be more than handing them a packet. There should be an identifiable change that is desired, and the individual growth and formation of the trustees for their governing role should be paramount.

Phases in the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model

The process is embedded within the context of the community college and within the context of the board of trustees. The Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model has three phases, which include:

1. Edification
2. Synthesis

3. Implementation

The iterative nature of the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model (see Figure 3) reveals a continuous, reinforcing loop of synthesis of information through edification to implementation throughout the trustee's board term in ongoing orientation. The process is fluid; trustees flow from one phase to the next in their own time and at their own pace, moving seamlessly into the next phase. The process is transformational in that each phase reinforces the next, building the knowledge base and application of that knowledge toward effective governance. The orientation occurs within the intersection of the board of trustees with the community college, recognizing that parts of each exist and function outside the realm of the other. The community college operates and functions in some ways outside of the board of trustees, as in the teaching that occurs in the classroom and the way that board decisions are implemented. The board of trustees and the individual trustees exist and function in some ways outside of the community college, as when their outside experiences inform their board role and in representing their constituency.

Transformational orientation is trustee-centered learning that is designed to develop governing potential. The orientation is customizable to address each trustee's strengths, needs, and interests; focuses on each trustee's content proficiency; and actively engages each trustee in determining what, how, when, and where orientation occurs. It allows for self-assessment throughout the process for trustees to identify their learning needs to be met in edification and set their own goals for development.

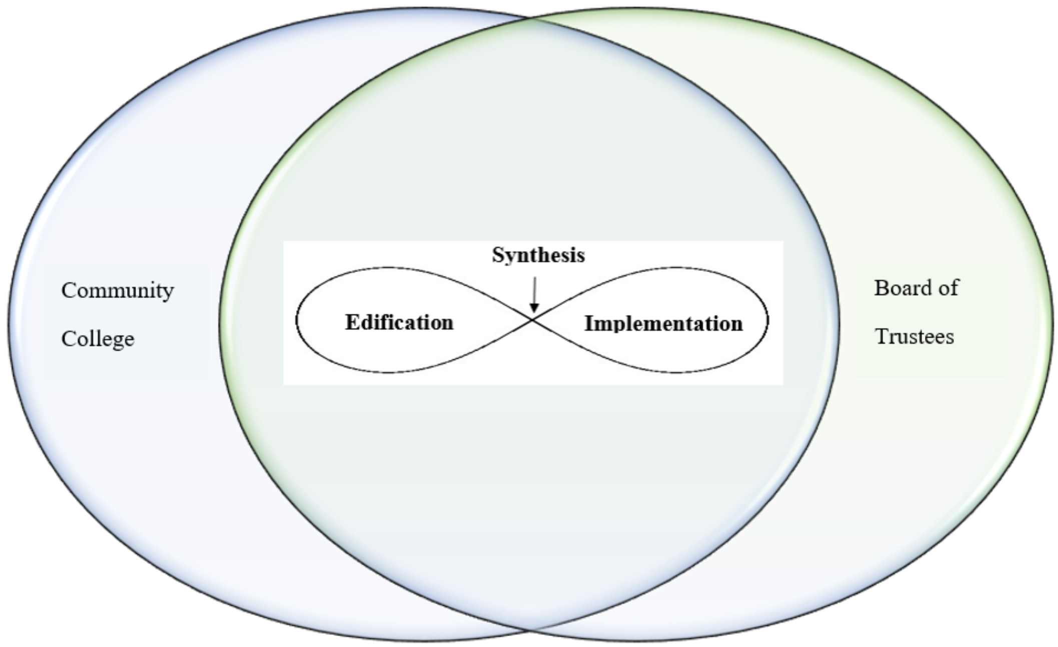

Figure 3. Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model.

Phase 1: Edification/Learning Loop

The board professional is instrumental in this edification phase. They are responsible for pulling the resources together to assure the subject and context are addressed in the right format with the right presenter to inform the trustee. There are four steps for the board professional: assess, coordinate, engage, and sustain. Figure 5, presented later in this chapter, provides a checklist for running an orientation to address each of these areas.

Assess the need – Identify the topic to be addressed and what stage of trustee development in this area for each trustee, including what they need to know for the decision at hand, and if any changes or developments occurred in this area that could impact this decision.

Coordinate the edification – Identify the materials that are needed and the subject matter experts that will facilitate the session. Confirm the location, date and time, and any additional resources needed for the session, such as IT resources.

Engage the trustees – Identify materials that need to be distributed prior to the session to prepare the trustees for the session. Plan for time for them to begin to synthesize the information through exercises, case scenarios, and open question periods.

Sustain the learning – Send a follow-up email with a synopsis of information from the session that integrates their input during the session. Include relevant articles and access to additional resources about the topic. Allow for trustee self-evaluation of the session as part of their synthesis of the topic, which includes their development and their additional developmental needs for this topic.

Phase 2: Synthesis/Evaluation Interchange

The trustee is responsible for this phase. This is where they process the information to form concrete ideas and understandings. The trustee evaluates the edification process and understanding of the concept and conducts a self-evaluation and outcomes after implementation. They may identify further needs of information or areas of personal development in this area. The board professional then takes this into account for the next orientation sessions or makes notes for implementing into the orientation for the next cycle of this topic in the coming year.

Phase 3: Implementation/Application Loop

The trustee is responsible for this phase. The trustee applies the ideas and understandings to the topic at hand, both outside of the session and in the board meeting to make the governance decisions required of them. They may have discussed the issue in the orientation session and in committee meetings prior to the board session and feel comfortable with the decision they are about to make. But other voices may not have been heard at that time, which will require them to actively apply what they have learned and process the implications to make the most informed decisions. Once the meeting is concluded, the trustee should take some time to evaluate that process and do a self-evaluation.

Summary of the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model

The Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model is trustee-centered learning that is designed to develop governing potential implemented in three phases. The orientation is customizable to address each trustee's strengths, needs, and interests; focuses on each trustee's content proficiency; and actively engages each trustee in determining what, how, when, and where orientation occurs. The phases of Edification, Synthesis, and Implementation simplify the intellectual integration that occurs to develop the trustee as a governance leader and allow for the individual development each trustee takes to reach this objective. The transformational impact of orientation is in taking the activation of the governance leadership in each trustee through development and support, helping them see their governance potential, assessing and aligning the orientation needs, and sustaining them through that journey. The infinity symbol represents the ongoing nature of orientation. In the same way the infinity line crosses over itself, trustees find they need to go back over materials to refresh or add to their knowledge as they evaluate their governing outcomes.

Timeline for Governance Orientation

Establishing the timeline for orientation is individual for each college and each trustee. There are specific calendar-year activities that stay the same and can be planned for within the orientation calendar. Tools necessary to develop the calendar may include the strategic plan, institutional effectiveness measures, and campus master plan. Actions happen in specific months, such as the budget approval, levy approval, tuition changes, and campus construction. The planning for these decisions starts months prior and this planning should drive the orientation sessions for trustees. They should be part of these discussions from the beginning to give direction, charge committees with tasks and define parameters, and provide generative ideas to address issues outside the traditional solutions. The summer board retreat often acts as a catch-all for multiple topics. Granted, these topics are interrelated and need to be considered as a whole with regard to the college direction, and to get to that point, each topic needs to be addressed on its own to allow for trustee mastery of concepts and application. A sample orientation calendar is provided in Figure 4 and begins in April to reflect that election of trustees to community college boards takes place that month, so this is a logical place to start the orientation calendar.

BOARD OF TRUSTEE ORIENTATION CALENDAR		
Month	**Orientation Topic**	**Board Meeting Topic**
April	First orientation, college basics	
May	Next fiscal tuition and budget discussions start (FY budget, levy needs, referendum needs)	Tuition exhibit
June	Board Retreat	
July		
August	Strategic Plan	Proposed budget posted
September	Institutional Effectiveness Measures (IEMs)	Budget exhibit approval
October	Campus Master Plan charter	
November		Levy exhibit approval
December		Strategic Plan approval
January		
February		IEMs approval
March		Campus Master Plan approval

Figure 4. Community College Board of Trustee Orientation Calendar.

Checklist for the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model

To ensure all facets of a topic are covered, a checklist for the board professional can provide a structure to allow for intentional orientation (see Figure 5).

The topic, location, and date are always included. It is important to identify the purpose or objective of the orientation session; more than likely the end result is an exhibit for the board to approve. A few sessions may lead to the final exhibit, building on knowledge, and reviewing task force progress or project research.

Board of Trustee Orientation Session Checklist		
Topic		
Objective / Purpose / Board Action		
Date / Time		
Location		
Subject Matter Expert		
Required trustees		
Required attendees		
Materials	Pre-reading	
	Meeting materials	
	Presentation	
Special Needs	IT technology	
	Conference phone	
	Flipchart w/markers	
	Other	
Last time topic covered		
Board action taken		
Prepare assessment forms		

Figure 5. Community College Board of Trustee Orientation Checklist.

If a subject matter expert (SME) is to be used, this too should be identified. Sometimes there is a fee for a facilitator that needs to be taken into consideration, whether a lawyer, auditor, or other expert. The SME may be an internal administrator or an external facilitator. Identify the trustees that must attend the session, and identify others that need to be present, such as the president's cabinet or the task force.

Materials should include prereading for the trustees to come in ready for discussion. Materials also include the specific materials needed for the session itself, like the session presentation.

Identify special needs, IT specifics, flip charts, or conference phone to accommodate those who cannot be physically present.

For reference, the last time the topic was covered, and the result of that session should be noted. The assessment forms for the session also need to be prepared.

Using a checklist allows the board professional to be thorough and all necessary items to be identified prior to the training. Preparation for orientation allows the session to be productive.

Assessment Form for the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model

Assessment is a necessary to any process that desires to provide a way to improve on what has been done, identify gaps in that process, and allow for the varying learning styles of those involved. Transformation is change. For the orientation to be transformational, the change that is expected and supported needs to be measured. Measurement should take place after both the edification phase and the implementation phase. This is the evaluation interchange that occurs in the synthesis phase. It facilitates the "what did you learn – how did you apply it and what more do you need to learn" cycle, which acknowledges that orientation is infinite.

This sample evaluation form presented in Figure 6 includes the following areas of self-assessment: understanding of basic ideas, understanding of relevance to college, critical application, participation in discussion, group dynamics, and consensus building. These are measured on a scale of *novice, some, good, very good*, and *mastery*. A section is provided for other comments and insights. There is a separate section for trustee self-identified needs for further development.

Trustee Personal Assessment Form / Synthesis Evaluation					
Trustee Name					
Topic					
Date					
	Self-Assessment Scale				
Area of Evaluation	Novice	Some	Good	Very Good	Mastery
Understanding of basic ideas					
Understanding of relevance to college					
Critical application					
Participation in discussion					
Group dynamics					
Consensus building					
Other comments/insights:					
Needs for further development:					

Figure 6. Community College Board of Trustee Orientation Assessment Form.

Opportunities for Applying the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model

The Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation (STGO) Model can be implemented in its current form or adapted to a specific state association or college district. Two practical applications for immediate implementation would be (a) to develop a virtual online training module for those thinking about becoming a community college trustee, and (b) for the Illinois Community College Trustees Association to use this structure for their state-required training for community college trustees.

Online and virtual training has become more commonplace because it allows the individual to fit the training into their own schedule. It also became necessary to use this format to continue education and meetings since the coronavirus in 2020 made meeting in person a high-risk situation. Community colleges have had to move board meetings and retreats to virtual platforms. The STGO model can be used as a format for online training as it is based on the abilities of an adult learner with the capacity to learn on their own. The STGO model also expects the individual to do work outside of the training in a flipped boardroom model, coming to the training with some knowledge ready to apply, which is a feature common to online training.

For the ICCTA, an online pre-election training module with certification would allow those thinking about becoming a member of their community college board the opportunity to learn about the role, the responsibilities, the time commitment, and the functions of a board of trustees. The STGO model provides the structure to identify the information common to community colleges, which would be the focus of this online training module. Providing a certification with the training would allow the verification of those running for board positions that they are aware of and accept the responsibilities of the position for which they are running. This benefits the college, the community, and the individual running for the office of trustee by showing the commitment and willingness of the individual to be informed before taking on the responsibilities.

The possible role of a state association in standardizing orientation across the state cannot be overlooked. In recent years, Illinois, for example, has passed laws requiring specific professional development and training for community college boards of trustees. By implementing the Seiler Transformational Governance Orientation Model, the ICCTA could guide or structure that training for trustees and standardize the professionalism of trustees on community college boards throughout the state. ICCTA currently offers regular training sessions that are optional but can be used to meet the first-, third-, and fifth-year training requirements. Using the STGO model as a framework for board orientation would provide greater guidance for both colleges and their trustees. The STGO model would provide a structured setting for community colleges to conduct board of trustee orientation in an effective manner. There would be opportunity for the ICCTA to be a facilitator of such sessions if a college were so inclined. Developing the trustees into governance leaders means they become capable of assessing issues from a variety of perspectives, leading to their understanding of their own institution to make the best decisions for their constituency.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study provided valuable insight into the prioritization and emphasis placed on board orientation at a specific point in time for Illinois community colleges. At this time, there is limited research about community college boards of trustees. Most of the research that exists around community college boards of trustees' orientation is anecdotal and involves few trustees. Trustees as a group may or may not be forthcoming with information, which would further restrict the information available. The research needs to be true research that is implemented and evaluated.

Three suggested topics for future research about community college board of trustee orientation include: (a) how and in what ways trustees understand their governance role, (b) what kinds of orientation strategies trustees identify as effective and necessary, and (c) how do trustees understand the teamwork necessary to the functioning of a governance board.

Further research should explore how and in what ways trustees understand their governance role. It would be beneficial to discover how implementing governance leadership affects the ability of the orientation to create a more professional, responsible board of trustees, with a goal toward understanding their impact and their generative duties. Ideally, this would be a long-term study that gauges the trustee's understanding over a number of years through various development situations.

Devising orientation plans mean little if they do not meet the trustees' needs. Research needs to be done that identifies what kinds of orientation strategies are effective and necessary based on trustee data. The effectiveness of orientation needs to be addressed through the perspective of the trustees. This layer of information will inform the further development of orientation programs.

Finally, research needs to be done on the value of teamwork and how trustees embrace the board dynamic as a leadership unit. This would identify how well community college trustees understand the group decision making and the level of teamwork necessary to the functioning of a governance board. Board functions differ from and complement their responsibilities as trustee. Understanding how these functions work together in effective governance leadership would benefit the trustees and the colleges they serve.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH
1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307 | (231) 591-2553 | www.ferris.edu/irb

Date: April 26, 2019

To: Sandra Balkema, Evelyn Seiler
From: Gregory Wellman, R.Ph, Ph.D, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application for Review

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, " *Preparing for Governance: Illinois Community College Board of Trustee Orientation Strategies*" and determined that it does not meet the Federal Definition of research on human subjects, as defined by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Food and Drug Administration. This project does not meet the federal definition of research on human subjects because the unit of analysis is the institution and its programs, and not human subjects. As such, approval by the Ferris IRB is not required for the proposed project.

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission; it does not apply should changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human subjects, submit a new request to the IRB for determination. This letter only applies to Ferris IRB Review; it is your responsibility to ensure all necessary institutional permissions are obtained and policies are met prior to beginning the project, such as documentation of institutional or department support. Note that quality improvement project findings may be published, but any findings presented or published should be clearly identified as part of a quality improvement initiative and not as research.

Your project will remain on file with the Ferris IRB for purposes of tracking research efforts at Ferris. Should you have any questions regarding the determination of this letter, please contact the IRB.

Regards,

Gregory Wellman, R.Ph, Ph.D, IRB Chair
Ferris State University Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Online Survey Questionnaire

This research project is being conducted by Evelyn M. Seiler, a doctoral student at Ferris State University located in Big Rapids, MI. The study is entitled *Board of Trustee Orientation for Illinois Community Colleges*. The purpose of the study is to identify the content and the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body.

I understand that the results of this study may be published but my identity will in no way be revealed, or that of my employer (community college). I also understand that there are no anticipated risks to me greater than those encountered in daily life. Moreover, the information gained from this study could be used to assist community colleges in becoming more effective in their preparation of the board of trustees for their governing role. By completing this survey, I am giving my consent of approval.

This questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Participant's Institution ____

How long have you been in this role (board liaison) _____ years

How many board elections have you run/managed/facilitated for your community college?

Board demographics	# _____ female	# _____ term end 2019
	# _____ male	# _____ term end 2021
		# _____ term end 2023

Does your college use a board meeting management system/software?
Yes _____ No _____
Which system/method do you use? (pdf/Adobe, BoardPaq, BoardBook, Diligent Boards, Board Effect, etc.)

Are your board members all comfortable using your board meeting system?

Does your board participate in trustee organizations?
_____ ICCTA
_____ ACCT
_____ AGB
_____ board of ICCTA
_____ board/committees of ACCT
_____ other ___________________________________

What types of training do your board members participate in (check all that apply):
_____ individual
_____ grouped
_____ full board
_____ orientation
_____ retreats
_____ seminars
_____ mandatory training (ethics, open meetings, etc)
_____ other ___________________________________

Do your new board members have mentors? How are these decided?

How often does college-initiated training take place?

Do you/have you used an outside consultant/facilitator for any board training/retreats? For what topics?

Define your orientation (include content, focus, setting, length of session, etc):

How often do you hold orientation sessions?

Who participates in orientation?

What content/materials do you include in your orientation (check all that apply)
_____ college history
_____ mission / purpose
_____ college institutional information
_____ college facts
_____ enrollment
_____ budget/finances
_____ operations
_____ shared governance
_____ academic freedom
_____ unions
_____ calendar
_____ other ____________________________
_____ community colleges in general
_____ regional issues
_____ state issues
_____ national issues

_____ accreditation
_____ state and national legislation
_____ other ________________________________
_____ trusteeship
_____ trusteeship as individual
_____ trusteeship as a board
_____ group decision making
_____ advocacy
_____ other _______________________________
_____ trustee position description
_____ trustee expectations
_____ trustee responsibilities
_____ code of conduct
_____ meeting protocol
_____ other ____

What resources does your institution use in developing/implementing orientation (online, print material, outside materials, etc.)?

Can you share your orientation agenda Yes _____ No _____

Can you share other orientation materials Yes _____ No _____

Are you willing to participate in an individual 45-Minute interview to further the depth of this research? This interview will explore your community college's board orientation in more depth and anecdotally to better understand processes and effectiveness.
Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please provide your contact information.

APPENDIX C: SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH
1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307 | (231) 591-2553 | www.ferris.edu/irb

Informed Consent

Project Information

IRB Approved Project #:
Principal Investigator: Sandra J. Balkema, PhD, Ferris State University
Email: balkemas@ferris.edu Phone:
Co-Investigator: Evelyn M. Seiler, ABD, McHenry County College
Email: seilere2@ferris.edu Phone:

Key Information

You are invited to participate in a voluntary research study. This research study is about orientation programs of Illinois community college for their board of trustees. Researchers are interested in identifying the content and the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body. Colleges will be identified only by ICCB peer group; all other identifying information will be coded to maintain anonymity of the subjects. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured individual interview. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes at a location identified you, or by phone. The interview will be recorded to assist the researcher with accuracy in the research process. Your participation in this study will be over when the interview is completed. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research study because the data collection is completely anonymous, and the topic is not sensitive. This study will assist community colleges in the development and evaluation of their own orientation programs for their boards of trustees and add to the existing research about community college boards of trustees.

Please take the time to read this form and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether or not to take part in this voluntary research project.

Participation

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study if you don't want to and you may leave at any time without consequence. Participation or nonparticipation in this study will not impact your relationship with Ferris State University or your employment at your community college in any way.

You are eligible to participate in this study because you serve in the capacity of a board professional for your Illinois community college. If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured individual interview. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

Anticipated Benefits

Although you will not directly benefit from being in this study, others might benefit from your participation because the results of this study will assist community colleges in the development and evaluation of their own orientation programs for their boards of trustees and add to the existing research about community college boards of trustees.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks associated with this study.

Confidentiality

Records of your participation in this research study will be completely confidential. Your identity will not be revealed on any report, publication, or at scientific meetings.

In order to keep your information safe, the researchers will employ the following methods:

Pseudonyms – Pseudonyms will be utilized to conceal the identities of all study participants of surveys and interviews.

Coding – A coding system will be developed for the transcripts, research memos, computerized records, and other related documents to avoid revealing identifying information. The coding document will be locked in a separate location with access restricted to the researcher.

Secure storage – All data will be stored in a secure location with access restricted to the researcher.

Data encryption – Data encryption will be used for identifiable data.

Disposition/destruction – All audio recordings will be destroyed immediately following transcription. Interview notes, research memos, and all other documentation associated with data collection and analysis will be destroyed or deleted after the required 3 years. For those 3 years, they will be maintained in a secure, locked file cabinet to which only the researcher has access. The study information will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

Use of audio recording:

Your initials _______ or verbal approval indicate your permission to audio record the research study. The text of your audio recording may be used in presentations related to this study. If the text of your audio recording is used for presentations of any kind, names or other identifying information will not be associated with it. Audio recordings will be destroyed following transcription, and no identifying information will be included in the transcription.

Participant Rights

This is a voluntary research study. You are free to leave the study at any time. If you leave the study before it is finished, there will be no penalty to you. If you choose to tell the researchers why you are leaving the study, your reasons for leaving may be kept as part of the study record.

Contact Information

The main researchers conducting this study are Evelyn M. Seiler, a graduate student at Ferris State University, and Dr. Sandra J. Balkema, a faculty advisor at Ferris State University. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Evelyn M. Seiler at   or eseiler@ferris.edu or Dr. Sandra J. Balkema at balkemas@ferris.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a subject in this study, please contact: Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), 1010 Campus Drive, FLITE 410, Big Rapids, MI 49307, (231) 591-2553 or IRB@ferris.edu.

Signatures

Research Subject: I understand the information printed on this form. I have discussed this study, its risks, potential benefits and my other alternatives with the researcher. My questions so far have been answered. I understand that if I have more questions or concerns about the study or my participation as a research subject, I may contact one of the people listed above in the "*Contact Information*" section. I previously received a copy of this form.

Signature of Subject: ____

Printed Name: ________________________ **Date of Signature:** ____________

Student Researcher: I have given this research subject information about this study that I believe is accurate and complete. The subject has indicated that by signing this form or giving verbal approval, he or she understands the nature of the study and the risks and benefits of participating.

Printed Name: ____

Title: ____

Signature:___________________________ **Date of Signature:**____________

APPENDIX D: SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Review the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the successful implementation strategies of orientation programs preparing Illinois community college trustees to lead their institutions successfully as an effective governing body.

1. What are the three or four main objectives of your college's board of trustee orientation?
2. How does your orientation prepare your trustees for their fiduciary responsibilities?
3. In what ways does your orientation prepare your trustees for their strategic planning and accountability responsibilities?
4. How does your orientation prepare your trustees for their institution-wide, mission-focused goal and direction setting role?
5. What were the factors that determined how you arranged the orientation session (F2F, online, packets, modules, etc.)? Do you feel these orientation arrangements work to engage the trustees in the material necessary to develop the trustees as governance leaders?
6. Are you able to adjust your college's orientation to meet individual trustee's needs?
7. What do you do to set the stage for learning and engagement during orientation?
8. How do you know they understand their role, the material, the expectations of being a trustee once orientation is complete?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share that could shed light on your college's Board of Trustee orientation process? Anything your college does that you think works particularly well?

Concluding the Interview

At the conclusion of the interview, thank the participant. Inform them that a transcript of the interview will be sent to them shortly, allowing them to check the content for accuracy (member checking).

APPENDIX E: FIELD NOTES TEMPLATE

Field Note Form

<table>
<tr><th>Descriptive Notes</th><th>Reflective Notes</th></tr>
<tr><td>Q1:</td><td rowspan="5"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Q2:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q3:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q4:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q5:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q6:</td><td rowspan="5">Room Map</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q7:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q8:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Q9:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other:</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX F: ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD PEER GROUP DESIGNATIONS OF COLLEGES INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

Illinois Community College Board Peer Group Designations of Colleges Included in this Study

Peer Group I	Carl Sandburg College Shawnee Community College Southeastern Illinois College Spoon River College John Wood Community College
Peer Group II	Danville Area Community College Highland Community College Kaskaskia College Kishwaukee College Rend Lake College Sauk Valley Community College
Peer Group III	Illinois Valley Community College Kankakee Community College Lake Land College Lewis & Clark Community College John A. Logan College McHenry County College
Peer Group IV	Black Hawk College Heartland College Illinois Central College Lincoln Land Community College Parkland College Richland Community College Rock Valley College Southwestern Illinois College
Peer Group V	Elgin Community College Morton College Prairie State College South Suburban College Waubonsee Community College
Peer Group VII	College of DuPage William Rainey Harper College Joliet Junior College College of Lake County Moraine Valley Community College Oakton Community College Triton College

APPENDIX G: MAPPING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO DRIVING QUESTIONS

Mapping Interview Questions to Driving Questions

Driving Questions	Interview Questions
1. How do current orientation programs facilitate trustees' understanding of their function as a board in group decision-making and effective governance for their community college?	What are the three or four main objectives of your college's board of trustee orientation? How does your orientation prepare your trustees for their fiduciary responsibilities? In what ways does your orientation prepare your trustees for their strategic planning and accountability responsibilities? How does your orientation prepare your trustees for their institution-wide, mission-focused goal and direction setting role?
2. What orientation program implementation strategies are employed by Illinois community colleges to develop their trustees as effective leaders in college governance?	What were the factors that determined how you arranged the orientation session (F2F, online, packets, modules, etc.)? Do you feel this works to engage the trustees in the material necessary to develop the trustees as governance leaders?
3. How and in what ways do orientation programs for trustees of Illinois community colleges meet their needs as adult learners?	How responsive is your orientation to individual trustee's needs? What do you do to set the stage for learning and engagement during orientation? How do you know they understand their role, the material, the expectations of being a trustee once orientation is complete? Is there anything else you would like to share that could shed light on your college's Board of Trustee orientation process?